

F *rcing Change*

Creating a “Faith-Based” United Nations

by Carl Teichrib



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When wrong suppositions are employed, wrong results are guaranteed.

It has been famously stated that our world is undergoing a “clash of civilizations,”¹ and in some respects this may be true.² Religion, which is viewed by many as the primary cause of warfare and general unrest, situated in the middle of this equation.³

Under this scenario, the obvious alternative to the “clash of religions” is to unite faith communities around common denominators – thus overcoming the divisions that drive humanity to war. Today’s global interfaith movement takes this approach, as does Ken Wilber of BeliefNet.com.

Postulating this idea of religious unity in light of religion’s historical war burden, Wilber explains,

“If humanity is ever to cease its swarming hostilities and be united in one family, without squashing the significant and important differences among us, then something like an integral approach seems the only way. Until that time, religions will continue to brutally divide humanity, as they have throughout history, and not unite, as they must if they are to be a help, not a hindrance, to tomorrow’s existence.”⁴

So what does it mean to be religiously “united in one family” and engaging in some type of “integral approach”?

Marcus Braybrooke, president of the World Congress of Faiths, explores this theme in his

Articles to Watch for in Upcoming Issues of *Forcing Change*

- ▶ Cult of Green: The UN Earth Sabbath
- ▶ Utopian Politics: International Socialism and the Rise of Global Governance
- ▶ Fundamental Fears: Biblical Christianity as a Factor in Global Instability
- ▶ Toward a Single International Currency
- ▶ Education for the Future: UNESCO and Seven Complex Lessons

book, *Faith and Interfaith in a Global Age*,

“My hope – though certainly not the hope of all in the interfaith movement – remains that dialogue will eventually bring convergence or, at least, that theology will become an inter-religious discipline or ‘global theology’.”⁵

The German Catholic theologian Hans Küng describes a similar pan-spiritual unification in his Preface to Oxtoby’s book *The Meaning of Other Faiths*, “after intra-Protestant and intra-Christian ecumenism we have irrevocably reached the third ecumenical dimension, ecumenism of the world religions!”⁶ And John Davis and Naomi Rice, both connected to Coptic Fellowship International, tells us that “the ultimate objective is a fellowship of religions, and the gradual appearance of a world-faith, which in its broader concept will be able to encompass all humanity.”⁷

The unification of religions, or the creation of some type of integrated “World Faith” system, is by no means a new concept. Back in 1893 this line of reasoning was embraced during the first World’s Parliament of Religions,⁸ and it has since become a central pillar in the modern interfaith movement.

For example: On June 22, 2005, the United Nations hosted a groundbreaking one-day inter-religious event titled the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace. Even though the conference was small by UN standards, it officially drew significant international players into the global interfaith agenda, including government reps from sixteen countries. Some of the participating leaders from the United Nations, World Bank, religious groups, and prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) included,

- ▶ Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General (represented at the event by Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Planning).
- ▶ Jean Ping, President of the UN General Assembly.

- ▶ Munir Akram, President of the UN Economic and Social Council.
- ▶ Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (invited but unable to personally attend, he still sent a special message of solidarity).
- ▶ Sarah Titchen, UNESCO Programme Specialist for Culture in New York.
- ▶ Ramu Damodaran, Chief of the Civil Society Service Outreach Division, United Nations Department of Public Information.
- ▶ Adnan Amin, Director of Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Environment Programme.
- ▶ Katherine Marshall, Director and Counselor to the President of the World Bank.
- ▶ Pauline Muchina, Representative of the Anglican Consultative Council (with a message from the Archbishop of Canterbury)
- ▶ Andrea Bartoli, Director at the Center for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University and representing the Holy See.
- ▶ Laurence Bropleh, Permanent Representative to the UN, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches.
- ▶ Bani Dugal, Representative of the Baha’i International Community to the UN.
- ▶ William Vendley, General Secretary of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.
- ▶ Hiro Sakurai, President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN.⁹

Why bother listing the primary players of this UN interfaith event? Because of the scope of propagation this list represents – the interfaith bridging of three distinct groups: governments, United Nations agencies, and NGOs.

The purpose of this conference, which is visible in its title, was to propel the world peace/interfaith agenda to a more substantial level. By its nature this is a *political* move. As Jean Ping, President of the UN General Assembly explained,



“If religions have contributed to the peace of the world, we have also to recognize that they have been used to create division and fuel hostilities. Fanaticism and adherence to exclusive ideologies, both religious

and secular, have challenged religious communities, governments and international relations for centuries.

It is important that in building our civilizations, we enhance interfaith cooperation among governments, civil society, and the United Nations system...

The quest for peace and justice, and the need to overcome violence, binds religions, governments and the UN together.”¹⁰

Reporting on the event, the Bahá’í International Community hit the target in terms of the larger idea; “The key to interfaith harmony and co-operation is to focus on the essential oneness of all religions.”¹¹ Why? Because the quest for “world peace” irrevocably links politics and religion into a new global framework.

Towards this interfaith-political quest for global unity, Ambassador Munir Akram, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), told conference attendees, “Faith is also a powerful instrument for social – and political mobilization – to achieve collective goals.”¹²

Taking all of this in context, a disturbing picture comes into view: The creation of an international “Faith-based initiative,” á la United Nations’ style. This was further emphasized in the outcome of the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace when it was announced that a new UN organization would be created: the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace.

Formed as a *Troika*, the organization is steered by a tripartite group composed of national government ties, the United Nations system, and select NGOs. The role of the Tripartite Forum and its Troika is to build on the existing interfaith momentum and help solidify this inter-religious agenda within the global community.

Speaking at the first anniversary of the Tripartite Forum on March 23, 2007, Mr. Hilario G. Davide (Jr.), Permanent Representative of the Philippines, reviewed the scope and importance of this work,

“In a very real sense, we celebrate the first birthday anniversary of a unique child, a special gift to the world: a child born out of a universal love for justice and passion for peace and from global interfaith, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue, understanding and cooperation...

...New challenges to peace, development and the promotion of human dignity seem to elude many traditional ways of addressing them. The Tripartite Forum represents one of the creative approaches to deal with these modern day challenges, by addressing these challenges through a multi-pronged fashion that seeks to mobilize the involvement of all stakeholders, in particular the faith communities.

The Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, held in New York on 22 June 2005 gave birth to the Tripartite Forum. I must at this point acknowledge with deep appreciation the collective efforts of the original group of governments that convened the Conference and nurtured the blossoming of our initiative, namely, Argentina, Bangladesh, Ecuador, The Gambia, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Spain, Thailand and Tunisia, in cooperation with three UN bodies, UNESCO, UNDESA and the World Bank, and with the 110 religious NGOs at the UN.

Interfaith dialogue has gained growing interest world-wide and is recognized by the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Asia-Europe Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum. It is currently the flagship project of UNESCO for the biennium 2006-2007; it was noted in the 2005 World Summit Outcome; and served as one of the premises in the creation of the Human Rights Council. More importantly, it gave impetus to the unanimous adoption by the UN General Assembly at its 62nd session of the resolution entitled “Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation” introduced by Pakistan and the Philippines and co-sponsored by over 50 countries.

Several UN agencies have been cooperating with faith communities in the discharge of their mandates – UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP, the World Bank, among others. Civil society has been active in the promotion of interfaith dialogue and cooperation, notably, the World Conference on Religions for Peace, the Temple of Understanding, United Religions Initiative and a host of other important organizations....

...May I conclude by inviting you all to consider enriching the open-ended activities of the Tripartite Forum, in keeping with one of the conclusions of the High Level Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, that “*interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace is no longer an option but a must.*”¹³ [italics in original]

On September 21, 2006, the Tripartite Forum held a second round of its high level meetings on the global interfaith agenda. Thirty-three official government representatives were in attendance, along with leaders from major inter-religious organizations such as the United Religions Initiative.

Commenting at this conference, Dr. John Gray-

zel, of the Baha’i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland, told attendees that,

“If the religious organizations of the world were to unite they could initiate a new global response group on ready alert to step forward at the first appearance of contention, conflict, or misunderstanding. This group could bring to the conscience of all, regardless of any disagreements and apparent divergence of interest, a level of reflection that recognizes humanity’s common origin and, fundamentally, common faith.”¹⁴

Alberto Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and Chairman of the Forum, expressively placed the burden of war-guilt on religions, emphasizing the motivation for religions unity. “Some of the atrocities, violence and problems which the world encounters rest squarely at the doors of proponents of varied religious orientations.”¹⁵

So is the creation of a UN styled “Faith-based initiative” a stretch? Not at all: already the United Nations and the larger world community have put in place a whole series of important inter-religious stepping stones leading the world down that path.

Consider these developments,

- Each of the successive Parliament of the World’s Religions (1993, 1999 and 2004) have thrust the interfaith agenda still deeper into society’s spotlight. During the 2004 Parliament, commitments were made to impact global political decision-making via a unified interfaith lobbying influence. In fact, the Parliament has gained so much in terms of actual impact that cities around the world now bid against each other in the hopes of hosting this prestigious “Olympics” of religions.¹⁶

- The United Religions Initiative – a world-wide interfaith organization working at the

grassroots level and within the international community – was modeled around United Nations lines with UN approval.¹⁷ Today, the URI plays an important role in advancing global interfaith-political concepts.

- During the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit, hundreds of religious leaders from around the globe converged at the UN in the hopes of finding an interfaith answer to the problem of “world peace.” The outcome of this Summit: creation of The World Council of Religious Leaders. According to the WCRL Charter, the aim of this body is to “serve as a model and guide for the creation of a community of world religions.” The WCRL also acts as a spiritual resource to assist the United Nations towards a united human community and “just world society.”¹⁸

Remember, much of the push towards interfaith political work is drawn from the thinking that religion and war are deeply entwined – which explains the continued call for “world peace” and a “just world society” so often heard at interfaith events.

Describing this spiritual/political convergence in light of the religion-war-interfaith loop, Frank Kaufmann, Executive Director of the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace (an organization founded by Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon), suggested in 1998 the creation of an empowered global body that “sits above religions at an international or interreligious level.”¹⁹

Kaufmann explained,

“...this organization would have the community of religions operate in such a way that they would want to expose, bring censure, and put pressure on religions that are acting contrary to the cooperative nature of the body.”

Does the creation of an internationally coercive religious-political body sound like a benevolent approach to world peace?

Even looked at superficially, the appearance of a centralist approach to “religious order” cannot be missed. One cannot help note that a globally centralized, politically involved “Faith-Based Community” has the real potential to become much more than just overly bureaucratic – it holds the seeds of a new form of religious collectivism; an international faith-based “Soviet.”

Wrong Assumptions, Wrong Peace



When wrong suppositions are employed, wrong results are guaranteed. Consider the following erroneous assumptions in the interfaith-political spider-web.

1. That religion is fundamentally to blame for the worst atrocities and conflicts in human history.

As already demonstrated in the *Forcing Change* essay, “Under War’s Bloody Banner” [go to the

free article section at www.forcingchange.org], this assumption is devastatingly misleading and factually incorrect.

While religions today and historically have been culpable (Islam is a prime example in both modern and ancient contexts²⁰), religion has not been the *prime cause* in every instance of war and strife, nor even in the most extraordinary cases of the 20th century. Remember, the greatest butchers and blood shed of the last one hundred years occurred under the *communist* regimes of Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, and Pol Pot (who killed a quarter to a third of his own countrymen), and through the horrendous actions of national socialist, Adolf Hitler.

Embracing this war-religion-interfaith-peace circuit as fact, the quest for world harmony already finds itself building on a shaky foundation.

2. A global governance format, which marries the interfaith movement within the international political community, will achieve world peace.

This assumption takes two forms: An outright political/religious “management” regime, as suggested by Kaufmann. Or an organized international pressure system that lobbies for policy changes at the national, regional, and global level. Either way it’s the infusion of power in a centralist fashion – and centralist political systems have an atrocious track record when it comes to peace.²¹

No matter if this governance system is couched as “global democracy,” and the religious side as a new “global ethic,” the bottom line is that a hybrid political/religious arrangement comes into play. Blend these two and you have a faith-based international political initiative, the legitimizing and empowerment of global governance, and the enforcing of peace in the name of tolerance.

And peace enforced is no peace at all.

3. That all religions are equally valid and hold to the same essential truths, and that spirituality can operate under a common set of planetary norms.

The above assumption lies at the heart of the larger interfaith movement. Yet this postulation flies in the face of anthropology, sociology, history, and *theology*. The belief sets of Hinduism and Christianity are fundamentally at odds, as are the theological standings of Islam verses Buddhism, Animism verses Judaism, etc. Furthermore, the concept that all religions are “equally valid” is logically inconsistent.

A number of years ago while on a fact-finding assignment, I attended a global interfaith event in St. Petersburg, Florida. During an afternoon coffee break the discussion on religious “equality and validity” suddenly came to a stop when one of the advocating participants attempted to apply logic to the interfaith principle.

“What are we going to do,” he asked, “about cults-of-death and Satanism?”

All discussion ground to a halt, and everyone around the coffee table looked sheepish. No doubt, each person understood intuitively that the interfaith position of equality and religious validity just ran into a brick wall.

This shouldn’t have come as a surprise, after all, many religious systems exist that are socially repulsive – even in our “golden age” of tolerance. For example, Satanism, as advocated by the Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, preaches a religion of complete self-indulgence and self-gratification. *The Satanic Bible*, authored by LaVey, proudly boasts “I am mine own redeemer.”²² Moreover, this type of ego-theism leaves little room for social compassion. As *The Satanic Bible* says,

“Blessed are the strong, for they shall possess the earth – Cursed are the weak, for they shall inherit the yoke! Blessed are the power-



ful, for they shall be revered among men – Cursed are the feeble, for they shall be blotted out!...Blessed are the iron-handed, for the unfit shall flee before them – Cursed are the poor in spirit, for they shall be spat upon!... Blessed are those that believe in what is best for them...Cursed are the ‘lambs of God,’ for they shall be bled whiter than snow!”²³

Contrast this with Biblical Christianity that teaches to love our neighbours *and* our enemies,²⁴ and to care for the sick and weak,²⁵ and we see that the differences couldn’t be more vivid. Furthermore, as opposed to self-redemption, Christianity recognizes the sinful nature of Man²⁶ and that salvation is only attained through the finished work of Jesus Christ.²⁷

The dissimilarities between these two religions couldn’t be starker. *Fundamental* differences exist not only between the “cult of self” and Christianity, but between all religions. Yet, during the 2005 UN interfaith peace conference, the President of ECOSOC outright stated, “The basic tenets of all faiths and cultures are fundamentally similar...”²⁸

Not only is this an incorrect assumption, it’s an assertion that builds upon the politically charged global governance concept. As quoted earlier by ECOSOC President Munir Akram, “Faith is also a powerful instrument for social – and political mobilization – to achieve collective goals.”²⁹

Taken together, these erroneous political/religious ideals can only lead to an erroneous conclusion. World peace cannot be built upon political centralization, which by its nature requires an amassing, holding, and wielding of power – an historically provable antithesis to peace and liberty. Nor can a World Faith/UN “Faith-Based” platform be the answer, unless it too becomes ultimately coercive and debasing.

The hand of man cannot achieve world peace. This fact doesn’t give license to war mongering or hopelessness, it simply points to the reality of our Human situation: and to the dangers of enforcing utopian dreams.

So what *would* happen if a global political/faith-based arrangement came into existence, putting into play an internationally recognized and enforced interfaith system?

Contemplating such a scenario reminds me of an old communist maxim. “Peace is the destruction of all opposition.” **FC**

Endnotes:

¹Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1996/97). Huntington proposed that the conflicts arising in the post-Cold War world would be primarily fuelled by cultural and religious concepts. In 1928, Leonard Woolf wrote a short volume titled *Imperialism and Civilization*, which also outlines the idea of a “clash of civilizations.” Woolf fingers imperialism as the chief player in this clash; “Though racial and religious conflicts seem on the surface to be the vital factors, they really only disguise the much more fundamental problem of the clash of civilizations. They are not the causes, but symptoms of a disease which is afflicting humanity in so many parts of the world. It is not race, religion, or nationalism, but the collision and maladjustment of different civilizations under the impulse of imperialism...” (p.22)

²Tony Blankley’s book, *The West’s Last Chance: Will We Win the Clash of Civilization?* (Regnery, 2005), outlines the clash between Islam and Western ideals. Other books, such as Dave Hunt’s *Judgment Day: Islam, Israel and the Nations* (Berean Call, 2005), also detail the rise of Islam and it’s antagonistic approach to Christianity, Israel, and Western philosophical concepts of liberty.

³See the article, “Under War’s Bloody Banner” in the *Forcing Change* free article section for a review of this religion-war cyclic argument.

⁴Ken Wilber, “Why Do Religions Teach Love and Yet Cause So Much War,” www.beliefnet.com/story/147/story_14762.html. BeliefNet column. Accessed November 17, 2005.

⁵Marcus Braybrooke, *Faith and Interfaith in a Global Age* (CoNexus, 1998), pp.15-16.

⁶Hans Küng, Preface to Willard G. Oxtoby’s, *The Meaning of Other Faiths* (The Westminster Press, 1983), p.10.

⁷John Davis and Naomi Rice, *Messiah and the Second Coming* (Coptic Press, 1982), p.111.

⁸See *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World’s Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Open Court, 1993).

⁹United Nations Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, June 22, 2005, Conference Room #4 at the United Nations Headquarters, Conference Program (on file).

¹⁰Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, President of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly at the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, June 22, 2005. Speech on file.

¹¹Bahá’í International Community, “At the UN, governments and religious NGOs convene a peace conference,” *One Country*,

April-June 2005, p.14.

¹²Ambassador Munir Akram, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), speaking at the United Nations Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, June 22, 2005. Speech on file.

¹³Message of H.E. Mr. Hilario G Davide, Jr. Permanent Representative of the Philippines on the occasion of the First Anniversary of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, 23 March 2007, www.tripartiteinterfaithforum.org/state-ments%202007/davide.htm.

¹⁴“UN forum sees interfaith dialogue as essential to peace,” Bahai World News Service, www.bahaiworldnews.org/story/484.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Carl Teichrib, “An Inside Look at the Global Interfaith Agenda,” *Hope For The World Update*, Spring 2001, p.4-6. See also “Re-Creating Eden” at www.gracesite.net/Articles.htm.

¹⁷See Carl Teichrib, “Blending of the Gods: The United Religions Initiative Global Charter Signing” and other articles on the global interfaith movement in various issues of *Hope For The World Update*. See also Gary H. Kah, *The New World Religion: The Spiritual Roots of Global Government* (Hope International Publishing, 1999), and *The August Review*, Volume 8, Issue 5, “Global Religion for Global Governance,” at www.augustreview.com.

¹⁸The World Council of Religious Leaders, *WCRL Charter*, chapter two, www.millenniumpeacesummit.com/chapter2.html. (Accessed November 21, 2005).

¹⁹Frank Kaufmann (Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace), “Religious Wars and World Peace,” a speech delivered at the International Coalition for Religious Freedom Conference on Religious Freedom and the New Millennium, Washington DC, April 17-19, 1998. Kaufmann’s speech can be read at www.religious-freedom.com/Conference/Dc/kaufmann.htm.

²⁰See Dave Hunt, *Judgement Day: Islam, Israel and the Nations* (The Berean Call, 2005) and Dore Gold, *Hatred’s Kingdom* (Regnery Publishing, 2003).

²¹See R.J. Rummel, *Death By Government* (Transaction Publishers, 1994).

²²Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (Avon, 1969), p.33.

²³Ibid., p.34.

²⁴Matthew 5:43-44 and Matthew 19:19.

²⁵Matthew 25:31-40.

²⁶Romans 3:23.

²⁷See John 14:6, Romans 3:21-26, Acts 4:8-13, etc.

²⁸Ambassador Munir Akram, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), speaking at the United Nations Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, June 22, 2005. Speech on file.

²⁹Ibid.

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Global Governance 2002: An Intelligence Report on World Change

by Carl Teichrib

NOTE: The following article, written as an intelligence-styled report, was originally published in early 2003 as a limited circulation item. Although dated, the information is still solid – providing a tangible window into the global governance agenda. Some editing was done on this version to add clarity and brevity where needed, and to assist in the flow of the text.

FIM And Global Governance

In 1999, Forum international de Montréal (FIM), a small yet dedicated international think tank established in order to increase NGO influence on multilateral institutions, hosted a major international conference in Montreal on the theme of “Global Governance.” This conference, and the subsequent 2002 event, brought together hundreds of NGOs, government officials, and members of various multilateral groups – such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization [see the chart of participating organizations]. Coming from all parts of the globe, these organizations represented a diverse array of issues and agendas, from human rights to environmental concerns, from global education to “world citizenship.”

Although these representatives had traveled from different parts of the planet, there was uniformity in purpose. Their ultimate objective, and the reason for the GO2, was to build support for United Nations-styled global governance.

But what exactly is Global Governance?

Jan Aart Scholte, a political professor and associate of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation at the University of Warwick,

recently offered this interesting explanation,

“Like ‘global-speak,’ talk of governance is a new addition to the vocabulary of politics. The contemporaneous advent of the two terms is not accidental. Globalization – a reconfiguration of social space – has gone hand in hand with a reconfiguration of regulation. Where we used to speak of *government*, it is now suitable to speak of *governance*.” (italics in original).

In the mid-1990s, a United Nations sponsored commission was established to define and shape this new “global-speak.” Hence, the Commission on Global

Global Governance 2002 Basic Data:

Conference/Event Name:	FIM Global Governance 2002.
Event Sub-title/Theme:	“Civil Society and the Democratization of Global Governance: Redefining Global Democracy”.
Conference/Event Acronym:	G02.
Place:	Palais des Congrès, Montreal, Que., Canada.
Date:	October 13-16, 2002.
Host Organization:	Forum international de Montréal.
Host Acronym:	FIM.
Approx. Number of attendees:	475.
Approximate countries rep:	65.
Event Audience:	NGOs, academia, governments, multilateral organizations. [see the accompanying chart]

I had come to Montreal to be part of a gathering of influential Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), government players, and representatives from the United Nations.

Our task was complex yet focused: to provide the vision necessary to mold the world into a harmonized machine – to strive in making the United Nations a world management regime. Global Governance 2002 was just that; a meeting of shapers and policy makers dedicated to the overarching ideal of “global governance.” Most everyone agreed; the world is rapidly changing, and we need to make sure that it’s changing in a way that empowers the international community.

Governance was birthed.

Their landmark report, *Our Global Neighborhood*, stated upfront that global governance was not world government. After making this distinction, the 410-page document went on to outline a strategy for the UN that would equip it with its own taxation and funding programs, its own military force and judicial system, and give it the ability to make laws and enforce them at the international level; all of these items combined make up the essence of government – world government.

Global governance, when stripped of its verbal mask, is quickly exposed for what it is. With this in mind, the FIM Global Governance 2002 conference, from a definitional point of view, was about “world government.”

Eyes Wide Open

The opening session on Sunday, October 13, was a time of mingling, making acquaintances, and re-establishing contacts. Between opening statements, appetizers, cocktails, and two very interesting and talented interpretive dance troupes, FIM organizers and active G02 participants greeted and networked for most of the evening.

On the surface this doesn't seem important, but it must be remembered that it's in these settings where alliances are formed and new partnerships to push agendas are conceived. Furthermore, to the observant participant, it's at such times that one can spot and watch particular men and women who obviously hold popular sway: the unspoken leaders within diverse global networking/peer groups.

Of particular interest was Bill Pace, the Executive Director of the World Federalist Movement (the WFM is the largest pro-world government lobby group in the world) and Convener of the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC) – both of which played paramount roles in ensuring the creation of the ICC.

Observing how NGO leaders and FIM organizers responded to Mr. Pace, it was obvious that he commanded a great deal of respect within the global governance movement. In speaking with one of the participants, it was noted that the WFM in decades past was



WFM Executive Director, Bill Pace

viewed with a large degree of skepticism, especially within policy circles. However, because of the organization's active role in UN conferences and its successful promotion of the International Criminal Court, this “skepticism” had changed to recognition. Pace and the World Federalist Movement, champions of the ICC and active promoters of global governance, were now highly regarded players able to galvanize the NGO community and effectively transcend political hurdles. [NOTE: Pace's hand in the ICC operation was monumental, and represents one of the most fascinating untold stories of successful global alliance building].

Through careful observation and my own networking, it was possible to gather a comparatively accurate picture of who was considered a prime mover, and whose agendas would rise to the forefront. By the time the evening wrapped up it was evident which NGOs held the most sway, and the World Federalist ticket was the one to hold.

G02 Core Concepts

Which agendas rose to the surface? What were the core initiatives of “global governance” at the G02?

International Criminal Court: As already alluded to, the agenda of the World Federalist/International Criminal Court was accepted as a primary focal point by a large segment of those in attendance.

Many of the working sessions, which included theme issues of democracy and human rights, referred to the ICC as a cornerstone institution for global change. Repeatedly, the ICC was held up as an essential ingredient for global governance, and its support was widespread and greatly encouraged. Moreover, with the fact that the ICC was officially launched on July 1, 2002, the mood at G02 was both celebratory and visionary. Great things are expected of the ICC and the advancement of world law, and those in attendance were confident that the ICC would become a cornerstone institution in structuring a new system of judicial world management.

World Taxation and the new economic order: A substantial portion of the G02 agenda examined issues surrounding neo-liberal corporate globalization – including the role of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and major trans-national business compacts.

Certain segments of the international community see the neo-liberal agenda as being in direct conflict with the vision and mandate of the United Nations. Rather than being referred to as partners, these global financial institutions were viewed by many participants as steamrollers on the road to global control, actively pursuing a for-profit governance model instead of an empowered, socialistic United Nations system. Hence, the UN was portrayed as the struggling “good guy,” and it was hoped that someday the world body would hold unparalleled jurisdiction over these multilateral financial institutions.

According to many G02 participants, a global taxation scheme was essential to empowering the United Nations as the prime management agency, giving it the financial clout needed to firmly coordinate “economic governance.” To this end, broad G02 support was given to the Tobin Tax – an international taxation arrangement that would charge a levy on foreign currency transactions and trans-boarder monetary flows. [NOTE: the implementation of a world taxation regime is an agenda deeply entrenched in world federalist circles].

It was recognized that great strides towards imple-

menting the Tobin Tax have already been achieved, especially given that some national governments, such as Canada, have openly endorsed the plan. NGOs were encouraged to continue lobbying government leaders, particularly US politicians, in anticipation that the democratic/industrialized countries would kick-start this taxation program between each other. It was strongly believed that by starting with the major democracies, other countries would soon join under pressures imposed by wealthier nations.

World Parliament: A “people’s congress” for humanity, tied directly into the United Nations, is something that is fast catching on in the global community [NOTE: in October 2007, a major meeting on creating a UN parallel world parliament will be held Geneva]. While the idea isn’t new, it is gaining in popularity and attracting some very influential NGO players to its cause.

The concept is simple; in order to have a legitimate world government, it’s necessary to have a legislative assembly in place so that pressing issues can be debated and laws enacted. The argument for such an assembly goes like this: Global problems can only be solved by a global parliament of man.

Because a strategic part of the G02 was the “redefining of global democracy,” the idea of a world parliament was enthusiastically discussed in some of the NGO working sessions. But NGOs weren’t the only ones in favor of an “elected” world assembly.

During a question and answer period with Bill Graham, the Canadian Government’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (the equivalent to the US Secretary of State), Mr. Graham announced that he favored the creation of a parliamentary system that would work in tandem with the World Trade Organization. This concept of creating a WTO world parliament was also discussed in one of the G02 working sessions. Moreover, during the 24th World Congress of the World Federalist Movement held in London last July (2002), it was agreed that the WFM should lobby for a WTO-world legislative assembly. And yes, the World Federalist Movement is also in favor of creating a UN-based world parliament – that way all the bases are covered.

If a world parliament comes into existence, either through the UN or via some supra-national trade and monetary organization, how will this impact national sovereignty?

Andrew Strauss, a professor of international law and a G02 participant, explained in the *Stanford Journal of International Law* that a Global People's Assembly/world parliament would "at the most general level, challenge the traditional claim of states that each has a sovereign right to act autonomously."²

Robert Muller, former UN Assistant Secretary-General and a strong supporter of a world parliament, takes this one step further; "In the next century Earth sovereignty must have precedence over all national sovereignties."³

Iraq: One other issue of importance at G02 was that of Iraq and the US war build-up. Legitimate concerns were expressed as to what the real motive may be regarding US interests in the Middle East; is it an actual war against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or is it designs for regional petroleum/resource access?

In debating the real or perceived threat and the actual or stated American intentions, G02 participants overwhelmingly opted for an empowered United Nations operating in the region as opposed to a US military engagement.

Conclusions Of Global Governance 2002

One of the primary goals of the G02 was to rally the NGO community in placing pressure on national government. Participants were encouraged to take the call of United Nations empowerment back to their home countries and regions, to lobby policy makers and community leaders, and to engage in actions that would enhance the call for global governance.

Another outcome of the G02 was the networking component and the coordination of likeminded NGOs as a force for change. Lobbying and support actions were encouraged to bolster the UN International Criminal Court, and advocate for a world taxation systems and a global parliamentary assembly.

Many of the government officials who attended G02 will also take these ideas back to their particular departments and infuse these larger agendas into public programs. And for the UN officials who attended, they will have walked away with a better sense of which NGOs can be partnered with, and who in public office

can be courted on as strategic allies.⁴

For readers of *Forcing Change*, the G02 conference gives a glimpse of the major blueprints now being considered, primarily the parliamentary aspect and the funding role in global governance. Both of these key areas will be critically examined in future issues of *Forcing Change*. **FC**

Endnotes:

¹ Jan Aart Scholte, "Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, Volume 8, Number 3, July-Sept., 2002, p.287.

² Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss, "On the Creation of a Global Peoples Assembly: Legitimacy and the Power of Popular Sovereignty," *Stanford Journal of International Law*, volume 2, 2000.

³ Robert Muller, *2000 Ideas For A Better World* (fascicle one), idea 51.

⁴ To keep the record straight, it must be noted that not all of those who attended were in complete agreement. I talked to a couple of government officials and at least one professor who had a real problem with what was being proposed. Moreover, there were a handful of NGO representatives who didn't really understand the scope of what was being discussed – nor its implications. These individuals had been sent by their organizations without being properly briefed on what the G02 entailed. Therefore, they naively believed that this was about human rights and giving "the people a voice in globalization" –euphemisms for radical world change agendas that may actually trample on rights and silence opposition. For the most part, however, those who attended fully supported a UN global governance regime.

Brief G02 Organizational List

The following is a brief list of some of the many organizations in attendance at G02. This list is not definitive; each category had more attending groups - including governmental and multilateral - than was listed in this chart.

Academia	NGOs	Governmental	Multilateral
Cairo University	FIM	Department of Foreign Affairs, Canada	UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service
New York University	CIVICUS	Government of Quebec, Canada	International Labour Organization
Concordia University	Amnesty International	Liberal Party, Canada	The World Bank
University of Warwick	World Resources Institute	Canadian International Development Agency	UN Development Programme
University of California, Irvine	Institute for Sustainable Development	Isfahan Municipality, Iran	International Monetary Fund
Université du Québec à Montréal	World Citizen Foundation	Government of Benin	UN - Economic and Social Affairs
McGill University	Baha'i International	Government of France	European Parliament*
University of Melbourne	The Commonwealth Foundation	Government of Uruguay	UN Development Fund for Women
London School of Economics	World Council of Religion and Peace	IRDC, Canada	
Free University of Brussels	World Federation of United National Association	European Parliament*	
Brock University	The Ford Foundation		
Adelphi University	The North-South Institute		
Queen's University	InterAction		
Delhi University	World Federalist Movement		
Monash University	Thid World Network		
University St. Gallen	World Forum of Networks		
Widener University	Focus on the Global South		
Carleton University	Coalition for the ICC		
Clark University	Franciscans International		
Harvard University	Halifax Initiative		
Université Laval	Global Democratic Council		

* acts in both a governmental and multilateral capacity.

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