



The WorldVoter

the newsletter of

Vote World Government

— democratic world government through a global referendum —

www.VoteWorldGovernment.org

Vote World Government President is Jim Stark; Vice President is Ted Stalets

www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com

This site, above, is for the new book *Rescue Plan for Planet Earth*

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(This issue and all previous issues are posted at www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com)

Quotes of the month

***Rescue Plan for Planet Earth* is a triumph. It belongs in a class with Thomas Paine's "Common Sense."** John Kintree, St. Louis Public Library

Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors. Jonas Salk

If given a choice between what we have now—a hodgepodge of uncoordinated, contested, non-representative, under-resourced international organizations and institutions of “global governance”—and what we could have—a democratic world “government”—I am convinced that the vast majority of humanity would choose the latter. The problem has been that this choice has not been available ... until now. The global referendum on democratic world government offers a means for humanity to make such a choice. James P. Muldoon Jr., *The Architecture of Global Governance: An Introduction to the Study of International Organizations*

If we cast our minds ahead into the future, and ponder our past history, it becomes totally obvious that a civilized planet like ours must have a democratic world government. Future generations will be surprised that it took us so long. Guy Dauncey, *Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change*

We need to promote the democratization of globalization before globalization destroys the foundations of national and international democracy. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

News in brief

Obama wins Nobel Peace Prize

It's hard to add anything new to the vast amount of reaction, both positive and negative, to the announcement that U.S. President **Barack Obama** has won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. However, if he wants Middle East peace and a world free of nuclear weapons, he is going to have to look beyond traditional multilateralism and bite the real bullet, the need for **UN Charter reform** and eventually the creation of a supranational body—a **democratic world government**, to put a finer point on it—that has the power to legislate solutions to intractable problems. The negative reactions to this Nobel surprise mostly say, “What has he done to deserve it, aside from not being **George W. Bush**?” It needs to be said that the new president is at least saying the right words, and that is a huge improvement over the USA of 2000 - 2008. While this award does focus mainly on Obama's aspirations rather than on his accomplishments, let us hope that at the end of his time in office, the two are congruent.

WATUN preparing for first Council meeting in New York City

The new **World Alliance for the Transformation of the United Nations** (WATUN) is now preparing for its first Council meeting in New York City, scheduled for October 25. The Council is made up (so far) of 29 or so representatives from around the world, and more are expected to be added soon. Vote World Government is a member-NGO of WATUN, and wishes to do everything possible to assist in its growth and effectiveness. Assuming that the resolution supporting the global referendum on democratic world government is confirmed (see September issue of *The WorldVoter*), we are even prepared to negotiate a transfer of “**ownership**” of the referendum initiative to WATUN (our main people would stay involved so as to preserve continuity and to help WATUN however we can to make sure the referendum gets completed as soon as possible). It would be difficult to let go of control after more than five years of work building the project to its present state, but it is the right thing to do, just as it is the right thing to do for all nation-states to surrender the minimum amount of sovereignty necessary to allow for the effective functioning of a real global authority, which must legislate on global issues and make world law “stick” when such pressure is needed. VWG president **Jim Stark** is expected to take part in the October 25 meeting, although his participation is expected to be by an electronic hook-up of some sort. The details are not yet worked out, but as **Shahriar Sharei** (VP of Democratic World Federalists in California, WATUN Executive Committee Member, Provisional WATUN WEB Administrator) recently said in an email: “If we want to solve global problems we must eventually handle this problem also.”

Kintree sets up new site

John Kintree, one of our long-time supporters (see review quote, top of page), has set up a new website called **Citizen of Planet Earth** (www.citizenofplanetearth.org/voters.php).

It deals with our global referendum on DWG as well as other issue-based referendums on a global scale. His site is worth a look.

UN accused of “abandoning democracy”

“The firing of its No. 2 official in Afghanistan shows how far the world body will go to cover up the fraudulent August election,” says **Nipa Banerjee**, former head of Canada’s aid program in Kabul (2003-06). Ms. Banerjee now teaches international development at the University of Ottawa. Her article (*Ottawa Citizen*, October 4, 2009) can be found at <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/opinion/op-ed/abandoned+democracy/2067117/story.html>

Editorial, by Jim Stark

The best defence is *not* a good offence! It is law!

There is an 18th Century English proverb that goes: “The best defence is a good offence.” The absurdity of this maxim becomes self-evident when one tosses nuclear weapons into the mix, at which time the best offence amounts to planetary suicide. And yet this maxim continues to be used by all sorts of people who want to justify preparations for an attack, or justify the attack itself, at which time it becomes a “preemptive” attack, which means it isn’t really aggression, you see ... just a form of defence.

One of the main jobs of any democratic world government will be to mediate and resolve conflicts before they become “hot.” Outlawing war in world law is the obvious first step, but it is just the beginning. Having done that, the DWG and the parties in dispute have to assume that there is an effective non-violent solution, apply whatever resources and time are required to find and negotiate that solution, and then legislate it, backed up by a range of coercive measures (starting with sanctions and hopefully never going as far as military intervention) that would be applied to any partner, nation-state or otherwise, that fails to respect or live up to the terms of the legislated solution.

The “mental” aspect of this problem is not difficult to understand. As I wrote in a 2001 article:

When it comes to armed violence, there are very few unapologetic conquerors any more. In recent decades, every side of every conflict justifies its mayhem as self-defence. In Vietnam, no one was a proud aggressor. The North Vietnamese were simply *defending* themselves against an American invasion, and South Vietnam was just *defending* itself against an invasion by North Vietnam, and the Americans were *defending* freedom and democracy against a world-wide Communist conspiracy. In the current Iraq-Afghanistan conflict, the U.S. and its allies see themselves as *defending* against a terrorist conspiracy. But the “evil-doers,” as George W. Bush likes to call them, explain that their attack was a mere *retaliation* (i.e., “defence”) against American foreign policies, such as the economic sanctions applied to Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait, which caused hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians to die, many of them children, or the USA’s support of Israel, a country which came into being when Jews militarily took most of what had been Palestine away from the Palestinians and left them without a country. To the Palestinians (and many other Arabs), American foreign policy is a “terrorist conspiracy,” and while we in the West reeled in horror at the wanton slaughter of September 11, the “other side” does have the far larger body count, which they

believe proves their point, and justifies their aggressions. It doesn't, of course, but they *believe* that it does, and that's what matters most here. In the language of every school of strategic studies, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom-fighter." It's all a matter of perspective—and quite confusing. In the final analysis, there is one inescapable conclusion: human beings are not always particularly rational, and when you combine irrationality with modern technology, it should surprise no one that we have ended up, as a species, in *very* serious trouble!

A young Muslim recently pled guilty to charges of conspiring to bomb several places in Canada. We are very fortunate to have an explanation of how he rationalized his intended actions. He went online, saw images of Muslims being abused around the world, became increasingly angry, and eventually decided that the best way he could serve Allah was to kill a bunch of Canadians, whom he felt would do just fine as his victims, as they sort of represented all non-Muslims, who were defined in his mind as his oppressors, and as his "enemies."

"The best defence is a good offence," remember? To this man, what he was planning was not particularly different from what brave citizens did in the French "underground" when France was occupied by Nazis in the early 1940s. No one would argue seriously against a person's right to defend himself or herself, so as soon as you can define yourself as a real victim, or as a member of a victimized group, any aggression you plan or execute is mere pushback, a legitimate response to grave injustice, a "defence," sort of. And the beat goes on.

I remember my parents telling my brother and me that fighting wasn't allowed, no matter what. By virtue of the fact that parents are responsible for kids, they got to "lay down the law." It seemed unfair, but I now realize that they were right—as far as they went. They didn't go far enough, though. I think the end of that frequent lecture should have been: "If you have complaints about each other we'll sit down as a family and hear them and find a solution other than fist-fighting so we can all get back to normal family life." As kids, my siblings and I understood that our parents had the authority to insist, and at some level, I think I remember realizing back then that as a child, I had a lot to learn before I could be loosed on the world as an autonomous adult, and it was a good thing to have parents who would intervene as needed when things got wild. And best of all, as long as I resisted the temptation to beat up my brother (or anyone else), I was free to do as I pleased in almost every other respect.

A democratic world government will have to take exactly that stand if we are to get past war and eliminate nuclear weapons and find a way to accommodate each other's beliefs. The best defence against violence is *not* a good offence. It is law! And the best (arguably the only) defence against war is world law, *enforceable* world law, to put a finer point on it. For that to work, nothing short of a democratic world government will do. And for all of that to happen, there must first be a directly-elected world parliament with authority to act on "global issues," which means the surrender of a small amount of sovereignty by all nation-states to a new and democratic worldwide institution.

I can see no way around this formula, and that's entirely okay. Even George H.W. Bush saw the light when he said: "We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and

for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.” Most unfortunately, and like my parents, he also failed to finish that discourse. To do all that he said was desirable and achievable, George H.W. Bush would have had to add that other part about every nation surrendering a bit of its sovereignty to a new world authority. And I have no doubt whatsoever that he failed to go that far not because he was uninformed or didn’t think it through; he failed to mention this critical aspect because in the American culture, to do so would have been tantamount to treason. If this odd brain cramp doesn’t (finally) get sorted out, and this comprehensive course of action doesn’t get launched, there is likely no future for humanity or the planet. Let us hope that Nobel Laureate Barack Obama can see his way through this ancient and deadly dilemma. He has the audacity to hope, and now we need him to have the audacity to spell out reality and the audacity to do what it will take to get us from here to there. A global referendum on democratic world government is a necessary starting point, and if it passes strongly, that mandate would serve as the foundation for a future without war and without the existential threats posed by nuclear weapons, climate change and the like.

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Jim Stark is the president of Vote World Government, an NGO dedicated to launching a global referendum on democratic world government (www.voteworldgovernment.org or www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com; 120 authors now support the global referendum—the list is at www.voteworldgovernment.org/authorscampaign.shtml)