



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.

DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD

Joe Schwartzberg, President

In this, my first message to you as the newly elected President of CGS’s Minnesota Chapter, it is fitting that I express the gratitude that I and all members of the Board feel for the dedicated and capable leadership of our past President, Claude Buettner. Thanks are also due to our outgoing Vice-president, Lee Dechert, and to our continuing Secretary, John Groos, and Treasurer, Dennis Dillon, as well as to the continuing Board members and those Board members who have completed three-year terms. Without their voluntarism, our chapter could not function. Well done!

As our regular readers are aware, I have been working for several years on a book entitled *Designs for a Workable World*. In our previous Newsletter I excerpted some passages from Chapter 15 on funding the UN system and provided a chapter outline for the entire work. But it occurred to me that some of you might wish to know more about the overall strategic approach that I’ve adopted. That is set forth in my introductory chapter, the first few pages of which I am including below. As of now I’ve written roughly 460 typed, single-spaced pages and expect that the entire book will come in at about 525 pages. I’ve recently begun searching for a publisher and will report more on this when and if I succeed. The main problem will be expense. Since the book will include about 40 pages of color illustrations, some of them quite detailed, I am hoping that it will be published in an 8 1/2” by 11” format. This, however, is economically problematic. So, wish me luck.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Another world is not only possible; she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.

Arundhati Roy

One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of looking at things.

Henry Miller

1.A. Objectives

The premise underlying this book is simple, namely that the design of decision-making institutions has an important bearing on the quality and legitimacy of the decisions that they make. To the extent that this simple truth is recognized, society will be inclined to

provide those institutions with greater resources and endow them with greater responsibility. Accordingly, improved designs for existing institutions and, where needed, the creation of new, well-designed institutions promise to set in motion a virtuous cycle that will contribute significantly to the gradual evolution of a more workable world.

The workable world that I envisage centers on a revitalized and substantially strengthened United Nations system. Most of the essential institutions within that system are already in place, but are not optimally constituted. In particular, their methods of allocating decision-making power typically bear little relationship to the actual power of global actors outside the arena of the UN itself. Consequently, their (continued on page 2)
DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD (continued)

fairness and even their legitimacy are often called into question. Moreover, some institutions needed for the efficient working of the UN system are absent and will have to be created. Finally, other agencies that have become obsolete or that have clearly failed to live up to the hopes and expectations of their creators will have to be eliminated.

Among the multitude of existing and proposed components of the UN system that call for critical scrutiny, this work pays particular attention to the Security Council; the General Assembly; an Economic, Social and Environmental Council (to replace what is now ECOSOC); a strengthened Human Rights Council (to replace the moribund Trusteeship Council and several other agencies); an eventual World Parliamentary Assembly; and a standing United Nations Peace Force. Other essential institutions, such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, will be more cursorily examined. Their shortcomings are not questions of design, but rather of neglect. Ways have to be found to ensure that they are used to a much greater extent than has been the case to date.

But medium and small powers are also generally inclined to pursue their parochial and short-term interests. They too tend to resist any infringements of their precious sovereignty. Their leaders often do not realize that promoting the good of the whole will generally also, in the long run, serve the good of their own nation. Nor are many willing to acknowledge the remarkable extent to which their sovereignty has already been eroded by a multitude of intrusive forces, many of which may be subsumed under the general heading of “globalization.” In short, vested interests, inertia and ignorance present powerful impediments to the realization of the agenda set forth in this work.

There are other serious problems as well. Greedy, over-ambitious and despotic leaders will continue to bully their way onto the global political stage and cause trouble in and beyond the areas under their control. Serious tensions between cultures and between individual nations will persist. Severe ethnic and religious strife, mainly intra-national, will remain endemic in much of the world. And changes will emerge within the global ecosystem about which we are still far from adequately informed, for which we are far from sufficiently prepared, and over which we will probably have little effective control.

Many of these and other problems within our complexly interconnected and astonishingly diverse global society cannot be adequately dealt with by individual nations.

Rather, they cry out for some degree of concerted regional and/or global oversight. This oversight will necessitate the evolution or refinement of norms of international behavior that establish not only the rights and responsibilities of nations, but also codify and guarantee the rights of individual human beings as well. And individual citizens must be accorded a greater role in shaping their own political destiny.

Collectively, society will have to refine and accept fair and sustainable economic and environmental standards. All of this presupposes the existence of appropriately empowered institutions designed in such a way that their decisions will be seen as legitimate, command broad international respect, and receive the political backing of the global community. This book will discuss a number of such institutions and—in keeping with the dictum that **form follows function**—it will demonstrate why the designs proposed here are appropriate for the functions that they are intended to perform.

I do not claim that any of the institutional designs put forward in this book are the only ones capable of promoting the objectives they are meant to address; and I recognize that many competing proposals have already been advanced for some of the institutions to be considered. But the ones presented here are those that I deem to be most promising, given my inevitably subjective assessments of the problems that the institutions will have to address, the political and economic environment in which they will operate, and the resources they are likely to command. Other worthy proposals will surely be forthcoming, each with its own pros and cons and likely costs and benefits; and nothing would please me more than to have my own formulations inspire others to advance alternative recommendations and to have the merits of the respective ideas seriously debated and weighed.

Some of the proposals of this work would require amendment of the UN Charter. Others would not. Oddly, some of the most important proposed changes, for example, the creation of an initially advisory World Parliamentary Assembly, would be in the latter category in that Article 22 of the Charter authorizes the General Assembly to establish such “subsidiary organs” as it deems necessary for the proper performance of its functions. On the other hand—to take a hypothetical case—expansion of the Security Council by even a single seat would require a Charter amendment. There are also proposals that would not require Charter amendment, but that would necessitate reinterpretation of that document, as has already happened on numerous occasions, for example in regard to peacekeeping, a word of which the Charter makes no mention. (continued on p. 4)

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

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

Thursday, September 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS: CEDAW AND RELATED ISSUES

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** is often described as “the international bill of rights for women.” Ratifying States (not yet including the US) commit themselves to promoting the equality of women and men, to abolishing gender-based discriminatory laws, and to establishing public institutions to ensure the protection of women against discrimination. This presentation will consider the extent to which those goals are being met in this country and elsewhere in the world.

Presenter: CHERYL THOMAS. Founder and Director of the **Women's Human Rights Program** of the Minnesota-based **Advocates for Human Rights**, Ms. Thomas has traveled widely in Central and Eastern Europe (including the former USSR), as well as in Morocco, to work with local groups and individual activists to promote women's rights. She has published extensively on violence against women and was one of 15 experts worldwide to participate in a UN Expert Group Meeting on violence-related legislation. An attorney and former partner in the firm, Briggs and Morgan, Ms. Thomas taught courses on women's human rights law at the University of Minnesota Law School from 1996 to 2002.

Women hold up half the sky. Ancient Chinese proverb

Thursday, October 21, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

“THE UNRETURNED,” THE PLIGHT OF IRAQI REFUGEES

Iraq's on-going middle-class refugee disaster is a crucial, but seldom acknowledged, reason why peace in Iraq remains so elusive. Forty percent of Iraq's professional class is now among the 4.7 million refugees displaced in neighboring countries. This is an unmitigated disaster, a shattered nation that desperately needs its native professional class to rebuild. Filmed in Syria and Jordan, and shot in the verité style, *The Unreturned* lets the displaced Iraqis speak for themselves. It vividly portrays the lives of five such individuals from different ethnicities and religions and chronicles the ways by which they cope with adversity. Discussion will follow the showing of this 70-minute film. Come early so as not to miss anything.

Presenter: NATHAN FISHER. Fisher has an MA in documentary filmmaking from the New School University in New York. His films situate individual experience within a context of broader social forces. Critically acclaimed, *The Unreturned* was voted the “best” of the 2010 Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival and was described in *City Pages* as “artful and unflinching, ... a feat of remarkable cinematic agility.” Prior to making that work, Fisher produced and co-edited *Gimme Delta*, a 2008 documentary on suburban development and urban sprawl in the San Francisco Bay area. He was recently awarded a Jerome Foundation grant for emerging artists.

PAKISTAN NEEDS YOUR HELP

The plight of as many as 20 million Pakistanis who have been displaced by the worst flooding that the area has experienced in the past eighty years is almost beyond belief. Please help bring relief if you are able to do so. Recommended agencies (in alphabetical order) to which you can contribute include the following:

AVAAZ, DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, MERCY CORPS, OXFAM, UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), and UNICEF

All you need do is Google their names, as given here, and you'll get instructions on how to contribute.

DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD (concluded)

Questions of Charter reform or reinterpretation will be addressed repeatedly in this work as need arises.

The timing for action on the changes proposed in this work would be flexible. I can see no obviously optimal, much less necessary, sequencing for their adoption, although early changes are likely to be less costly than those that are delayed. While there are also arguments in favor of a gradual approach—adopting reforms one at a time—a strong case can also be made, on grounds of synergy, for adopting multiple changes as parts of one or more integrated reform packages. For example, the creation of a United Nations Peace Force in tandem with the establishment of a United Nations Administrative Reserve Corps (to be discussed in Chapters 16 and 17 respectively) would provide each of those two agencies a greater chance of being effective than would be the case if either were to be established without the other. There is also the possibility of adopting all or most of the proposed reforms by means of a single grand constitutional process, commencing with a comprehensive review conference under the terms of Article 109 of the Charter. All things considered, a relatively gradual, piecemeal approach seems most likely at the outset. But that could well change as trust in the efficacy of a reformed UN system is generated.

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1.B. A Question of Perspective

Many recommendations in this work are predicated on the eventual acceptance of a political paradigm that gives an interpretation to the term, “sovereign equality of nations,” that is substantially different from what is now most commonly understood within the UN system. The current increasingly dysfunctional legal fiction in respect to sovereignty, originating with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, is enshrined in the “one nation-one vote” principle followed in the UN General Assembly and adhered to also in the decision-making practices of most other UN agencies. Although nations pay lip service to the principle, they frequently ignore it in practice when doing so suits their purposes and when they believe they have the capability of doing so with impunity. **The presumption of equality is, in fact, so glaringly at variance with the perceptions and behavior of nations outside the arena of the UN itself that the disjuncture seriously compromises the credibility and legitimacy of the entire UN system.**

[In the remainder of this 21-page chapter, I continue to explore the theme introduced in the preceding paragraph, then provide a chapter-by-chapter overview of the entire work, and conclude with a discussion of the conventions followed in the text, notes and illustrations.]

Henceforth, every nation’s foreign policy must be judged at every point by one consideration: does it lead to a world of law and order or does it lead us back to anarchy and death?

Albert Einstein