



World Citizens Association
Australia

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Appeal for Flood Victims in Bangladesh

We have decided to undertake selected aid projects in our region, in order to demonstrate our solidarity as world citizens with people in our neighbourhood, and also to give our members a concrete focus for their efforts.

Wali Islam has printed off 5000 brochures for our aid program in Bangladesh, at a cost of \$600, and our first mail out to members has taken place. Our next step is to obtain Deductible Gift Recipient status, a process which will take several months. We first need to apply to AusAID to become an “Approved Organisation”. We will also begin to approach corporate donors.

With help from ourselves and others, a free primary school for the children of flood victims has already been established in the Char Khabulia district of upper Bangladesh, on the great river Jamuna (or Brahmaputra). The school has five teachers and 200 students, with more clamouring to get in. Wali has been instrumental in setting up a local body, the Wajifa Noor Ashmatia Foundation, to run the school. The teachers are paid only \$30 per month, and the entire budget is about \$300 per month.

With more funds, we hope to expand the project.



Picture 1 Students and teachers gathered outside the school.

remaining nuclear weapons.

I gave a talk in the School of Physics at UNSW entitled '*From the Bomb to a Global Parliament*'. I also sent letters to the Brookings Foundation and the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Canada, proposing a high-level conference on ideas for a Community of Democratic Nations. So far, no response whatever.

Shirley Scott in International Relations and myself have been giving some thought to proposing a 'Centre for International Law and Global Governance' at the University of NSW. It is only the germ of an idea so far, with no funding or staff lined up, but you never know Daryl Le Cornu told me about the Watson Institute at Brown University in Rhode Island, which concerns a similar subject and has a very large outreach program to secondary school students and the general public. That could be a very useful model.

Finally, let me thank once again our small executive team. Wali Islam is working full steam on the aid project; Alan Ryan has our website looking very attractive and professional; Michelle Cavanagh is keeping tight control of our finances; and Brett Samuel is looking after this Bulletin. Well done all.

Best wishes to all, from

Chris Hamer



Picture: Fate of the old school

Wali Islam ■

Treasurer's Report at 30 June 2009

The financial record for our working account shows an amount of **\$539.40** in the bank.

Over the 2008/2009 financial year expenditure paid out of this account totalled \$1034.18 and we have no outstanding bills to be paid.

The financial record for our newly operational WCA Aid Project Trust account shows an amount of **\$2537.52** in the bank. This includes donations of \$1564.10 towards our appeal for the flood victims in Bangladesh. PayPal fees for the financial year amounted to \$26.58. Prior to opening the trust account we paid \$500.00 to our Bangladesh appeal plus printing costs of \$627.00 for the appeal brochure - a grand total of \$1127.00 - out of our working account. This amount will be transferred from the trust account to the working account during the 2009/2010 financial year.

Once these transactions have taken place the accounts will stand as follows:

WCA Working Account \$1666.40

WCA Aid Project Fund Trust Account \$1410.52

Michelle Cavanagh ■

The Penrose weighted majority voting system for international councils

Abstract: We review the Penrose weighted majority voting scheme, widely recognized as the optimum system for councils made up of representatives from many different nations. The European Union has adopted a very similar, though not identical, voting formula. Its possible use in other councils is discussed, such as the North Atlantic Council of NATO, or the General Assembly of the United Nations. Finally, we emphasize its utility for any mooted Community of Democratic Nations.

International councils, made up of representatives from many different nations, often need to adopt some sort of weighted voting system if they are to be effective in reaching decisions. A decision reached by consensus would always be the best outcome, but it is very often not possible, so that requiring consensus is a recipe for deadlock, frustration and inaction. Here we review the Penrose voting system (Penrose 1946), widely recognized as the optimum voting system available. This scheme has been extensively discussed over recent years in connection with the Council of Ministers of the European Union. Here we will compare and contrast it with the voting systems now in use, or proposed, for bodies such as the Security Council and General Assembly in the UN, the Atlantic Council of NATO, and a mooted Community of Democratic Nations.

The importance of the voting system can hardly be overemphasized. A good voting system will result in a harmonious and effective council, which can easily reach appropriate decisions, and act on them. A

bad voting system can lead to disagreement and deadlock among the members, so that no decision can be reached and the operations of the council are hamstrung; or else the decisions of the council end up being ignored.

New councils are continuously appearing on the international scene, and need to adopt a sound voting system. For example, other regions are seeking to follow the path of the European Union, and pursue regional integration in order to achieve greater security and economic prosperity – the African Union is a prime case in point. There are also calls to reform and streamline existing institutions such as NATO, to improve their effectiveness and capacity for timely decision-making. We shall consider these cases in more detail below.

Continues page: 7 >>

United Nations Parliamentary Assembly

The campaign to establish the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly has gathered support from the European Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament, the Latin-American Parliament and the Senate of Argentina, as well as more than 600 MPs worldwide and Boutros-Boutros Ghali, former Secretary-General of the UN.

See <http://en.unpacampaign.org> ■



Vote World Government

The Canadian group "Vote World Government", headed by Jim Stark, has begun an 'Authors Campaign' to attract signatories to their global referendum on democratic world government. They have attracted about ten thousand signatures so far, and are hoping for tens of millions.

See:

[http://www.voteworldgovern
ment.org](http://www.voteworldgovern ment.org) ■

World March for Peace and Nonviolence

This will be a global event, beginning on October 2nd, the centenary of Gandhi's birth. It will take place over three months, beginning in New Zealand, and ending up in the Andes of South America. It was initiated by the humanist movement. We have signed up to the event, but no further details are available as yet. See

[http://www.theworldmarch.
org](http://www.theworldmarch. org) ■

IPRA Conference

The big peace research conference IPRA (International Peace Research Association) will be held in Sydney next year, hosted by CPACS, the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. It will be attended by maybe 500 delegates, and some of us should plan to take part. We have

proposed a session on International Law and Global Governance. ■

About the Human Union

The Human Union Movement calls for global political reform to build a truly human political system, a Human Union, to replace our existing state based political system.

All wars today are civil wars; civil wars of humanity, and the Human Union Movement urges people everywhere to work to bring an end to the civil war of humanity and build a Human Union.

The Human Union Movement works for the establishment of a Human Union through the development of global governance institutions that are consistent with all of humanity having an equal opportunity to benefit and that promote freedom of conscience and expression, democracy, access to education and knowledge, economic development, and political equality.

In 2009 we have continued to attract signatories to our Human Union Appeal to call for the formation of a Human Union. We are developing plans to create an online petition to US President Obama calling for him to make a Human Union Declaration.

The primary immediate policy goal of the Human Union Movement is to encourage countries to make a Human Union Declaration. This is a Declaration that the country making the Declaration is willing to start negotiating minimal common terms with any other

Pope Benedict XVI urges a "true world political authority"

On July 7, 2009 New York Times reporters Rachel Donadio and Laurie Goodstein wrote:

Pope Benedict XVI has called for a radical rethinking of the global economy, criticizing a growing divide between rich and poor and urging the establishment of a 'true world political authority' to oversee the economy and work for the 'common good.'

For more, see:

[http://www.nytimes.co
m/2009/07/08/world/e
urope/08pope.html?r=2](http://www.nytimes.co m/2009/07/08/world/e urope/08pope.html?r=2)



country that wishes to join it in a Human Union based on respect for democracy and human rights.

If you wish to sign the Human Union appeal or just find out more about the Human Union Movement please visit our website at www.thehumanunion.org

Lyndon Storey ■

WFM Council meeting

We have been invited to attend the World Federalist Movement 2009 Annual Council Meeting in New York, 27-30 October. This is just in case anybody might be in a position to attend on behalf of the World Citizens Association (Australia). I have more information if anyone is interested. Early registration deadline is 24 July, and the cost (including accommodation and meals) is \$US600, with some possibility of travel assistance. ■

The Wave

THE WAVE is a new project that aims at promoting the basic ideas of world citizenship and democratic global governance in a manner that is compatible with all cosmopolitan proposals. Its mission is not to promote a particular form of global governance or specific strategy, but to make visible to political decision makers the support for the basic principles of world citizenship, subsidiarity, human legitimacy, political equality and democratic global governance. At the same time, it is a way to present these principles and concepts to the public at large and, hopefully, to gain increasing support for them. Finally, it is an opportunity for concerted action by the different organizations and individuals who share a common vision compatible with these principles.

THE WAVE's strategy is simply to start a campaign with a new petition and message each time we feel there is an opportunity for increased awareness or

advancement towards democratic global governance. Each campaign will clearly refer to the same basic principles, but be adapted to the new specific context that justifies it. Think of each campaign as a new wave that slowly takes up momentum before breaking in the shore and creating a resting time before a greater wave starts again. With each new wave:

- We ask organization and individuals to join us signatories.
- We ask organization signatories to send the message to all their members and contacts.
- We ask individual signatories to send the message to as many people as possible.
- We ask recipients to forward the message and join the wave.
- We aim to ultimately reach those with the power to make political decisions, political leaders and representatives at all levels of democratic governance.

The screenshot shows a social media-style interface for 'The Wave'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Main', 'My Page', 'Members', 'Organizations', 'Forum', 'Blogs', 'Waves', 'The Wave In...', and 'Photos'. A blue circular logo is on the right. Below the navigation, there's a section for 'Members' with a grid of profile pictures. To the right of this is an 'Appeal' section with a heading 'Humanity faces many challenging problems throughout the world today, including the misery and conflicts caused by continuing inequity and poverty, the disparity between rich and poor, the collapse of communities and forced migration, the demographic explosion, the oppression of women, cultural and religious conflict, environmental degradation, the pollution of natural environments, massive extinction of animals and plants, the waste and exhaustion of non-renewable resources, the multiplication of acts of violence, terrorism, and war, and the risks of spreading weapons of mass destruction.' Below this is a 'Forum' section with a post from a user named 'Elijah' about accelerating the evolution of a Republican State of Consciousness. The post has 20 hours left and 12 likes. At the bottom, there's a 'Form & Style of' section.

Each new petition will be hopefully signed by more and more organizations and individuals, and our message will reach an increasing number of recipients, until it makes a difference and pushes political leaders to make concrete advancements towards democratic global governance. Although conceptually simple, The Wave incorporates a series of elements that we believe to be, as a whole, new to the cosmopolitan movement:

- A core set of non-trivial principles that can be shared by most, if not



- all, cosmopolitan organizations and individuals
- An opportunity for cooperative, coordinated concerted action by those cosmopolitan organizations and individuals
- A strong viral design
- A social network for committed world citizens

This is THE WAVE's declaration:

We, world citizens, hereby demand the establishment of executive, legislative and judiciary institutions of global governance that are democratically elected, transparently monitored, and accountable to all citizens of the world, that protect people's basic rights and interests, and that are consistent with the principles of subsidiarity, human legitimacy and political equality.

Democratic global governance: The network of executive, legislative and judiciary institutions of global governance that are democratically elected, transparently monitored, and accountable to all citizens of the world.

Subsidiarity: The principle that decisions must be taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that a global (or higher) level of government should perform only those essential tasks that (for reasons of scale, capacity or need for exclusive power) cannot be effectively undertaken at lower levels of administrative decision-making.

Human legitimacy: The principle that global policies must be consistent with all of humanity having an equal opportunity to benefit and must promote freedom of conscience and expression, democracy, access to education and knowledge, sustainable development, and environmental preservation.

Political equality: The principle that global institutions must promote equal access to the decision-making process, facilitate genuine participation by the vulnerable, provide effective enforcement mechanisms available to all, and ensure that institutions are accountable and operate in a transparent fashion.

If you feel like a world citizen,
If you think all of humanity must have
equal opportunity,
If you believe we need democratic global
governance,

[Sign our basic petition](#) and [join THE WAVE](#)

Josep Ortega ■

Penrose Vote System Continued

Let us consider a council made up of representatives from a range of nation-states with widely different populations and economic strengths, such as the General Assembly of the UN. In that case the range is truly huge, running from states such as Nauru with only 10,000 inhabitants, to China with a population of 1.3 billion. How should the votes of the different representatives be weighted, in theory, in a case like this?

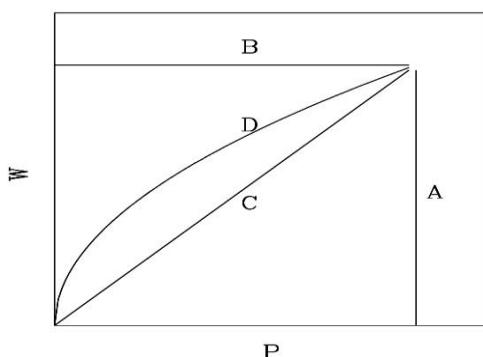


Figure 1. Voting weight W as a function of population P . Four possible systems are illustrated, options A, B, C and D. The Penrose system is D.

Possible Voting Schemes

If the votes are weighted as a function of each nation's population P , there are several options available, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Option A is to give all the weight to the largest nation, or the most powerful nation. This we might call a 'monarchy'. It is clearly unfair and inequitable - and yet the UN Security Council has a system roughly approaching it.

Of all the nations in the UN, only 15 are members of the Security Council. They consist of the five permanent members, plus ten rotating members elected from the General Assembly for a term of two years. The permanent members are the victorious Great Powers from World War II, namely the USA, Russia, Britain, France and China. When a matter comes to a vote in the Security Council, it must be approved by 9 out of the 15 members; but on a 'substantive issue' of peace and security, all 5 permanent members must concur for the decision to be approved. Thus the 5 permanent members have a 'veto' power over substantive issues, and have the final say on matters of peace and security. This is not a monarchy but an 'oligarchy', one might say. The Security Council is in essence an alliance of the Great Powers, following a pattern going back through the League of Nations to the Concert of Europe after Waterloo.

The next option (B) is an equal vote for every member of the council. This is the option adopted by the General Assembly of the UN, where every nation has one vote, according to the principle of 'sovereign equality' of all nations adopted in the Charter (Charter). This also is very far from an optimum model. It means that tiny Nauru, with 10000 inhabitants, gets an equal vote with the USA, which has 30,000 times as many people, and an economy maybe half a million times larger. This is wildly inconsistent with the realities of power and influence in the international community. The great

powers can find themselves simply swamped by the votes of the smaller countries in the General Assembly. The inevitable upshot is that the great powers will never allow themselves to be bound by the decisions of such a council. The resolutions of the General Assembly are non-binding on members, and are often disregarded. The Assembly is sometimes criticized as little more than a talkshop.

Of course these criticisms of the UN system are not new. The UN does a wonderful job, on a shoestring budget, in feeding famine victims, preventing disease, and aiding refugees. In the classic phrase, if it did not exist, we would have to invent it. But nevertheless its constitutional model is deeply flawed. There have been countless discussions of the need for reform of the UN over the years. We shall mention some of them later on.

Returning to Figure 1, the simplest and most equitable voting system would seem at first sight to be option C, where each nation gets a weight W proportional to its population:

$$W = \text{constant} \times P$$

In fact, however, this model is still not optimal. It would give the smaller nations, such as Nauru, such a minuscule vote that they would have no influence whatever on the decisions of the council. It would certainly negate completely the idea of 'sovereign equality' among nations, and lead to severe discontent as the smaller nations would feel themselves ignored and disregarded by the larger ones.

Banzhaf (1963) analysed this weighting scheme, which had been proposed for state legislatures in New Jersey and New Mexico. He showed by means of



hypothetical examples that it doesn't work. He studied the 'voting power' of each representative, defined as the ability of a legislator, by his vote, to affect the passage or defeat of a measure. Under scheme C, legislators with the smallest vote may find themselves with a voting power of zero: that is, the outcome of a vote will be determined by those with the largest weights, regardless of how the lower weighted votes are cast.

The Penrose Scheme

This brings us to option D, the Penrose system. This gives each nation a weight proportional to the *square root* of its population:

$$W = \text{constant} \times \sqrt{P}$$

There are very good arguments to say that this is the optimal voting scheme (Penrose 1946). As one can see from Figure 1, it gives the biggest nations the largest vote, which is in accord with the realities of power distribution. On the other hand, it does give the smaller nations a significant weight, more than their population would seem to warrant, so that they can still influence the decisions of the council. Thus the reasonable aspirations of all parties can be satisfied.

The mathematician Lionel Penrose first introduced this scheme in his paper '*The Elementary Statistics of Majority Voting*' in 1946 (Penrose 1946). It was also discussed and endorsed by a world federalist group in the 1960s, as recounted in Everett Millard's book, '*Freedom in a Federal World*' (Millard 1969).

The mathematical argument runs as follows. Lacking any *a priori* information,

we can compare a vote involving N voters with a scientific experiment repeated N times. The experiment will be subject to random experimental errors. According to statistical theory, by repeating the experiment N times and averaging the results, a more accurate result can be obtained: in fact, the expected error in the mean decreases like one over the square root of N - or alternatively, the 'reliability' of the result increases like the square root of N. In the same way, the vote of an individual voter is unpredictable; but by combining the results of many voters, a more reliable or predictable result is obtained. This is well known to opinion pollsters, who will tell you that the expected error in their sample votes is proportional to $1/\sqrt{N}$, where N is the number of voters sampled. If we give a weight to each vote proportional to its 'reliability', we arrive at the Penrose scheme.

There is another, related argument to show that this is the optimum scheme. A question beginning to be asked in international councils is this: should the European Union represent the European people, or should each European nation be represented separately? If each nation was represented separately, and if they all voted together as a bloc, then the total European vote would obviously be much larger than if there was only a single representative, under the Penrose scheme. But generally the Europeans would not all vote the same way, and so their votes would cancel each other out, to some extent. Assuming that there is no correlation between their votes, one can show statistically that under the Penrose scheme the net average European vote would be exactly the *same*, regardless of whether they are represented as a bloc,



or as individual nations. This is another crucial test for the optimum scheme.

A final question regarding the voting system is whether population alone should be taken as the defining variable. An alternative scheme would be to use the financial contribution C of each member state as the determining variable:

$$W = \text{constant} \times \sqrt{C}$$

This would be in accordance with the old adage, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', and with the realities of comparative power once again. The statistical arguments connected with population would no longer apply, of course; but the qualitative arguments given above would still hold good. If the Penrose scheme were applied to the UN General Assembly, for instance, using population P as the yardstick, then India and China would have a weight three or four times larger than the United States, which would not match the power and influence of the respective nations. Using the financial contribution of each nation to the UN budget as the yardstick would be a more sensible and pragmatic choice. Of course in the long run, as the economic differences between nations are ironed out, it would make little difference which prescription was adopted.

The European Union

There have been many papers discussing the Penrose scheme in connection with the 'qualified majority' voting rules used by the European Union. Proposals that the EU should formally adopt the Penrose scheme were made by Sweden in 2003, during negotiations on the Amsterdam Treaty, and by Poland in 2007, in connection with the Lisbon Treaty.

Zyckowski and Slomczynski (2004, 2006) from the Jagiellonian University in Poland have calculated that the Penrose scheme, together with a 'quota' of 62% (i.e. assenting votes have to pass a threshold of 62% of the total population for a measure to be approved) would ensure that the voting power of citizens in all countries of the EU would be equal, according to game theory. This scheme is known as the 'Jagiellonian compromise'. The figure of 62% is a consequence of the number and size of member states of the EU. For a very large number of member states, the optimal quota would drop down towards 50%.

The European Union has not formally adopted the Penrose scheme, but by a process of pragmatic adjustment has arrived at a very similar result. Voting procedures in the Council of the European Union are based on the Treaty of Nice, and are due to be modified by the Treaty of Lisbon after 2014. The Council consists of a minister from each member state, whose portfolio encompasses the proposal under discussion. When the Council is acting on a proposal put to it by the European Commission, the following qualified majority voting (QMV) system operates. Each member state has a fixed number of votes, allotted as shown in Figure 2. To be approved the proposal must be supported by 255 votes from a total of 345 (about 74% of the votes). Furthermore, it must be supported by a majority of the member states (50%), and by the representatives of at least 62% of the population. In practice, the population requirement is almost always implied already by the condition on the number of votes.



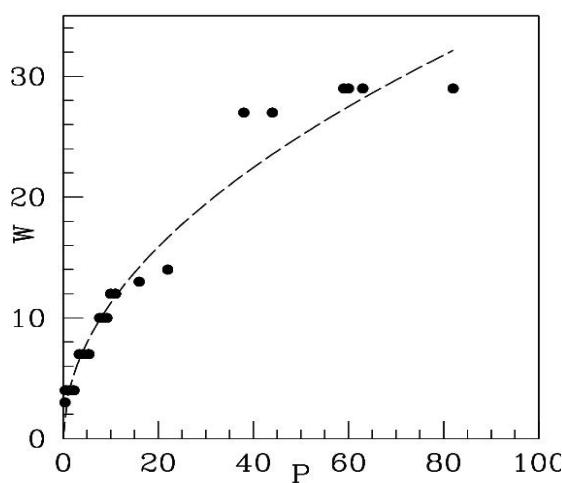


Figure 2. Number of votes W allotted to each member state in the European Council as a function of population P (in millions), according to the Treaty of Nice. The Penrose formula is shown as a dashed line.

Figure 2 shows the number of votes allotted to each member state as a function of its population, in comparison to the Penrose formula. It can be seen that the allocated votes follow the Penrose formula quite nicely, except for a few anomalies. The most obvious anomalies are that Germany, with a population of 82 million, should have 32 votes rather than 29, and Romania, with 22 million, should have 17 votes rather than 14. Poland and Spain, on the other hand, have too large a weighting, and should have 23 votes rather than 27. It is somewhat ironic that Poland, which advocated the Penrose scheme, would get a smaller weighting if it were implemented.

Felsenthal and Machover (2001) have pointed out the dangers involved in setting the voting threshold as high as 74% of the vote, in comparison with the Jagiellonian compromise figure of 62%. That clearly makes it more difficult to get

proposals accepted, and may lead to 'sclerosis' or deadlock in the Council. Moberg (2002) discusses how the threshold rules arose out of the desire of the larger states for a greater blocking power against measures they disapprove of. He argues that fears of paralysis in decision making are highly exaggerated, because in practice most decisions have already been discussed before being put to the Council, and a near consensus has been reached. Nevertheless, it is clear that such a high threshold will block any decision on any of the more contentious issues.

It is notable that the European Constitutional Convention of 2003 proposed a different set of rules (Draft Treaty 2003), with a qualified majority consisting simply of a majority of the Ministers voting, representing three-fifths of the Union's population. This would have been a highly retrograde step.

In recent times, other regional associations have begun to copy the European example. Latin America and the African Union, surprisingly enough, seem to be furthest along this path. The Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, has even argued for the creation of a 'United States of Africa' (Gaddafi 2009), in imitation of earlier calls for a 'United States of Europe' from historical figures such as Jean Monnet, Victor Hugo, and George Washington. The African Union has not yet reached the sophistication of a qualified majority voting scheme, however.

Proposals for Reform of the United Nations



The problems with the decision-making procedures in the UN have been recognized from the beginning, and calls for reform have been made from time to time ever since its foundation. One of the best-known schemes was Richard Hudson's 'binding triad' proposal, which proposed that a resolution of the General Assembly should become binding on the member states if the affirmative votes satisfied three criteria, namely:

- that they included two-thirds of the member states;
- that they represented a majority of the world's population;
- and that they represented a majority of the financial contributions to the UN.

All such proposals have foundered, however, on the rigidity of the UN Charter. Amendments to the Charter require the assent of two-thirds of the members of the Assembly, and all five permanent members of the Security Council. This is so difficult to achieve for a substantial reform, that no Charter Review Conference has even been convened. The Summit on UN Reform in 2005 was not able to reach agreement on any substantial reform of the Security Council or the General Assembly.

The Campaign for a More Democratic UN (CAMDUN) launched in 2007 a renewed campaign for the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA). The idea is to set up an assembly of parliamentarians from member states as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, which would not require any amendment of the Charter. The Parliamentary Assembly would initially consist of nominated legislators from the

national parliaments, and have a purely advisory role. In the longer term, however, it is envisaged that the members would be directly elected, and the assembly would introduce a democratic aspect to the UN which is currently lacking. The campaign has won support from some 600 Members of Parliament worldwide.

There have been various proposals for apportioning votes among member states in such an assembly. The Provisional Peoples Assembly has suggested that the number of seats allotted to each nation should be determined by the Penrose method, with some modifications. This suggestion would only be justifiable, however, if all the members from a given nation voted together as a bloc, which would destroy the whole purpose of the assembly. If they all voted independently, it is hard to justify anything other than a 'one man one vote' allocation, i.e. seats allocated in proportion to population.

Joseph E. Schwartzberg (2003) has proposed a weighted voting scheme for the General Assembly, to cure the misallocation of voting power previously discussed. His formula for each nation's voting weight is

$$W = (P+C+M)/3,$$

where P is the nation's percentage of the total world population, C is its percentage of the total contributions to the UN budget, and M is the nation's percentage of the total UN membership (the same for all members). This would imply a change from option B in Figure 2 to a modified version of option C, which would certainly be a major improvement, even if it is not the optimum scheme. The presence of the constant term M in the formula gives



a (little) extra weight to the smaller nations which brings the formula somewhat closer to the Penrose scheme.

NATO

There have also been suggestions recently for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, to adopt a qualified majority voting system. 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. 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 perhaps 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 28 member nations. This has put the old consensus model of decision-making under great strain. The military officers of the alliance have become increasingly frustrated by the sclerosis in the decision-making process. The problem was highlighted for the public by the long period of delay and indecision before the alliance finally decided to intervene in Bosnia. In 2007 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 (Jones 2007). “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?”

This call was echoed in an extensive report advocating renewal of NATO, *Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World*, by five former chiefs of staff in their respective countries, namely General John Shalikashvili of the US, General Klaus Naumann of Germany, General Henk van der Breemen of Holland, Admiral Jacques Lanxade of France, and Field Marshal Lord Inge of Britain (Naumann 2008). They suggested a shift in NATO decision-making from consensus to majority voting at all levels below the NATO Council, and the abolition of national caveats in operational matters.

Many countries further afield have become NATO “partners”, including even Russia itself. Given the broadening of its operational range, it is not a huge step to envisage the expansion of NATO membership to democracies outside the traditional boundaries of Europe and North America, to become a global alliance for mutual collective security. Former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain has advocated such an expansion recently (Aznar 2006). 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.



Australia, for example, is the largest non-NATO contributor to the anti-Taliban struggle in Afghanistan, and has provided more forces than some full NATO members.

If NATO were to adopt a qualified majority voting system, this would be another situation where the Penrose system could usefully be applied, presumably calculated on the size of each nation's financial contribution to the alliance. This would mark a significant step in the evolution of the organization, transforming it from a mere alliance to something more like a community of democratic nations – a concept to which we now turn our attention.

A Community of Democratic Nations

There have been a number of recent calls for the formation of a worldwide community of democratic nations, in some form, in order to tackle some of the broader global issues confronting us all as citizens of the global village. Global warming and other forms of damage to the environment have become an alarming new threat to our children's heritage. Sixty years after World War II, mankind still faces a looming threat from the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Billions of the world's poor still face the ever-present dangers of famine, disease and war; and the basic human rights of many thousands of people are still horribly violated every day, without means of redress.

John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, in 2007 proposed a '*League of Democracies*' as an organization 'where the world's democracies could come together to discuss problems and solutions on the basis of shared principles

and a common vision of the future'. It would complement the United Nations, and 'could act where the UN fails to act, in places like Darfur. It could join to fight the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa and fashion better policies to confront the crisis of our environment' (McCain 2007). Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay have recently proposed a similar concept in the form of a '*Concert of Democracies*', involving up to 60 democratic nations, to form an 'international institution capable of prompt and effective action both to prevent, and where necessary respond to, threats to international security' (Daalder 2008). Ex-prime-minister Edouard Balladur of France has even gone so far as to suggest a *Union* between the USA and Europe to form a bulwark of the West against various threats to Western values (Balladur 2007). And finally, President Obama has emphasized that his administration will move away from the unilateralist position of the Bush administration, and seek more cooperation with America's friends and allies. Whether this extends to the creation of new formal mechanisms of cooperation remains to be seen.

If these proposals were to come to fruition, the question of voting systems would again come up. A '*League*' or a '*Concert*' of democracies would imply the structure of a mere alliance, where consensus among the members is required to reach a decision. As we have seen, this is likely to be a recipe for deadlock, frustration, and inaction. Far better would be to move as quickly as possible to a '*Community*' of democratic nations on the European or Penrose model, where decisions are taken as far as possible on a weighted majority vote, with individual members perhaps being



able to ‘opt out’ of a particular decision, via their own constitutional processes, if they feel strongly that it is against their national interest.

Such a community might be based on NATO in the first instance, as in past proposals for a North Atlantic Community (e.g. Deutsch et al. (1957); see also the campaign for a union of the democracies led by Clarence Streit (1939)).

Alternatively, it might be based on an amalgamation of NATO and the OECD, to include an economic aspect; or else it might be set up as entirely new organization. All these options have been canvassed at one time or another.

Conclusions

In summary, we have discussed the Penrose weighted majority voting scheme, widely recognized as the optimum choice for international councils made up of representatives from various nations with widely differing populations and financial resources. It gives the larger nations a larger vote, but not a dominant vote, in accordance with natural justice and the realities of world power. On the other hand, it gives the smaller nations a smaller, but not entirely insignificant vote, so that they can have at least some

■ Chris Hamer (references over page)

influence on the decisions of the council. The mathematician Lionel Penrose gave the first statistical justification for the scheme.

By a process of pragmatic adjustment, the European Union has arrived at a qualified majority voting scheme for the Council of Ministers which conforms quite closely to the Penrose formula. The scheme could usefully be applied in other international councils, such as the North Atlantic Council of NATO, or even the General Assembly of the United Nations - although such a reform of the UN is notoriously difficult, if not impossible to achieve.

Finally, we have briefly discussed the possibility of forming a Community of Democratic Nations, which has been proposed in different forms by a number of commentators to help in tackling the enormous and pressing issues which confront the global community, such as climate change, nuclear weapons, and the perennial problems of the world’s poor and dispossessed. The Council of such a community would be another instance where the Penrose scheme should be applied. A sensible weighting scheme is of crucial importance to ensure that the council makes responsible and widely accepted decisions.

I hope my presidency will address what has become a universal clamour all over the world for the democratization of the United Nations. I promise to give full support to the working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

H.E. Miguel D'Escoto,



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