

ute for Establishing Universal Peace



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A Democratic Path to Peace

Excerpted from Taking Democracy Global: Assessing the Benefits and Challenges of a Global Parliamentary Assembly (2005)

By Andrew Strauss

The global system is not democratically organized. Niceties aside, it consists of the most powerful political and economic elites from the world's most powerful states meeting behind closed doors to make planetary decisions. The current model for world governance is akin to the loose coordination often associated with rival criminal "families," or perhaps war lords in failed states, than it is to accepted standards of democratic decision-making. For the spirit of democracy to survive, much less flourish, in a globalized world, it is crucial that the international system be democratized. A Global Parliamentary Assembly (GPA) is becoming increasingly desirable.

The most serious single deficiency of the global system is its propensity for political violence. The Twentieth Century was the most bloody in human history. For us not to repeat this dismal record, we need to search out alternatives to the war system of conflict resolution.

The GPA would offer disaffected citizens a constructive alternative to terrorism and other forms of political violence. Those angry about perceived injustices or by global silence about their grievances would be less likely to feel forced to choose between surrender and the adoption of desperate tactics. Citizens would be able to stand for office, champion candidates and form coalitions to lobby the parliament. Those with diverse or opposing views would be brought into a give and-take setting that would improve the chances for compromise and reconciliation. Because a parliamentary process has the ability to confer popular legitimacy

on a policy position, even those with extreme agendas will often be drawn into the process

A GPA would counter the vitality of anti-democratic extremists such as Al Qaeda. One important feature of the liberal parliamentary process has been a capacity to assimilate even those who do not share a pre-existing commitment to democracy.

A GPA would provide a democratic substitute to achieving national security through domination and violence. In a GPA there would be no unified states to counter, contain, or even attack other states. Rather, as occurs in other multinational parliaments, delegates would break national ranks to vote along lines of interest and ideology. Thus, fluid transnational parliamentary coalitions could begin to supplant conflict, including armed conflict, among states.

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The UN Culture of Peace

Seventy-eight years ago, 51 countries pledged to move beyond the parochial nation-state system to form the United Nations (UN). They promised "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace."

Yet, almost immediately the United States formed its highly secretive Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that used acts of war to overthrow governments around the world. By the 1980s, the CIA had effectively taken over US military policy with its own private armies starting wars in Central America and Africa.

Now, after 192 countries have made the UN pledge. Russia — a UN Security Council Member — has ignored its UN promise by invading Ukraine. The Security Council makes the United Nations a non-democratic institution with a cabal of the World's most powerful nations exercising a veto over any action the UN takes.

As, Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second Secretary-General, wisely stated, "The United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell."

In service to that purpose the UN has long supported and advocated for establishing a Culture of Peace. Championed by long-time Diplomat Anuraj K Chowdhury, *The Declaration on a Culture of Peace* calls on the entire United Nations system — all governments and all peoples — to work together to build a freer, fairer and more peaceful global neighborhood through "a positive, dynamic, participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation."

Unfortunately, the Culture of Peace will never become a reality until all global governance organizations operate democratically, and all people come together to form a democratic global institution with jurisdiction over global issues from war to climate change.



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