



**Citizens for
Global Solutions**

MINNESOTA

www.globalsolutionsmn.org

**Newsletter
May 2010**

OUR VISION:

We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION:

We are a membership organization working to build political will in the United States to achieve our vision. We do this by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations.

IMPENDING CHANGE

Claude Buettner, Outgoing President

It has been a great privilege and pleasure to lead our chapter for the last three years. But it is time for me to step down. I gladly relinquish the presidency to someone who will, I am confident, be a worthy successor.

It is impossible to know or measure the effectiveness of NGOs such as CGS. Sometimes our faith that the “keyboard is mightier than the gun” suffices to motivate us to plod on. Rest assured that your support and interest is working towards keeping this imperfect global civilization on course to a safer future.

The good news on perhaps the biggest issue, to my thinking, is that the US and Russia have recently agreed on further reduction in their stockpiles of Cold War era nuclear bombs, the original weapons of mass destruction. Together, the US and Russia own over 90% of these weapons. Although some analysts have written that the recent agreement is more symbolic than the numbers at first indicate, it is a clear demonstration by decision makers to continue the long-term trend of nuclear weapons reduction. Only with this trend can the world be made safer and the necessary legitimacy be given to non-proliferation efforts.

Although the world’s estimated population of 6.8 billion people continues to rise, the global birth rate (currently estimated to be 1.1% per year by the US Census Bureau) continues to fall. This is great news as population growth is one of the main “drivers” behind a host of related global problems such as environmental degradation, economic and political instability, and even war.

Currently, there is a test of resolve for the European Union, the most noteworthy on-going experiment in international integration. When things are going well, all parties bask in the success of expanded economic opportunity and rising standards of living. But when many among Europe’s population begin to have misgivings that their stressed economies are subsidizing the most poorly managed or most unfortunate countries, such as Greece, Portugal and others, there are calls to rethink the basic premise of the EU. For the moment the various EU countries are determined to give the needed financial support to Greece. But, if other countries need financial propping up, the mood may change and the EU steadfastness may be tested.

I end with this Haiku to offer encouragement to a world in dangerous times on the cusp of great change:

*Sloughing our past selves,
We unfold who we are now
To our amazement!*

FUNDING A WORKABLE UNITED NATIONS

Joe Schwartzberg

As many readers of this Newsletter are aware, I have been working for several years on a book entitled *Designs for a Workable World*. I have just finished Chapter 15 (see outline on p.4), “The Problem of Funding,” and have written some 410 pages out of what will probably come to something over 500. Funding is a topic that would bore most readers to death; but I actually found the problem rather interesting and share with you here a few slightly edited excerpts from the work, [including a few interpolations in square brackets, like this]:

The Regular Budget: Although critics of the UN are wont to complain about the organization’s burgeoning cost, the regular budget has always been remarkably—one might even say incredibly—low. In its first budgeted year, the approved regular budget came to a mere \$18.9 million. In *percentage* terms, growth in the budget was moderately high during the UN’s early years; but, considering the very low starting point, the *absolute* increases were modest. The \$100 million mark was crossed only in 1965, the \$500 million mark in 1978, and the billion dollar mark in 1990. The 2010 budget came to \$2.58 billion, which works out to roughly \$0.38 for each person on this planet! (*Can the world really justify such extravagance?*) [The US share of the current budget, 22% of the total, comes to \$568 million, just about \$1.87 (or one hamburger) *per capita*, as against a whopping \$0.02 *per capita* for Bangladesh!] But the figures just cited are in *current* dollars, as of the dates indicated. When adjusted for inflation, based on the US consumer price index, growth over the past four decades has been quite modest. Using 1971 as a reference year, at which time the budget came to \$194 million, the Global Policy Forum found that the nominal budget of \$2.073 billion for 2007 (the last year for which calculations were made) translated to only \$404 million in *constant* 1971 dollars. In short, in real terms the *regular* budget slightly more than doubled over a period of thirty-six years. Applying the compound interest formula, this comes to an annual growth rate of approximately 2%. The picture is significantly different, however, in respect to the peacekeeping budget and in programs funded by voluntary contributions.

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The Peacekeeping Budget: In contrast to the highly regulated—even if often contentious—process by which the UN’s regular budget is established, funding for peacekeeping missions since the Suez crisis of 1956, has, of necessity, been carried out on an *ad hoc* basis in that the need for such missions

cannot be reliably forecast and the UN never has a substantial cash reserve on which it can draw when serious emergencies arise. [In 2007, the most recent year for which global data are available, the total peacekeeping budget for sixteen operations was \$5.146 billion, of which the US was assessed 27.1%, or \$1.395 billion, well below the cost that year of a *week’s* US military operations in Iraq.]

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Voluntary Contributions: Finally, we come to voluntary contributions [for special programs and funds such as UNICEF, the World Food Program, and the Fund for Population Activities], to which there is no reference in the UN Charter. The volume and distribution of such funding are, arguably, even less predictable than is the case for peacekeeping funds. The determination of which agency gets what, from whom and when is typically based on varying combinations of altruistic, political and economic motives. The purposes for which funding may be used are largely established by leading donor nations. The General Assembly, which, in theory, has control over funding, plays a relatively minor role in respect to voluntary funding. It can elect officers for the programs and specialized agencies which such funding supports; but if the individuals elected pursue agendas greatly at variance with the intentions of the donor(s), it is highly likely that the funding spigot will soon be turned off. [The world total for voluntary funds in 2007 was \$12.28 billion, of which the US contributed 36%, or roughly \$4.42 billion.]

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[Counting two other budgets, not described here, the total spending for the UN system in 2007 was just short of \$25 billion of which the US contributed roughly \$7.9 billion.]

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Continued on page 3 (Subsequent text contains *ideas* from the book, but not in the form of quotes.)

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

Where? Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church,
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis (at Lyndale & Hennepin). Park in church lot.

Thursday, May 20, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE: REPORTS FROM COPENHAGEN

Neither the limited success of the Copenhagen Climate Conference nor the comfortable cynicism of the “climate deniers” can change the fact that climate change is a very significant challenge. Join two local “climate champions” to dialogue about this issue. They will share their experiences at the Copenhagen conference and discuss what local residents can do in the coming months to support climate legislation, energy efficiency and healthy life styles in our communities.

Presenters: Paul Thompson and Jim Nelson

Paul is a member of the Edina Energy and Environment Commission, a retired teacher, former Peace Corps volunteer and founder of the blog Cool Planet. In 1989 he won the Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service, given to a retired Peace Corps volunteer whose activities carry on the spirit of the Peace Corps. Paul was very engaged throughout the Copenhagen summit rallying activists. He continues climate work and promoting healthy life styles in his own community and consults with other communities. He is an avid volunteer for many groups including the Will Steger Foundation and 350.org.

Jim is a long-time active member of Citizens for Global Solutions. He spent a 42-year career as a finance manager in a number of regional aerospace companies. Currently, he performs market research for Compass Consulting Group helping international companies that produce environmental technologies. He is also Managing Director for a small wholesale plant nursery business. At Copenhagen he spent time with members of several UN Association groups from around the world promoting re-vegetation to help restore climate balance. Jim is especially concerned about the poor and marginalized who are most often negatively impacted by climate change.

FUNDING A WORKABLE UN (Continued).

Now suppose that in place of the UN’s present complicated and contentious (take my word for it) budget system, there were a system in which each nation, however rich or poor it might be, was assessed at the very low and easily affordable rate of 0.1% of its GDP. As of 2007, for the world as a whole, that would have generated \$60.7 billion in 2007, as against the total of not quite \$25 actually budgeted that year. The US share of the new total would have been about \$14.2 billion (roughly the cost of seven weeks of the Iraq War), or about \$36 *per capita*, while the total for Bangladesh would be about \$79 million, calling for an increase from \$0.03 *per capita per annum* (the total for five UN budgets) to \$0.57 *per capita*. The increase for both countries (and for all others as well) would cause no significant fiscal pain. The UN would have more financial resources than it could efficiently spend with its present staff and would have, I would estimate, at least

\$10 billion to put into an escrow account to help meet the costs of unpredictable future peacekeeping missions or for dealing with future natural catastrophes.

The US could then no longer complain that it was being unfairly exploited. Nor would the UN have to be a hat-in-hand supplicant for voluntary funding that would be provided only on terms specified by a small number of wealthy donor nations. And there would be no need for biennial budget squabbling in the General Assembly over ridiculously petty differences in assessment rates. While the general principle of progressive taxation would be abandoned at the *collection* end of the budget process, *progressive principles could be applied, with much greater positive effect, in the ways by which funds were disbursed*. We could then move more rapidly toward a more just and more peaceful world. Finally, as UN capabilities increased, the uniform assessment rate could be appropriately adjusted, with no appreciable pain to UN member nations for the foreseeable future.

AWARD FOR JOE SCHWARTZBERG

In March the University of Minnesota's Office of International Programs honored Joe Schwartzberg with an Award for Global Engagement and bestowed on him the title of "**Distinguished International Professor Emeritus.**"

WEIGHTED VOTING

A major problem with UN decision-making is that it is neither fair nor realistic. The Security Council is an exclusive club in which the veto-wielding P-5 (the permanent members) are immune from censure and can block any action of which they disapprove. In the much weaker General Assembly, which has binding power only in respect to the budget and appointments, the vote of any one of the smallest, poorest, and weakest of nations is equal to that of the United States or China. Small wonder then that its decisions are routinely ignored by any nation that wishes to do so. In various chapters of *Designs for a Workable World* (see column to right) I propose for the major UN agencies objective

formulae for weighted voting that should be perceived as sufficiently fair and realistic to command the respect of the community of nations. For example, in the General Assembly the proposed formula would be $W = (P+C+N) / 3$, in which a nation's voting weight, W , would be the average of three terms: P , its population as a percentage of the world's total; C , its budgetary contributions to the UN budget as a percentage of the total; and N , its membership as a percentage of the UN total (currently 1/192 or 0.521%). These terms respectively honor the democratic/demographic principle, the economic (capacity to do good) principle, and the legal (sovereign equality) principle and should provide an acceptable compromise reflecting the desires of populous, wealthy, and small states respectively. If the system were now in place, it would make the budgetary system proposed on pages 2-3 much more acceptable to the nations who actually pay the bills, and ensure that they actually meet their obligations because they would automatically penalize themselves by failure to do so.

Joe Schwartzberg

Chapter Outline DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD

- 1. Introduction**
- PART ONE: THE STATE OF THE EARTH**
- 2. A World of More or Less Sovereign States**
- 3. Power**
- 4. Problems**
- 5. The Rise of Regionalism**
- PART TWO: PRESCRIPTIONS**
- 6. Reform of the General Assembly**
- 7. Reform of the Security Council**
- 8. From ECOSOC to ESEC**
- 9. A Human Rights Council**
- 10. Strengthening Judicial Organs**
- 11. A World Parliamentary Assembly**
- 12. Affiliated Agencies**
- 13. Enhancing Human Resources**
- 14. Engaging Non-State Actors**
- 15. The Problem of Funding**
- 16. Peacekeeping and Peace-building**
- 17. A Sustainable Planet**
- PART THREE: MOVING FORWARD**
- 18. A New Global Architecture**
- 19. Getting There**

Citizens for Global Solutions

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www.globalsolutionsmn.org

In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes. Benjamin Franklin

Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons. Woody Allen

CGS MN ANNUAL MEETING INVITATION

Thursday evening, June 17, 2010, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Social Hall, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis

ABUNDANT FREE PARKING IN CHURCH PARKING LOT

SCHEDULE: 6:00 Social Hour; 6:30 Served Dinner (vegetarian option available);
7:15 Program; 9:00 Adjournment.

COST: \$30 per person; \$15 for students and those with limited income.

Reservations should be made by June 10. **QUESTIONS?** Call Mary Rose Goetz at 612-374-5321.

Keynote Speaker: Secretary of State MARK RITCHIE

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Born, raised and schooled in Iowa, Ritchie has lived in Minneapolis for the past 24 years. From 1986 to 2006 he served as President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, a non-profit organization working with businesses, farm organizations and other civic groups to promote long-term sustainability. A major concern of IATP has been the effect of trade rules on farm families and rural communities. In 1994 Ritchie was a co-founder of the Global Environment and Trade Study, based at Yale University, which investigated international linkages and synergies between environment and trade. In that same year he organized a conference at Bretton Woods commemorating the 50th anniversary of the historic meetings at which the key institutions regulating global finance and trade were designed.

In 2006 Ritchie was elected as Minnesota's 21st Secretary of State. In that capacity, he oversaw the recount in the 2008 US Senate Election, a task he handled with such skill and fairness that it led to his being named by *The Nation* magazine the 2008 "Most Valuable State Official in the United States." An inspirational speaker, Ritchie's presentations combine great depths of both knowledge and passion.



MEETING RESERVATION FORM AND BALLOT

RESERVATION: Please reserve _____ places for (indicates names of those who will attend):

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

VOLUNTARY DONATION: I would also like to contribute \$ _____ to promote the work of the Minnesota Chapter of Citizens for Global Solutions. A check is enclosed.

**Please send checks, payable to "CGSMN," to Mary Rose Goetz,
1712 Humboldt Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55403.**

BALLOT (for CGS members only): Check the following spaces as you wish. I hereby cast my ballot for:

_____ all the candidates listed for the officers' posts and Board of Directors (see list on reverse of this page):

_____ all of the candidates except for the following: _____

_____ the following write-in candidates (please state position): _____

CANDIDATES FOR OFFICERS AND BOARD OF CGS, MN CHAPTER

N.B. One must be a member to vote, but does not have to attend the dinner to do so. Ballots appear at the bottom of reverse side of this page and should be sent to Mary Rose Goetz at 1712 Humboldt Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

PRESIDENT: JOE SCHWARTZBERG. A life-long peace and justice activist, Joe has served eleven years as President of the Minnesota Chapter of the World Federalist Association / Citizens for Global Solutions. He is an emeritus professor of geography at the University of Minnesota and has published and lectured extensively on UN reform. His academic specialties are South Asia, political geography and the history of cartography.

VICE-PRESIDENT: GAIL HUGHES. Gail, a present CGS Board member, teaches undergraduate global studies courses at St. Cloud State University and graduate education courses through Capella University. Her academic background is very eclectic and inter-disciplinary. She taught English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho and was a Program Evaluator for the Minnesota Community Colleges.

SECRETARY: JOHN GROOS (incumbent). Retired from Minnesota Department of Education after serving many years as Director of the State Special Education Program for handicapped children, John is a current member of the CGS Board and coordinates its "Partners" program. He feels strongly about social justice issues and is active in church and community task forces advocating social change.

TREASURER: DENNIS DILLON (incumbent). Retired after 38 years of work on educational testing and survey research and a co-founder of two companies, Dennis is active in peace, justice and sustainability pursuits for the Basilica parish, the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers (directing Peace Island project) and the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

HOSSEIN AKHAVI-POUR. Born and raised in Tehran, Iran, Hossein graduated from Tehran University and came with his family to the US in 1974 for graduate study at Kansas State University. He earned his Ph.D. in economics in 1981. He came to Minnesota in 1982 and has since taught economics at Hamline University. His major interests are in development issues and political economy.

LYLE CHRISTIANSON. Educated at Hamline University, Lyle's career was that of a minister in the United Methodist church, Now retired, he long chaired the Peace and Justice Program at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church and was President of the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers from 1996 to 1999. He has made eight trips to the Middle East on behalf of the Palestine-Israel Justice Project.

HECTOR GARCIA. After obtaining a degree in business administration in his native Mexico, Hector studied psychology and philosophy at the University of Minnesota and French in France and Canada. Now a business consultant, he has had a varied business career, has published and lectured widely on inter-cultural understanding, and has been a frequent consultant to Minnesota Governors, Senators, and Congress members of all major parties.

TED RICHTER. Now retired, Ted taught social studies and peace education for almost four decades in a Twin Cities suburban high school. He has served as President of the Minnesota Chapter of the World Federalist Association in the early 1970s, on the Advisory Board of the UNAM, and on the Board of Directors of the former Foreign Policy Association of Minnesota through which he organized seminars for high school students throughout Minnesota.

SOREN SORENSON. Originally from Bemidji, MN, Soren studied biology and computer science before traveling to Indonesia in the late 1990s to experience biodiversity. In addition to his reverence for all forms of life, he has a keen interest in international peace, humanitarian action, cross-cultural understanding and grass-roots organizing. Following the 2004 tsunami, he returned to Indonesia for many-months to assist in recovery efforts in Aceh.

Thanks to OUTGOING OFFICERS: Claude Buettner (going from President to Board) and Lee Dechert (going from Vice-President to Board); **CONTINUING OFFICERS:** John Groos (Secretary) and Dennis Dillon (Treasurer); **CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dick Bernard, Jim Nelson, Charmagne Campbell-Patton, Rosa María de la Cueva Peterson, Randy Roberts, Verlyn Smith, and Adepeju Solarin; and **OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS,** Gail Hughes (to Vice-President), Bharat Parekh, June Parrott and Joe Schwartzberg (to President).

Mark the Date!

June 17

C.G.S. Annual Dinner

Keynote Speaker

Minnesota Secretary of State

MARK RITCHIE

**“The Role of Civil Society
in Global Governance”**