

**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.*

## **THE SYSTEM'S BROKEN; WE'VE GOT TO FIX IT**

**Joe Schwartzberg, President, Minnesota Chapter**

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I don't know about you, dear reader; but I find this year's electoral contests pretty depressing. Here—written in the week before the election—are some of my principal concerns:

- a) More than ever before, the current elections are an exercise in *plutocracy*, not democracy. In far too many cases—thanks to the 2010 Citizens United decision of the Supreme Court—the elections will yield “the best government that money can buy.” Unlimited funding by unaccountable campaign contributors has little to do with democracy.
- b) The four so-called “debates” between the presidential and vice-presidential candidates proved to be exercises in political theatre, pandering to the presumed interests of selected demographics. Some of the biggest issues were either skirted or totally ignored, especially in respect to global warming, our relations with the *most of* the rest of the world (Israel [mentioned 36 times in the final presidential debate], and the two bogeymen de jour Iran and China, being obvious exceptions), needed reforms of the United Nations system, the ruinous and unsustainable cost of national defense, the misguided erosion of human rights as an aspect of the so-called “War on Terrorism.”
- c) The rhetoric of candidates for national office is largely divorced from reality. America is touted as the hope of the world; the richest, freest, most virtuous nation the world has ever seen. All members of its armed forces are heroic defenders of freedom. Only by the select application of American force can we guarantee world peace. We are the “shining city upon a hill.”
- d) A way-too-large proportion of our electorate is politically unsophisticated and fails to recognize the essential truth of the foregoing observations.
- e) Collusion between the Democratic and Republican party bosses excludes third and fourth parties from the presidential debates and, more often than not, from debates for seats in Congress or state legislatures. This greatly limits the possibility that Americans will learn of realistic alternatives to the many ill-advised policies being pursued or recommended by the two dominant parties. Both major parties assume the support of their respective extreme wings and gravitate toward the political center in hopes of capturing a significant segment of the “undecided” voters. That spells death to bold reform initiatives.

- f) In that most states are regarded as clearly in the red or blue political columns and given the peculiar nature of the winner-take-all Electoral College, the presidential campaigns of both major parties are focused overwhelmingly on only nine states: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. Within that group, a few, such as Florida and Ohio, with 29 and 18 electoral votes respectively are especially prominent. But it gets worse. According to a recent Associated Press analysis, this year's presidential race could be decided by a mere 270 counties (out of a US total of 3,077) in the states named. These normally Republican counties switched to Obama in 2008. Whether or not they switch back could make all the difference.

But why all this emphasis on the *US* elections for an organization that calls itself *GlobalSolutions.org*?

For starters, despite my remarks above, I believe that our country does have the *potential* to provide the world with the enlightened leadership it so desperately needs. But to do so our country must abandon its policies of unilateralism and exceptionalism, with one set of rules for other nations and quite another for ourselves. While there is, undoubtedly, a substantial reservoir of admiration for the US, for all its political and economic accomplishments since our nation was born, our actions on the global stage, over the last generation or so, have steadily eroded the respect and trust of many of our global friends and reinforced the negative views of our enemies.

Our political system has gotten out-of-whack. What, then, can we do to fix it? Let me suggest here a few key elements of an admittedly ambitious program:

- a) We need a constitutional amendment declaring that corporations are not people and that campaign funding, while acceptable within reasonable limits, is not to be taken as an exercise of free speech.
- b) We need another amendment to do away with the Electoral College and to have the presidency go to the candidate who obtains a clear majority of the nation-wide popular vote.
- c) We need ranked-choice voting for some offices and proportional representation for multi-seat legislatures. These reforms will relieve voters from the perceived necessity of voting for the lesser of two evils, and permit the growth of minority parties and new political thinking.
- d) We need to limit the terms of Supreme Court justices to nine years (as in the ICJ), thereby facilitating the Court's changing as society itself evolves.
- e) We need educational reform, with greatly increased emphasis on civics, history and geography.

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### IN MEMORIAM: GEORGE PILLSBURY, 1921-2012

With deep regret, we note the death, on October 14 of George Pillsbury, a long time friend of the World Federalist Association and Citizens for Global Solutions, among many other organizations providing support to government, education and the arts. A great-grandson of an 1880s Minneapolis mayor, a grandson of the founder of the Pillsbury flour-milling company, George had a remarkable career, which included service as a captain in the Marine Corps in World War II, 24 years in the family milling business, service in the state senate from 1970 to 1982. Known for his integrity, he was a moderate Republican for most of his life. But he voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and, with his wife,

Sally, was a keen supporter of Jim Graves' bid to unseat 6<sup>th</sup> District incumbent Congresswoman, Michelle Bachmann.

An ardent advocate of government reform at the state level, George also took a keen interest in the work of our chapter President, Joe Schwartzberg in respect to UN reform. He was also the top bidder in last year's CGS auction of a stained-glass window bearing an image of the UN flag with a surrounding inscription, **"World Peace through World Law with Justice."** The window now graces the Connecticut home of his son, Charles, a conscientious objector and conflict mediator.

# 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, November 15, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

**A NEW APPROACH TO PEACEKEEPING.** The UN deploys more than 100,000 military peacekeepers to conflict zones around the world, at a cost of \$8 Billion a year. These UN ‘blue helmets’ have saved many lives and have often helped create the stability needed for lasting peace. But is there a more effective, more acceptable – and cheaper – way to do this? Nonviolent Peaceforce, an international non-profit, started in the Twin Cities, now deploys nearly 200 ‘civilian peacekeepers’ to countries like South Sudan, the Philippines, Georgia, Sri Lanka and, very soon, Burma. NP and similar groups challenge the idea that only military personnel can keep the peace or protect civilians in war. A peace agreement just signed in the Philippines was made possible, in part, by the official ceasefire monitoring provided by the Nonviolent Peaceforce. This talk will explain how *civilian* peacekeepers really can reduce violence and protect civilians and why this approach is at the forefront of how the world will deal with violent conflicts in the future.

**Presenter: Dr Timmon Wallis.** Dr Wallis, Executive Director of Nonviolent Peaceforce, is a leading authority on ‘unarmed civilian peacekeeping’. He has a PhD in Peace Studies from Bradford University in England and has spent all his adult life working in this field. He has done civilian peacekeeping in Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Chechnya, Bosnia, Croatia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines and has trained field staff for a number of NGOs as well as for the European Union. He has served as executive of Peace Brigades International as well as of Nonviolent Peaceforce.

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**December 21:** Because of the conflict with the holiday season, there will be no forum in December.

**January 17 and February 21, 2013:** Although the details have yet to be finalized, our speakers for these two dates have already been determined. In January, **Jane Kirtley**, Professor of law and journalism at the University of Minnesota will provide a global perspective on the general topic of **freedom of the press**; in February, Dean **Christy Hanson**, Dean of the Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College, former WHO staff worker or director of numerous UN. and US public health agencies, will speak on some aspect of **global health**. Fuller information will appear in our January Newsletter.

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## HOW OTHERS SEE US

It is not easy to see yourself as others see you; but making the effort: can be instructive. Consider, for example, the following transmission from John Sutter, a Californian Democratic World Federalist.

*“O wad some power the giftie gie us To see oursel's as ithers see us!”--Robert Burns*

Here’s a glimpse of how many Russians (among others) see the U.S.A:

### MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION REPORT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### Introduction:

The human rights situation in the United States of America has provoked serious concerns within the international community, American NGOs and mass media.

The present report is based upon verified information from authoritative international and national sources and summarizes broad factual information on multiple, including systemic, problems related to the human rights observance that the American society faces.

(continued)

In the USA, among the most grave challenges are growing social inequality, racial, ethnic and religious discrimination, continuing detention of prisoners without charges presented, partial justice, prisons operating outside the legal field, torturing, governmental authorities influencing judicial processes, weak penitentiary system, restraint of freedom of speech, Internet censorship, legalized corruption, limitation of electoral rights of citizens, racial and ethnical intolerance, infringing children's rights, extraterritorial application of American law which leads to infringing human rights in other countries, kidnapping, "witch-hunt", disproportionate use of force against peaceful manifestations, death penalty applied to underage and mentally disabled offenders, etc.

That being said, the international legal obligations of the USA are still limited to participation in three (1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1984 Convention against Torture)

out of nine basic treaties on human rights that provide for control mechanisms. The USA has not yet ratified the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Such a situation makes a drastic contrast with the ambitions of the USA to become a global leader in the protection of democratic values, shows the double standard attitude actively used by the USA authorities and requires effective measures to resolve the large-scale problems that exist in the humanitarian and human rights areas in accordance with the international obligations of the USA....

This, of course, is a clear case of the pot calling the kettle black. But, granting that the human rights situation in Russia is far worse than in the United States, what part of the above characterization of us is false? [I can find no factual errors in the quoted passage.](#)

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For an inspiring story about a family's multi-generational commitment to civic responsibility, we recommend *The Pillsburys of Minnesota*, Cambridge, MN: Nodin Press, 2011, co-authored by George Pillsbury and Lori Sturdevant.

### **GlobalSolutions.org**

(formerly the World Federalist Association)

5492 Bald Eagle Blvd. E.

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

[www.globalsolutionsmn.org](http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org).

**You are invited to explore Joe**

**Schwartzberg's website:**

[www.JosephSchwartzberg.org](http://www.JosephSchwartzberg.org).

America is much more than a geographic fact. It is political and moral fact. - the first community in which men set out in principle to institutionalize freedom, responsible government and human equality.

**Adlai Stevenson**