



**Citizens for
Global Solutions, Minnesota**
Promoting global unity since 1947

Visit our website: <http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org>

January 2016

OUR VISION: We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect universal human rights and freedoms, foster sustainable development, and solve related problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires the involvement of informed world citizens to create and maintain effective democratic global institutions that will supplant the law of force with the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION: We are a membership organization working to build political will, promoting global citizenship and a new spirit of sharing, and devising initiatives to promote our vision. We undertake our mission by organizing educational events, communicating global concerns to public officials, collaborating with globally engaged organizations, and disseminating proposals to reform and strengthen the United Nations and other international institutions, including the creation of new agencies when necessary.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ENDLESS WAR BY HEARING OTHER VOICES

By Gail Hughes, President CGSMn

Since WWII, the U.S. has been involved in a series of subversions, wars, assassinations, and other aggressive actions: the overthrow of democratically elected leaders in Iran, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Bay of Pigs; the Vietnam War; the Iraq War; the bombing of Libya; and more. There's a pattern of our getting 'sucked into' supporting one military action after another, only later to learn that those actions were based on lies or false information.

How does this happen? Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's 1988 classic book *Manufacturing Consent* describes the process of generating support for war through the mainstream media – a process that I would argue occurs in countries across the world, not just in the U.S.

When a war is in the offing, the mainstream media characteristically will publish and broadcast only negative reports about a given country or leader, portraying them as a threat, a dictator, perhaps a 'new Hitler'. Some sort of 'evidence' is presented against them, and there will be a call to help present or potential victims. Voices are excluded that would offer counter-evidence or that would challenge the view that some 'Bad Guy' is so bad that military action is required. Only later – after much damage has been done - there is 'hand-wringing' as to how we (the U.S. government) could have gotten things so wrong.

Those of us who would like to 'give Peace a chance' need to be aware of these dynamics. We need to realize that we cannot rely uncritically on the mainstream media when it comes to matters of war, but must actively seek out alternative and international media. We may in the end decide that the claims our media make are valid; but without hearing other voices (as we've been doing in some of our Forums) we will not be able to make informed decisions. Knowledge of counter-narratives will make it harder for our government to persuade us to support yet another war that isn't worthy of support.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

By Joe Schwartzberg

Juxtaposed in the December 2015 issue of *National Geographic* are articles concerning two cities: the first about the "New New York," and, immediately following it, a piece entitled "Haiti on Its Own Terms," largely relating to that nation's capital, Port-au-Prince. No connection was made between the two featured cities; yet the contrast between them could not have been more stark.

The most prominent element of the New York article was a stunning two-foot long foldout photo-shopped display with the lower Manhattan skyline on one side and the Midtown skyline on the other. Highlighted on both skylines were some 76 (!) skyscrapers over 700 feet tall: many already built, others under construction or proposed (48 more than the 28 that existed as of 2004). Near the northern end of the Midtown skyline was the so-called “Billionaires’ Row.” There, at One 57th Street, lies a penthouse that just sold for \$100.4 million, “the most ever paid for a single residence.”

On the same planet, less than 2,000 miles to the south, lies Port-au-Prince, the squalid center of a conurbation of two and a half million mostly impoverished Haitians, somehow scratching out a living from a land of meager resources, that is still reeling from the devastation of the earthquake of 2010 followed by several severe hurricanes, and a cholera epidemic. Haiti’s GNI per capita, as of 2013, was a mere \$810 and it would not be much higher than that in the nation’s capital. For the price of the single New York penthouse noted above one could keep alive for a year more than 1.2 million Haitians at the country’s average level of living.

Alas, Port-au-Prince is not an isolated case; but it does epitomize the situation in much of the Global South. This raises an important question: how can we expect to maintain peace in a world marked by the contrasts noted in this essay?

PEACEMAKERS OF MINNESOTA

By Ehtasham Anwar, Pakistan native and civil administrator

2013-2014 Fulbright/Humphrey Scholar, Human Rights Center, University of Minnesota Law School

Through the eyes of media, rightly or wrongly, I had always seen the United States as an aggressive country, a war monger nation, and the biggest obstacle to my dream of a dream world—a world free of hunger, disease and war.

I also believed that US citizens were too mired in their own worldly pursuits that they did not have time to attend to what the US government was doing elsewhere in the world in their name and with their tax money. They either endorsed or, at best, remained indifferent to the US aggression and highhandedness abroad. Their heart, if at all it was, did not beat for humanity at large. They were thus equally to be blamed for the death and misery that their government brought to people in many parts of the world every now and then.

And then I got an opportunity to travel to the United States and live among, and interact with, the citizenry. Myths were shattered. Concepts were changed. I met some of the best persons in my life in the United States. They were as humane, if not more, as anyone else on the globe. The overwhelming majority disapproved of war. They too felt disturbed over the US hegemonic designs. They too worked for the cause of peace. They too wanted a world full of happiness and joy, not only for them but for others too.

Where then was the disconnect? With so many good people, why was there no impact seen on US policies? Was the church and the clergy playing its due role? If those who were working for peace failed to inspire their own families, how could they expect to impact US policies? What were the obstacles? Way forward? Messages?

During my nearly year-long stay in Minnesota, I talked to people from all cross sections of society: those who had given their lives to the cause of peace; those who had taken part in, and personally seen the horrors of, World War II and the Vietnam War; those who had participated in the civil rights movement; those who were well off; those who belonged to less privileged segments of society; those who were academicians and had been keeping an eye on peace and related issues all around the world; those who claimed to have belonged to the inner circles of the US security establishment; those who spoke from the pulpit; those who used arts as a weapon for peace; the men; the women; the young; the old; the rich; the poor; the white; the people of color.

Not all of my questions were satisfactorily answered; yet, at least, I got a clue to what they were thinking. I decided to compile all my work—the interviews—in the form of a video ‘Peacemakers of Minnesota’, with three aims in mind: firstly, to pay tribute to those who had virtually given their lives to the cause of peace; secondly, to archive their thoughts and achievements for posterity; and finally, to help those who would want to work for peace by equipping them with greater insight into the thought process of the citizens of the sole superpower of the world, for the key to global peace lies with the US citizens.

Those with access to Facebook may view Mr. Anwar’s two-part video series at
<https://www.facebook.com/Dream-World-1461225510855011/videos>

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUMS

Free and open to the public

Plymouth Congregational Church (Jackman room, lower level), 1900 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis. Abundant free parking in lot on Franklin Ave. adjacent to Church; enter building from lot on LaSalle Ave side.



JANUARY FORUM:

“The UN Conference on Climate Change (COP21): Minnesota to Paris and Action Steps Going Forward”

Presentation by **J. Drake Hamilton**
Science Policy Director, Fresh Energy

Thursday, January 21, 2016
6:45-8:45 p.m.

Back from Paris, where she was part of the Climate Action Network international delegation, J. will describe the results of the climate talks and the role of nongovernmental organizations working on de-carbonization. Her work in Paris focused on the need for a climate agreement that is ambitious and based in science, inclusive, fair to the people and nations now suffering from climate impacts, transparent, and durable.

Humphrey Fellows from the University of Minnesota Law School will respond to J’s talk by giving their thoughts about the implications for their respective home countries.

Humphrey Fellow Respondents:

Mr. Ahmed Tholal (Maldives); Mr. Hamze Haidar Ahmad, (Lebanon); Ms. Abosede Oyeleye (Nigeria)

FEBRUARY FORUM:

What’s Happened to the ‘Arab Spring’?”

Thursday, February 18, 2016 6:45-8:45 p.m.

Presenter: Ms. Ikram Ben Said, Tunisia, Humphrey Fellow,
Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Ms. Ben Said is the founder of Aswat Nissa (Voices of Women’s), a women’s rights CSO which advocates for gender equity in Tunisia. She was a recipient of The Madeline Albright Award for Women in Political Participation. She was also invited by the Clinton Foundation as “an influential voice and stalwart champion for the rights and opportunities of women and girls” at the No Ceiling Event featured by Time Magazine as “Next Generation Leaders.” She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing from the Higher School of Economic Sciences in Tunisia.



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All issues archived at <http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org/>

It is not because it is difficult that we are afraid to act; it is because we are afraid to act that it is difficult, Seneca

Join CITIZENS FOR GLOBAL SOLUTIONS, MINNESOTA

If you believe in the goals of our chapter, please consider becoming a member by making an annual donation. This is your opportunity to invest in strengthening a Minnesota organization that is truly international in impact, bringing effective solutions to problems that affect every one of us.

Suggested donations: \$10 for students, \$30 for individuals, \$40 for couples

Contributions in any amount will be welcome: more if you can, less if you are short of funds.

Name _____ Amount enclosed: _____

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*Please make checks payable to "Citizens for Global Solutions, Minnesota" and mail to
Dennis Dillon, 210 W. Grant St., #414, Minneapolis, MN 55403*

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all contributions are tax deductible**

Our Board: Dr. Gail Hughes, President; Dick Bernard, Vice-President; Nancy Dunlavy, Secretary; Dennis Dillon, Treasurer; N. John Borgen, Margaret Esslinger, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Dr. Bharat Parekh, Dr. Joseph Schwartzberg, Olivia Vongharath, Maryam Yusefzadeh.

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