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Editors Welcome:

Welcome to the latest edition of the Australian World Citizens Bulletin. 2008 will be an important year for world citizens. Politics presents the possibility of change with the new Rudd government in Australia having the chance to try to make its mark and the US holding a presidential election in which a new President must be elected. Political debate, insofar as it touches upon international issues, still tends to focus on the troika of terrorism, Iraq and global warming.

But the solution to any of these problems must include an effective system of world politics. Whatever our position on the environment it can only be preserved through coordinated global action. And coordinated global action can only be achieved through a new political system that includes a voice for all humanity rather than the existing systems of competing nation states. The ideas of we world citizens will be a necessary part of the future political progress on this Planet. This Bulletin contains an article by World Citizens President Chris Hamer discussing one way we can move towards building a genuine global political system.

Please feel free to browse through this Bulletin if you are not already a world citizen and look at some of the things we do. It is never too late to become involved and the need for a democratic world political system will not go away. Join us as a world citizen and be part of building humanity's future!

Lyndon Storey

President's Column: A Turn for the Better?

The most notable event of the past six months has been the change of government in Australia, and the election of Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister. Hopefully this will signal a shift towards a more progressive and multilateral foreign policy in Australia. To begin with, we have at long last signed the Kyoto Protocol!

Another hopeful sign is the appointment of Duncan Kerr as Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for Pacific affairs: he was one of the first Australian MPs to sign the petition for a UN Parliamentary Assembly. Kevin Rudd has also spoken about our policy in the Pacific. His first priority is to mend relations with the Melanesian nations, and that is already off to a good start, with the election of a new Prime Minister in Solomon Islands and the return of Julian Moti to face charges in Australia. The development of a Pacific Community remains further down the track, however. We are trying to advocate, as a first step, the setting up of a Council of Ministers from the Melanesian states to coordinate and control the logging industry. This would help to fix the multiple problems in that industry, such as widespread illegal logging, corruption, over-harvesting, and the overall lack of a sustainable plan for the industry. I have already written to Duncan Kerr about this.

Personally, I have been trying to generate an active campaign to reorganize NATO into a worldwide Community of democratic nations, an idea which I have discussed previously in this Bulletin. An extended discussion is given in the article below. I have corresponded with the Streit Council in the US, who have a similar focus, and we may be able to organize a workshop on these issues, if some finance can be drummed up.

Meanwhile, Michael Ellis in Melbourne has been actively promoting his Global Citizens for Peace campaign, and Lyndon Storey in Canberra, in spare moments from his editorial duties, has been working on his Human Union movement. Vinay Orekondy, a graduate student in international politics, has jumped on board and offered to drive our campaign in support of the UN Parliamentary Assembly. Well done, and welcome Vinay!

With a *Happy New Year!* to all our members,
from

Chris Hamer

The Case for Transforming NATO into a Community of Democratic Nations: an "Atlantic Community".

I will argue here that the time is ripe for an expansion and remodelling of NATO to form a universal Community of Democratic Nations, which could provide an alternative route towards the goal of a democratic world federation.

From a World Federalist Perspective

World federalists generally agree that all human beings, regardless of nationality, have many fundamental interests in common, and face some enormous common problems:

- Sixty years after World War II, mankind still faces a looming threat from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;
- Global warming and other forms of damage to the environment have become an alarming new threat to our children's heritage;
- Billions of the world's poor still face the ever-present dangers of famine, disease and war;
- The basic human rights of many thousands of people are horribly violated every day, without hope of redress.

These problems can only be solved if the peoples of the world work together to construct a system of democratic global governance and binding international law. The present United Nations is not equal to the task.

The great question is, how do we get there from here? World federalists of many different stripes have been debating this issue ever since the end of World War II and the explosion of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The failure of the Summit on UN Reform should prompt us to take stock, and re-appraise our strategies.

The uniting of some 7 billion people and 200 different nation-states, each one jealous of its national sovereignty, is an enormous task, which might be likened to climbing Mount Everest. You cannot simply reach the top of the mountain in a single giant leap; instead, you must get there gradually, by a long march using a series of base camps. In the same way, we need to find a gradual, evolutionary path toward world federation. In Europe, Jean Monnet and his friends showed the way. They started with a relatively modest organization, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), involving a small number of the more progressive states (the 'Six'). They then proceeded by negotiated stages, marked by the Treaties of Paris, Rome, Maastricht etc., to construct the European Union we see today.

The problem now is to emulate that feat on the world stage. We should start from a (relatively) small association of progressive nations, with strictly limited aims, but including all the basic ingredients of government in prototype form, and then build up from there by a series of Treaties, progressively including new members and expanding the functions of the association until a universal global parliament is eventually achieved. Democracy is a basic principle of modern government, and only democracies should be accepted as member states, forming a Community of Democratic Nations, distinct from but complementary to the UN. The function of the initial association should preferably be economic, so that its economic success would provide an incentive for non-members to 'democratize' their institutions and join up.

Ideas rather like this were advocated long ago in the book 'Union Now' by Clarence Streit, who in 1939 called for a federal union of democracies to combat Fascism. After the War, he continued a similar campaign, to combat Communism. His ideas were carried on by the Association to Unite the Democracies (AUD), and more lately the Streit Council and the Ashburn Institute, with precisely the aim of planting the seeds of an eventual world federation. The main focus of the AUD has always been on NATO, which was indeed an alliance of the Atlantic democracies against the Soviet Union.

Since the Soviet collapse, NATO has been searching for a new role. It has started to participate in security operations outside Europe, as in Bosnia and Afghanistan. Could this be the basis for our new Community of Democratic Nations? It would make very good sense if NATO was recast as the common security arm of the democracies, and its membership was broadened to include countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand – stable democratic nations. This was actually suggested recently by former Prime Minister Aznar of Spain [1]. The OECD could also be rolled into the organization, since it has a very similar membership. NATO already has some form of representative assembly attached to it, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and would only need the addition of a Court to have embryonic forms of all the organs of

government. A drawback is that NATO is a security community, not an economic community, and might not offer such compelling attractions for new members.

Role and Structure of a Community of Democratic Nations

The aims of the new Community need not be very different from those of the present NATO:

- To guarantee the security of each member against external attack;
- To undertake peacekeeping operations on behalf of the member states, under the aegis of the United Nations;
- To provide a framework in the future for coordinated action by the member states on other issues, such as global warming.

Membership of the Community should be open to any stable, democratic nation, subject to suitable criteria laid down by the existing member states. Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand might be invited to join at the outset.

Following the pattern laid down by Jean Monnet, the Community should possess prototype forms of the organs of an eventual federation:
- NATO already has an Atlantic Council, to represent the member states;
- It already possesses a Secretary-General and other staff to provide a working bureaucratic system. Should it be given a 'cabinet', in analogy to the European Commission?
- A NATO Parliamentary Assembly already exists, which could form the basis for an eventual democratic parliament. Its role should be formally recognized within NATO, and it should be given the right to review NATO's policies and operations annually, and make recommendations on these matters to the Atlantic Council.
- A Court with a reserve panel of judges should be set up, empowered to adjudicate disputes between member states on the basis of accepted international law, and to make rulings on the interpretation of the founding treaties. This would provide the basis for an eventual legal system.

Finally, the decision-making system in the Atlantic Council needs to be overhauled. At present, decisions are made on the basis of consensus, as appropriate to a mere alliance. This can lead to indecision and deadlock, as illustrated by the long hesitation before NATO intervened in Bosnia. To become a Community analogous to the EU, decisions on functional matters within the agreed competence of the organization should be made by some form of qualified majority voting system, perhaps with an opt-out clause included. Some remarks on qualified majority voting systems are included in the Appendix.

From the perspective of NATO members

As noted above, NATO lost its original motivation with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since then, it has slowly been developing a new role. It has continued to act as an umbrella organization for the defence of the Atlantic democracies; and it has also begun

to act as their peacekeeping arm, first in Bosnia and then in Afghanistan, outside its traditional domain in Europe. This is entirely consistent with the Community aims outlined above. Members of the European Union are still debating whether they should continue to rely on NATO for their collective defence, or establish their own European armed forces. A strengthened and streamlined NATO would probably swing the balance towards the former option.

NATO has recently taken in a large number of new members from Eastern Europe, and now has a total of 26 member nations. This will put the old consensus model of decision making under even greater strain. General James Jones, the outgoing Supreme Allied Commander Europe, called for a stronger political structure for NATO at his parting session with the Atlantic Council [2]. "Sooner or later, NATO will have to address whether you want 350 committees all acting on the rule of consensus", he said. "What's the logic of one or two countries being able to block action by the remaining 24 members? Why not have a system where they can just opt out?" Certainly NATO needs to do something about this problem in the near future.

Very recently, a group of very senior military men have added their voices to the calls for reform. They include General John Shalikashvili, former chair of the US chiefs of staff, General Klaus Naumann, former head of Germany's military, General Henk von den Breeman, former Dutch chief of staff, Admiral Jacques Lanxade, former French chief of staff, and Field Marshal Lord Inge, former chief of staff in Britain. They demand a shift from consensus to majority voting in NATO decision-making, following General Jones; the abolition of national caveats (opt-outs); and the possibility of preemptive strikes, including even nuclear attacks, when "immediate action is needed to protect large numbers of human beings" [3]. The last idea would be absolute anathema to those of our persuasion, but at least the proposals illustrate the pressure for reform.

The European Union has struggled with this problem of consensus decision-making, and partially solved it by introducing a system of qualified majority voting on functional issues (as opposed to major policy changes). The reformed Atlantic Council should do the same, giving members the opportunity to opt out of the majority decision if they really feel it is contrary to their vital interests – perhaps requiring a vote of their domestic parliament in order to do so. This change would transform NATO from a mere alliance to a genuine Community.

As well as increasing the membership of NATO to 26 within the last few years, an equal number of countries have become NATO partners, including even Russia itself. It is therefore not a huge step to envision expanding the membership to democracies outside the traditional boundaries of Europe and North America. Former Prime Minister of Spain Jose Maria Aznar has advocated such an expansion recently [1]. He emphasized the emergence of the new threat of Islamic terrorism, and argued that NATO should develop a new dimension of homeland security to counter the threat. He also argued that an integration of intelligence information and security services across all the democracies is vital to counter this new global threat, and that stable democracies such as Israel, Japan and Australia should be invited to join.

The Political Opportunity

The prospects for achieving substantial reform of NATO seem particularly good at present, with the recent changes of public opinion in the US. The Bush administration has retreated from its earlier unilateralist stance in world affairs, and has begun to reemphasize cooperation with its allies following recent difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Unilateralism is out. Effective multilateralism is in", said David Fried, assistant secretary of state for European affairs [4]. The 'war on terror' provides a strong motive for setting up new mechanisms of common security. The administration is also very keen to promote democracy by all possible means. Victoria Niland, the US Ambassador to NATO, has stated that "The hope is to see NATO as the core of a global security community." [4]

One of the Republican contenders for the Presidency in 2008, John McCain, caused quite a stir recently when he proposed the formation of a "League of Democracies" in order to build an enduring peace based on freedom [5]. "We Americans must be willing to listen to the collective will of our democratic allies", he said. This would seem to indicate that a bipartisan consensus could be achieved on expanding and reforming NATO.

The Europeans have already had long experience with transnational cooperation through the European Union, and might be expected to give ready agreement. David Miliband, the new Foreign Secretary in Britain, is an avowed federalist, having co-authored a paper on "Beyond Economics: European Government after Maastricht" with Stephen Tindale [6]. The new Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, also seems to be very much in favour of multilateral cooperation.

Conclusions

Tiziana Stella [7] has summarized the proposals for reform of NATO which are on the table at the moment, including:
* Reform of decision-making procedures;
* Enhanced common funding;
* Development of a common foreign policy; required for effective multilateralism;
* Achieving a unified view on the global role of NATO;
* Increased cooperation between the Atlantic and global levels of institutions.

Many of these changes have already been called for by the executive side of NATO, such as General Jones, and also the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Resolution 337). We may hope to see at least some of these proposals put into practice at the NATO Summit in 2008.

If the decision-making model can be changed from consensus to a more effective qualified majority voting system, and if the membership were opened up to stable democracies outside the traditional boundaries of Europe, the new 'Atlantic Community'

could provide a highly prospective new avenue towards democratic global governance. We could expect the membership to expand over time, and the responsibilities of the Community to increase, until eventually it could become a truly global parliament.

Chris Hamer

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Appendix: Voting Procedures

The traditional way of deciding issues within NATO has been to try to achieve a consensus among the members. This gives each member an effective 'veto' over decisions, which can be disastrous, leading to deadlock and inertia. The problem will only get worse as the organization grows. It is the pernicious veto system, also, which has so stultified the United Nations. Obviously, every effort should be made to reach a consensus by open dialogue on any given issue; but if consensus cannot be reached, a decision must be reached by a vote. The European Union uses a system of 'qualified majority voting' for this purpose.

Devising a qualified majority voting system will present a particular problem, in the disparity in size between the member states. How can one devise a fair and equitable voting system for such a group? 'One man one vote' would give no voice at all to the smaller states. On the other hand, an equal vote for each member state would not fairly represent the relative power and influence, and the input of resources, from the larger states. Clearly one needs to arrive at some sensible compromise formula for weighting the vote of each member state.

One attractive scheme was proposed by Everett Millard in his book "Freedom in a Federal World" [8]. It has also been advocated by scientists such as the mathematician Lionel Penrose [9] and others, and goes under the name of the Penrose voting system, or the 'Jagiellonian compromise'. It may appear slightly complex at first sight, but actually makes excellent sense from a statistical point of view.

It runs as follows:
First, measure the **raw** weight of each member state according to its population ('one man, one vote'), or else its financial contribution ('he who pays the piper calls the tune'), or preferably a 50:50 combination of the two;
Second, determine the final **relative** weight of the vote from that state by taking the square root of the raw figure.

The formula can be given a statistical justification as follows. An individual vote is subject to error, like a physical experiment. If one repeats an experiment N times, where the results are subject to the usual random errors, then the expected error in the average result decreases like $1/\sqrt{N}$. A well-known example is the opinion poll, where the reliability of the result increases like the square root of the number of people polled. In the same way, one might say that the 'error' in a vote involving N people is expected to decrease like $1/\sqrt{N}$; or alternatively, the 'accuracy' of the vote involving a population N increases like $\sqrt{N}$.

According to this scheme, the larger partners would have the dominant vote in the organization, but the smaller states would still have a significant voice, sufficient to decide the issue if there was a disagreement between the major partners. The European Union has not adopted this scheme explicitly, but its weighting system probably follows it in a rough fashion.

Global Human Rights Torch and the World Citizens Association in Canberra

On 13 July 2001, the International Olympic Committee announced Beijing as the host city of the 2008 Olympics. Later this year the Beijing Olympic Games will begin swamping the world's television and computer screens from London to Alaska to the back of Bourke. Professional athletes, belonging to teams constituted by and for nation-states will participate on the athletic side and many corporate interests will also be involved in sponsorship and deal making. Yet again, the Games will be conducted in one of the States of the world that independent human rights watchdogs have documented to be an abuser of human rights inside and outside its state borders.

Individuals and organisations across the globe have pointed to the evidence that reputable, independent organisations such as Amnesty International (http://action.amnesty.org.au/china), Human Rights Watch (http://hrw.org/englishwr2k8/docs/2008/01/31/china17604.htm) , the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture
(http://www.unhchr.ch/huricane/huricane.nsf/view01/677C1943FAA14D67C12570CB0034966D) and others have long amassed on the State of China's human rights breaches. These include providing

financial aid and political counsel for crimes against people inside China and in places where China has economic and/or military might, such as Burma, Darfur, North Korea and Tibet.

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of the Falun Gong in China (http://www.cipfg.org/en/) initiated the Human Rights Torch Relay to support all those oppressed by China's state apparatus and to encourage reform amongst those doing the oppressing. The Coalition is a group comprised of many prominent exiles from China, human rights lawyers, parliamentarians, and others from around the world. It has supported community groups to maintain the Relay throughout the world, since it left Athens in August 2007.

Lyndon Storey, the President of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Branch of the World Citizens Association, was one of the principal authors of the Canberra-Goulburn Region declaration inviting the Human Rights Torch to the Region and affirming the humanist, globalist principles underpinning the World Relay. On 3 December 2007, this declaration was signed by Dr Storey on behalf of the ACT Branch of the World Citizens Association, as well as representatives of the Burmese, Darfur, Tibetan, and Vietnamese-Australian communities, the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of the Falun Gong in China, the ACT Refugee Action Committee, and the Goulburn-Canberra Diocese of the Catholic Church.

On 11 December 2007, the Torch arrived in Canberra, after its travels through the towns and cities of several continents. The Torch was welcomed by a large gathering in Garema Place, one of Canberra's largest and most popular outdoor places of public assembly. At this welcome, Dr Storey spoke to the crowd about the cosmopolitan ideas of Mencius and many other Chinese thinkers. In particular, he illuminated how these ideas were keystones upon which China and the rest of the world could build a fair and just transnational community.

Dr Storey and the other Goulburn-Canberra Relay participants called upon the State of China to live up to its promise to comply with the Olympic Charter. The Charter requires all Member States and, particularly, States hosting the Olympics to effectively act against this devastation of humans and the environment (http://www.olympic.org/uk/utilities/reports/level2_uk.asp?HEAD2=26&HEAD1=10). This declaration reached people all over the world, through multiple internet sites (http://www.humanrightstorch.org/news/category/torch-relay-news/ and http://cipfg.org/en/index.php?news=723); the *Canberra Times* (http://www.humanrightstorch.org/news/2007/12/11/putting-torch-to-torture/ , http://www.humanrightstorch.org/news/images/Canberra_Times_1.jpg) and *Epoch Times* (http://en.epochtimes.com/news/7-12-4/62543.html) newspapers; Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) television and radio stations (http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/12/11/2115969.htm); the local commercial radio station, 2CC; the Taiwanese public broadcaster, Sound of Hope (http://www.sohnetwork.com/) ; and other media outlets (http://act.greens.org.au/1229).

Photo: On 3 December 2007, Dr Lyndon Storey of the World Citizens Association and Mr Tsewang Thupten of the Tibetan-Australian community shake hands over the declaration supporting the Global Human Rights Torch Relay. Photo by Mr Elliott Fan.

Sam Salvaneschi

Sam (Samantha) Salvaneschi is one member of the Goulburn-Canberra Region Organising Committee for the Global Human Rights Torch Relay. She may be contacted on ***smsalvaneschi@gmail.com***

Bangladesh Project; some possible paths:

Editor's introductory note: Now that we have achieved charitable status (see roundup of awca activities item 9) it is possible to start seriously considering some charitable projects. World citizen Abul F. M. Wali Ul Islam has visited Bangladesh several times to investigate possible aid projects. Here are some excerpts from his list of suggestions for us to consider as possible aid projects, submitted as part of our application for charitable status. He has also compiled a larger report on possible activities which is available upon request from President Chris Hamer.

Bangladesh Project location:
Upazila Sonatola and Shariakandi of Bogra District, Shaghata and Fulsori of Gaibandha District.

Aim: Working towards education and welfare of destitute people devastated by natural disasters: river breakage and regular floods.

Background Summary:

River breakage and floods are common in many parts of Bangladesh. The consequences of these natural disasters are catastrophic. This is because many thousands of families have lost their farm lands and homes. They have minimal means, if any, for their survival.

Most of the families have moved away to build huts on the slopes of public roads to live in, which don't have proper cooking arrangements, drinking water, toilet and sanitation facilities. Many of the families may have less than a total property of Aus$3-500.00 with a monthly income of around $50-70.00 for a family of 4-6 members. Understandably, this puts them in a very miserable condition.

Children suffer from extreme malnutrition, and have no facilities for their education. Young adults lack education and training in professional skills and life-related matters. They are mostly unemployed and many of them can't become income-generating members of the community because of lack of skills and occupational resources. The young women have no financial means to marry, leaving them in a very vulnerable situation for abuse with serious social consequences. Elderly people can't earn, have no savings, and suffer from ill health. Many members of these families might have no opportunities to see a qualified doctor. The average lifespan appears to be considerably less than the general population of the country. The bread earner male family-heads seem to be more vulnerable to health problems and premature deaths exposing the families to more financial and security problems.

Apparently, these groups of people are left alone without much support from government and non-government organizations.

The problems seem enormous; however, the potentials are also very high. The people are enthusiastic, honest, quick learners and above all, very hardworking. They are keen to change their conditions and improve their lifestyles. Any assistance to these people will hopefully improve their situations and they deserve support. It is strongly recommended that appropriate projects are undertaken for the welfare and education of these poorest of the poor people.

Possible Future Projects
Useful projects can be developed in the following areas:

Business set up/ helping existing businesses
To create occupational facilities by providing the necessary instruments for farming, fishing, animal rearing including cows, goats, hens, ducks and pigeons. A contribution of $300.00 can help to start a small business that can significantly improve and sustain the quality of life of a family.

Rickshaw / Van Project:
Rickshaws and vans will be purchased and rented out to the selected drivers at a reduced rate. A percentage of the money may be allocated to support maintenance of their health (particularly when they are sick) and education (purchasing teaching materials). Another percentage can be saved to help in their retired lives. The organization will take responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the Rickshaws/Vans. A trained person may be supported to establish a Repair and Maintenance Centre.

Education

Scholarship
Scholarships for intelligent but poor students, who have no financial support and would have to leave school without completing their HSC.

A yearly contribution of only $100.00 can be a very good support for a high school student. This support can help them to meet expenditures for education and some of their personal needs. If anyone wants to support a student, a yearly progress report on the student will be made available to the sponsor before the next year's support can be provided.

Establishment of education and training centers:
This is to support basic Islamic education and moral teachings as well as training for professional and life related skills. The facilities and resources will be suitable particularly for young boys and girls.

Repair of mosques/moktobs:
The damaged but existing mosques/moktobs will be repaired and supported to make them functional. These can be venues for community education and training.

Marriage support
Organizing marriage ceremonies for young adults and supporting them with minimum capital to start a family life through setting up a small business to generate income.

A single marriage can be arranged by spending just $500-700.00 including setting up a small business.

This can be a good support for getting a great start in lives for poor young adults, particularly for the girls. What else could be more pleasing than helping to establish a family by girls and boys who otherwise would have been lost and would not find ways for their lives.

Organizing meals
Organizing a good meal particularly during festive seasons for people who have not enjoyed a decent meal for months or even years. $5-10.00 for a meal per person

depending on the quality of the meal served. Such occasions can also be used for the arrangement of marriage ceremonies.

Burial Place and burial services
Many poor people do not have any land for their burials. There is no public cemetery. A piece of land can be purchased for this purpose and a burial service can be organized.

Clothes and Dresses
Many people lack appropriate clothes for summer and winter. This causes ill health and restricts their work ability and employment opportunity. Two sets of summer and winter clothes every 3 years could be of great help. A contribution of $50.00 could be sufficient for a single person for this purpose.

Health Project

A weekly/bimonthly health care centre can be established for promotion of health and treatment for sick people who do not have the means to visit doctors and buy medicines. An amount of $30-50.00 would be of great help for the treatment of a sick person (depending on their conditions).

Research

Basic research can be carried out aiming for situation analysis, finding out the prevailing positive and negative factors and how to improve conditions.

Proposal for Establishment of a village
An ideal village can be established for the people of the devastated areas. The village will have living, small business, farming, fish culture, animal husbandry and gardening facilities. This can also work as a professional and moral training centre.

The village could be in a convenient location which is easily approachable from river damaged area but safe from flooding and further erosion. The educational facilities and business centers would be easily accessible from the village. A detailed project plan could be worked out.

Future steps/recommendations

- A three member project committee to be established.

- An external advisory panel may help in reviewing and improving the projects and their implementation.

- Mechanisms to be developed for continuous monitoring and support of the project both in Bangladesh and in Australia.

- A continuous funding source to be developed. For example, a list of members could be prepared who would commit to contribute on a regular basis such as monthly for implementation of the project(s). The amount of contribution may be decided by the members on the basis of their capabilities and commitment.

- Collaboration can be developed with similar organizations both in Australia/international level and Bangladesh to improve the quality as well as depth and breadth of the projects.

- Confidentiality procedures are to be framed and implemented.

Conclusions

I have visited this remote area three times when I went to Bangladesh last year. The visits have given me an insight into the locality, its people, present conditions and future prospects. Although the vast majority of the people in the locality are going through extreme hardships and poverty, I found them cooperative, honest and hardworking. I strongly recommend that projects are undertaken aiming for education and poverty alleviation of this very vulnerable group of people.

Abul F. M. Wali Ul Islam

Roundup of AWCA Activities

1) Peoples Congress

Chris Hamer was elected as a member of the Peoples Congress, and attended their meeting at Liege in Belgium on the weekend of November 3-4. The Congress is a model world parliament, associated with the World Citizens Registry in Paris. It holds elections every 3 years, and delegates hold office for 9 years. At the meeting, a new executive was elected, Heloisa Primavera from Brazil as President, Liliane Metz-Krencker as Vice-President. Proceedings at the meeting were slowed by translation into 3 languages; next time, the aim is to use Esperanto alone as the working language! Hopefully the new executive will be able to revitalize this organization.

Action: Chris Hamer has been asked to apply for membership in the World Federalist Movement (WFM) for the Peoples Congress, and (I propose) for ourselves also.

2) Pacific Islands Forum.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee has produced their report on Australia's aid program in the Pacific. Our submission was listed as one of 37. Unfortunately, the report did not propose much in the way of concrete action. Its main recommendation was to set up a scheme of Youth Ambassadors in the region. There were also recommendations for a

system of micro credit (like the Grameen Bank) in the Pacific; and for an altered tax regime for Australian companies investing in the Pacific; and that was about it.
.
Action:
- Propose governance in the Pacific as a research topic at CPACS. Erik Paul, who is on the CPACS research committee, has kindly offered to help in this regard.
- Prepare a submission to the Forum summit meeting next year on the need for a regular Council of Ministers, e.g. to coordinate forestry management in Melanesia. This seems a particularly urgent topic in view of the rapid destruction of tropical forests around the world, and its implications for climate change. Setting up a Council of Ministers meeting would be an easy and logical step, but also an important step towards improved regional governance;
- Explore the possibility of internships at the Forum Secretariat in Fiji, which might be of interest to our student supporters.

3) Human Rights Torch

The Human Rights Torch has been established as a counterpart to the Olympic torch. It is traveling around the world to highlight human rights abuses by the Chinese government ahead of the Beijing Olympics and as part of a call to the Chinese government to promote respect for human rights. On December 13 the Human Rights Torch arrived in Canberra where it was welcomed by a large crowd and a number of speakers before being escorted to the Chinese Embassy by a large group of people. One of the speakers at the welcoming ceremony was World Citizen Lyndon Storey who spoke of the need for everyone, including the Chinese government, to respect our common humanity and make the Olympics a vehicle for promoting human rights rather than covering up violations of human rights.

4) NATO.

Chris Hamer has written to Tiziana Stella at the Streit Institute to propose a campaign to transform NATO into a security community of democratic nations, of which Australia could become a member.

Action: A Conference on NATO reform may be arranged, in conjunction with the Streit Institute.. We would like to have propositions ready for the next Summit meeting of NATO in 2008. We need to find some funding here.

5) UNPA.

The worldwide campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly is proceeding, and has been endorsed by many luminaries, ranging from Kofi Annan to the Pope. One of our student members, Vinay Orekondy who is a postgraduate student in international relations at UNSW, has offered to act as our director for this campaign, aiming to hone his skills in advocacy and lobbying. His first aim is to get the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) to endorse the campaign. Congratulations to Vinay on his outstanding initiative.

Action.

- Join the association supporting the UNPA
- Lobby new MPs on the issue.

6) Peace Commission and Non-Violence Bill

Senator Lyn Allison of the Democrats has tabled a motion to establish such a Commission in the Senate. Its fate following the demise of the Democrats in the Senate remains to be seen.

Action: Michael Ellis in Melbourne is leading the charge on this.

7) World Unity Day

The solstice, March 21st, has been proposed to the UN as World Unity Day/ World Citizens Day.

Action: We should mark the day with a celebration, e.g. a BBQ. Liliane has proposed the planting of a World Unity tree on that day, perhaps at the Glover Cottages (AIIA).

8) Talks.

It's now 18 months since our last public talk, by Keith Suter. I sent an invitation to Tim Flannery, but got no reply. Stephen Fitzgerald might be an interesting speaker, to tell us about the global policy of the new Rudd government. Chris Hamer would be available to give a talk on NATO. Lyndon Storey would be available to give a talk on the Human Union proposal.

9) Sydney Uni branch.

We have made several abortive attempts to inaugurate a Sydney uni. Branch. We should now postpone any further attempt until next year. Student members on the ground could potentially be very useful:

Action: - Liaise with CPACS
- Arrange talks and events on campus
- Possible Youth Ambassadors/interns in the Pacific
- Recruiters and campaigners
- We need to look for volunteers in these areas.

10) Aid program.

We have finally submitted an application for charitable status, which would allow us to ask for tax-deductible donations. Approval came through very quickly thereafter. Michelle has established a dedicated bank account for donations. Wali has already begun his aid project in Bangladesh, which we will continue to support. We should also look for some project in our own region in the Pacific.

Action. Having achieved charitable status, our first step should probably be to set up a Fundraising Committee. Then we can start
- Soliciting donations; and possibly even:

- Apply for Federal assistance
- Possibly look for a part-time executive officer!

Literary Corner

Some reminders of the recent literary contributions of Members of our association.

Andrew Greig has written a book entitled *'Taming War: Culture and Technology for Peace'*. Find out more about his book at www.tamingwar.com, or email info@tamingwar.com

Michelle Cavanagh is continuing promote her book on *'*Margaret Holmes: The life and times of an Australian peace campaigner*'* (New Holland, 2006), RRP $29.95.

Lyndon Storey's book *'Humanity or Sovereignty: A political roadmap for the 21st century'* is available from Peter Lang Publishing , US$32.95.

Keith Suter has produced another new book in his impressive series, called *'Teach Yourself Globalization'* (Hodder), US$12.95, which has a chapter on world federalism.

Michael de Mol has written a paper on *'The Role of Multi-National Corporations in Globalisation'*, which he forwarded to the Australian Conservation Foundation, aiming to forge some links with them

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