

## THE UNITED CITIZENS OF EARTH

by  
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There is a fundamental problem with the United Nations and that is the recognition of sovereignty of nations above the rights of individuals. This has effectively eliminated the possibility of the UN ever bringing justice to all the world's people and that effectively eliminates the possibility of ever bringing peace. The United Nations was the start, and the only possible start, of the formation of a true world government and it has gone as far as it can go within the constraints of its original charter. It is time for a new or radically altered body – it is time to make the individual the basis for rights and obligations under the world body. It is time for the UN to become the United Citizens of Earth.

To make this fundamental shift a reality does not mean the elimination of nations. They are a (sometimes) legitimate form of regional government and many things presently under the control of nations can best be determined at that scale. Similarly, the division of powers within nations into smaller regional areas, even down to cities and towns and rural areas, each with its own government controlling issues that affect its citizens at that scale, is also workable. What is needed is a new definition of ultimate rights. Ultimate rights must originate with the individual and migrate upward, not in a hierarchy but a circle, so that the individual is not only closest to the most local governance but on his other side to the most global governance. The individual becomes the point on the circle from which all other rights emanate.

In practice, the defense of the individual's rights, including and especially his life, would be the joint responsibility of the entire circle of influence, and would remain paramount. Under this structure, whatever threatened the rights and life of the individual would be protected by other bodies of the circle, and if one member of the circle was threatening those rights it would be the obligation of other member to protect them from the threat. In this arrangement, the existing practice of local governments being subject to regional control and regional governments being subject to national control would be extended to include national governments being subject to world control.

In nations at present local laws are similarly subject to regional laws and regional laws are subject to national laws. This hierarchy too must be extended to global laws, perhaps limited to individual and biosphere rights, which will supercede all national laws. And an international justice system whose jurisdiction is the entire globe must be part of any new charter.

This may sound simple, even obvious, but it will be an enormous struggle of the will of the people everywhere to prevail and bring to heel those powerful individuals within national governments that have been accustomed to controlling the power of societies, both economic and military.

Once accomplished, it will become apparent that while local police forces may maintain civil order in towns, cities, states and nations under the rule of law, none of these police forces have any jurisdiction outside their geographic areas. The same must apply to so-called armies kept by nations. No national army should have any legal right to act in or occupy any territory not legally its own, no matter what the pretext. Only the army of the United Citizens would have legitimacy over the entire globe, and then only to defend the rights of individuals and biosphere threatened by national forces within or between nations. National armies would effectively be police forces employed only to prevent violations of rights not protected by more regional bodies, never to gain territory or expand influence, either political or economic. And national territorial boundaries in particular could only legitimately be altered by negotiations ratified by majority decisions of the world body in a full and free vote.

Failing this, global problems such as atmospheric warming and the newly expanding nuclear threat cannot be effectively resisted. The last decade has seen the increased militarism of powerful nations emerge, including the threat of widening the arena to include the space above our atmosphere. This is likely to be a greater threat to us in the near future than even global warming, and like global warming its pace is accelerating.

If we can't restrain the powerful individuals in powerful nations I have no doubt we will all die together and the meek who inherit the earth will turn out to be cockroaches or viruses. What a failed experiment we will have turned out to be— what an epitaph written of us all.

The prospect of inaction or endless fractional infighting in the cause of protecting privilege is very real and the most likely impediment to survival. Whether the instrument of our demise is global warming or a nuclear cataclysm, or some other unforeseen problem, the cause of our demise will have ultimately been the same— the inability of individuals to recognize the equal rights of all and to forego the domination of others.