

PROPOSAL FOR UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION IN U.S. ELECTIONS

Paulo Martins
marpaulo@uol.com.br

According to the United Nations accord, *Principles on Human Rights and Environment* (The Ksentini Principles, July 6, 1994) *,

"All persons have the right to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment. This right and other human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, are universal, interdependent and indivisible."

Yet, never before in the history of the planet has one country had as much power in the world as the U.S. does now. Because its power conflicts with peoples' universal rights, we affirm that there be universal, global participation in US elections.

* For a recent summary see: <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/hurist.html>

Comments

(This is an archived discussion. You can no longer submit comments.)

George

Friday 12 March 2004

Those who are citizens of the U.S. should be the only people allowed to vote. They know their Constitution, and the way their country works, better than people who don't live in this country.

Linda , Tulsa OK

Friday 12 March 2004

I understand that each country should run its own affairs and put its own house in order, without the added confusion of others being involved.

It seems to me however, the reason for this proposal is the realization that America's actions and decisions affect other countries more than most American's might realize. One would choose to agree that there is a need to educate the laymen here in America or in Zimbabwe on ongoing political issues to help these people have an informed consent if there is need for their input.

Currently, however, one can suggest that those immigrants that are here in American should be given a right to vote in the United states elections.

The reason being that, a substantial number of these people reached a certain education level to be issued a visa to come to this country, some are here for

political reasons and already have an appreciation of their countries' state and how it is affected by America.

It is from this group of people that random sampling can be done and certain representative can be allowed to vote and have a say in congress/ legislation. This would help to bring the picture closer to home so that whatever decisions are made can be weighed and evaluated not just by outsiders looking in, but by those from inside who can voice and state what would really be beneficial without having a bias.

In response to one comment that was made that other countries just stand by and don't do anything about situations. One needs to understand that the superiority of America in international affairs has stripped most of the other countries of their independence unofficially. when aid is given to these countries there are some strings attached and inability to pay back, or the need for more aid would mean abiding by certain rules that America imposes and these restrict these countries. Even the united nations doesn't seem to have power over American, its authority is questionable when it comes to dealing with this super power. Thus there is a need for a different way of getting input from other countries that would enhance or limit America's international impact.

One would also agree that there is need for educating the John Does in America as well as Zimbabwe so as to let them have a more informed consent when it comes time to make these political decisions. Most of us are ignorant of what really is happening amongst our selves because all we know is what comes out on the surface. Depending on the media that airs the different events, we will get one side of the story and not get to appreciate the patriotism that each individual has for their country and desire for equality and power.

Rory, Indiana

Friday 12 March 2004

When Leah writes "Foreigners do not have the same way of life as Americans, so why then should they be allowed to make decisions for the American people"....it seems like she is actually making the same point that Paulo makes with his proposal. The proposal asserts that the U.S government (foreigners) is making decisions that affect the people of Brazil (and, of course, many other nations).

Perhaps it would be helpful if Paulo could list some of the specific ways that the U.S. government makes decisions that affect the people of Brazil.

Leah, Tulsa, Ok.

Friday 12 March 2004

I feel that people all over the world should not be allowed to participate in U.S. national elections because they are not U.S. citizens. Foreigners do not have the same way of life as Americans, so why then should they be allowed to make decisions for the American people.

MB, USA

Thursday 11 March 2004

I do not think that everyone in the world should have the right to vote in U.S. national elections. I think if you do not live here and it is not affecting you everyday then you should not have the right to vote.

Clark Shaver - Tulsa OK USA

Thursday 11 March 2004

The idea that I think the argument is about is legislation (or the direct effects of legislation) without representation. If the US policies directly affect another group of people shouldn't they have a say in those policies? I find several problems with this. One is that a lot of the effects of policy that have been discussed are economic. These issues are a group of people (U.S. Citizens) that are directing their financial affairs in a certain way. If people who do not live in this country want a say in my money then they better be paying in the same amount as every one else in this country. That means that the entire world would have to pay taxes to the US plus their own taxes. I am not sure that people want to do this. Plus I think that most economic effects on other countries are the byproduct of industrial America making decisions on how to conduct their business. While in this countries those companies must abide the laws of this land, and while in other countries there business is governed by the laws of that country. Therefore it would seem to me that THOSE governments need to be amended not ours.

If the people of the world want a vote to help regulate our laws then it would be safe to say that the president would have the same power over them as he does us. So our constitution would have to be abided by all nations who vote. Furthermore, we would have say in their nation also. We would vote for kings, and presidents around the world. This would be the only true democratic way to allow other people to vote in this nation. Or they could submit themselves as another state in the union.

Judith Blau

Thursday 11 March 2004

Dear LB,

I take it that you are a student. Let me help you here. Contrary to your idea and the one held by the President of the US, Protestants - I take you are a Protestant and not Catholic or Jewish - are not a demographic majority in the world and cannot make truth claims for others. Additionally, appeal to religious authority simply does not fly in international discussions, and is deemed inappropriate in national, public ones as well. Religious appeals in public fora (especially international ones) disappeared with the Dark Ages, about the 13th century. For this reason, religious appeals by Americans confirm to people around the world that Americans are extremely isolated and uniformed about global issues.

If you wish to discuss this further, send me a message at my own email (above).

LB , USA

Wednesday 10 March 2004

With the exception of a few - and I mean a few' - most Americans love their Constitution, their freedoms, their country. It is against the Constitution for foreigners - those who don't live here - to vote in our elections, and as a patriotic American, I feel it is completely unacceptable for non-citizens to vote in elections that affect me more than it will affect those in another country. Now, if an imigrant chooses to move here and work hard, obey the laws, pay taxes, etc., and wants to become a citizen, more power to you. Most American's ancestors were imigrants at one point anyway. Finally, and most importantly, since I'm a Christian and have read the Book of Revelation, I don't want to move, in any way, towards the idea of a one-world government.

David- Coweta, Ok.

Tuesday 9 March 2004

If you are not a citizen of the United States, you have no right to vote. Most of the world has no clue as to what goes on in the daily lives of Americans.

Again I state the rest of the world needs to keep their opinion to themselves on who should be our president.

This matter is an A (The American people), and B (The American government's)

democracy, so the rest of the world can C thier way out!!!!

Carl, Bartlesville, Oklahoma USA

Tuesday 9 March 2004

I understand how many people feel that the United States can be preceived as an "Empire" or even very ethnocentric. in many ways they are. There are also many factors to it. The main one, I think, is the lack of education. I find that the majority of young Americans are not being nutured like they have been in the past. The American society values money and material over mental and physical health. They also are not taught due to the fail education system about the world cultures like they should. In result. the American individual does not have a sence of concern for the society as a whole.

However, that does not mean that the world has a right to vote in the United States of America's elections. They must then be willing to allow American citizen that same priviledge. Under out law we allow other countries a voice to speak their mind. We even allow them to influence our laws. However, the majority of the world would rather compalin about how bad it is then actually do something about it.

Carrie, OK, USA

Monday 8 March 2004

I don't believe there should be global input because globally, people do not follow and live by the laws in the US, therefore, no voting from the world in an US election should be allowed

Alexandria

Sunday 7 March 2004

I feel that people that are not from this country should have no right to vote in our elections. As of now, the people who live here sometimes have a hard enough time getting their opinions heard and if the world was allowed to vote it would be that much harder. Another reason is that they do not live here so what would be the point for them to have a say in what our (the people who do live here) government does.

kn, USA

Saturday 6 March 2004

This is a fair and just proposal. Most certainly there should be universal participation in the U.S. elections.

alberto moncada, so/wb

Thursday 4 March 2004

Dear CM, the question is that American militars and American multinationals are spoiling MY environment for the sake of their narrow interests. Do you know the damage they are creating in IRAK? And how little they care for things other than protecting the oil fields?

The pasivity and ignorance of the American electorale to the devastation caused abroad by American nationals has prompted, among other factors, this proposal.

cm, chapel hill

Thursday 4 March 2004

No, No, No, and NO. The idea of open international US elections is appalling and absurd to even discuss because it will never happen. Opening the elections to everyone wouldn't create equal rights for those who suffer from the US's "Empire," it would take away my right as an American to a " a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment, etc." No one can or should vote in an election where ALL of the issues don't relate to their everyday life. American elections should remain just that, AMERICAN.

[Joon-Suk, UNC, Chapel Hill, USA](#)

Monday 1 March 2004

Comments on recent posts:

"... Other countries have valid opinions and should be heard, but allowing people to vote who neither live in the country or pay taxes is not the best first step."

- If the criterion for voting rights is residency and paying taxes: Are you in favor of excluding U.S. expatriates from voting ? And grant it to non-naturalized immigrants (they live here, possibly illegally, but pay taxes) ? Also, how long do you have to have lived here and how much tax must you have paid to "qualify" ? All these questions show that granting voting rights cannot be solely based on residency and tax payment.

"... I'd hate to play the role of the devil's advocate but John Doe over in Zimbabwe doesn't have the information or personal experience to vote on decisions that will directly affect my life."

- So voting rights only for "educated" people ? Hmm, does that include a literacy and history test ? Also, how much information can all of us claim to have about the circumstance of, let's say, welfare recipients ? Is it, because we have never lived their lives, that we should not be allowed to vote on issues of social welfare ?

Though I am skeptical about granting non-citizens voting rights as well, I reject the idea that "informedness" or "shared experience" are a good enough criteria.

Doo Daa, Chapel Hill

Monday 1 March 2004

Personally, I feel it is ridiculous for people outside of our country to be able to decide who runs our government. I feel like it is hard enough for American individuals to have their voices heard and elect good representatives to Congress. Our president's decisions certainly do have an effect on global decisions, but they still have a greater effect on the American public. A global non-binding council/committee could deal with specifically U.S. related foreign affairs. Other countries have valid opinions and should be heard, but allowing people to vote who neither live in the country or pay taxes is not the best first step. The American public should be aware of our foreign policies and make sure we are not infringing on other people's universal rights.

Jana, UNC-Chapel Hill, USA

Monday 1 March 2004

I think that this proposal sounds nice in theory, but there is no way that it would work. I'd hate to play the role of the devil's advocate but John Doe over in

Zimbabwe doesn't have the information or personal experience to vote on decisions that will directly affect my life. On the same token, I don't have any business voting in his country's elections. The US and the world in general is becoming far too capitalistic for that to ever work.

[Joon-Suk, UNC, Chapel Hill, USA](#)

Sunday 29 February 2004

Ok,

comments on the following statements:

"FTAA - Free Trade Area of America - and NAFTA - the North American Free Trade Agreement - permit the US to dump their subsidized products on Brazil and other Latin American countries, and undercut their economies. It is unfair, with cruel results to populations. European states have done the same, but there is more transparency in the EU, and they are beginning to roll back subsidies for their own products."

You probably are talking about agricultural subsidies. If so, I agree with you that the western industrialized nations are hypocrites when it comes to free trade in agriculture (and in fact the EU is not much better than the US in this respect). However, I doubt that the bulk of US exports (which are in manufactured goods and services) gets and requires any subsidies. Also, while subsidies are unfair to farmers in the countries to which the US exports agricultural goods, they benefit the non-farming population (because the non-farming population will be able to purchase food/agric. products at a lower price thanks to the subsidized imports). Whether these benefits outweigh the costs (more rural poverty, social disruption, etc) is of course a matter of debate, quite apart from the issue that export subsidies counteract the idea of free and fair trade.

"THE COMMERCE SECRETARY OF USA ARE NOT BRAZILIAN CITIZEN AND NOT PAY TAXE IN BRASIL BUT MAKE IMPOSSIBLE YOU FIND BRAZILIAN PRODUCTS IN AMERICAN SUPERMARKET.. FREE COMMERCE ONLY IN ONE DIRECTION (USA/BRASIL) NOT IN CONTRARY."

So, what makes you so sure that the only reason that one cannot find many Brazilian products here in the U.S. are trade restrictions ? I agree with respect to agriculture products that probably is the main culprit. But as for other non-agricultural products, it could quite possibly be a question of market competition, not government intervention. In fact, one Brazilian product, Embraer jet airplanes sell quite well in the U.S. and worldwide.

"you think that America does not infringe on others' rights with currency, with IMF, WTO, the military, trade, ?"

Ok, I will make the standard economists' argument here: No one forces countries

to hold and use US dollars or lower tariffs, no one forces countries to accept the terms and conditions of the IMF and WTO. Each country has the ability and right to refuse either, which obviously can have negative economic consequences. But the fact that one is forced to choose the lesser of two evils does not make the situation one of "no choice". Countries accept free trade, the IMF, WTO etc despite the negative consequences, because they decided that there is something to be gained as well and that gain in their mind outweighs the negative consequences.

An additional question is what and whose rights exactly are being infringed upon ? Is there for example a basic right to a job ? If so, what kind of job ? Does the individual also have some or any responsibilities in obtaining and maintaining a job ? Suppose, we can answer all those questions. Then, the following questions still remain: Is the US government the only infringer ? What about other industrialized nations ? What blame falls to their own employer, their own government? I don't see why the default assumption must be that the US government is responsible for everything.

Considering the questions of "whose rights?": Free trade creates both winners and losers - in all countries involved. Losers include small farmers outside the US and blue collar workers in the US. Winners include the export industries in the US (and that also includes the employees of these firms) and individuals outside of the US who get employed by the export industries in those countries. So how do you weigh the right (assuming that it exists) of the farmer to his or her economic existence prior to market liberalization versus the right (assuming that it exists) of the blue-collar worker to his new job which sprung up due to some free trade agreement ?

Monica UNC

Saturday 28 February 2004

I would agree. I don't think immigrants should be allowed to vote on issues concerning this country. I think this is the right of citizens. But, on the flip side I am genuinely concern about the well being of immigrants. I wouldn't like to see their needs overlooked.

Judith, US

Friday 27 February 2004

Yes, Paulo, I agree. FTAA - Free Trade Area of America - and NAFTA - the North American Free Trade Agreement - permit the US to dump their subsidized products on Brazil and other Latin American countries, and undercut their economies. It is unfair, with cruel results to populations. European states have done the same, but

there is more transparency in the EU, and they are beginning to roll back subsidies for their own products.

PAULO MARTINS BRASIL

Friday 27 February 2004

MY SHORTS COMMENTS

KERI. I AGREE WITH YOU

NICOLE USA X UN . THE RECENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USA AND UN
COMPROVE THAT THE REAL POWER IS WITH USA.
CUNITRAS USA X UN SIMILAR TO NICOLE. THE POWER IS USA NOTE UN. SO, IS
NECESSARY the world being allowed to vote in the United States
elections, BECAUSE HERE IS THE PLACE OF THE REAL POWER.

ALM . The people aren't citizens and do not pay tax CITIZEN = ONLY IF PAY
TAXE??? THE COMMERCE SECRETARY OF USA ARE NOT BRAZILIAN CITIZEN AND
NOT PAY TAXE IN BRASIL BUT
MAKE IMPOSSIBLE YOU FIND BRAZILIAN PRODUCTS IN AMERICAN
SUPERMARKET.. FREE COMMERCE ONLY IN ONE DIRECTION (USA/BRASIL) NOT IN
CONTRARY.

Scheff, Thomas, UCSB

Friday 27 February 2004

I must have missed the discussion of the Patriot act. Would it be in order for me to bring up that topic again?

ALM, CH USA

Thursday 26 February 2004

I agree that perhaps we should hold non-binding elections in these countries. The people aren't citizens and do not pay taxes. I think their opinions are valid and should have an impact on the nations actions and be taken into consideration. However I don't believe that it should be a direct affiliation upon our governance.

Conitras

Thursday 26 February 2004

I think that Keri brings up a valid point. Unless there is a way to change America's system of checks and balances to be global the idea of universal US elections will never work. I believe that it would be more effective if the United Nations could establish more power over countries essentially creating a world government. Instead of the world being allowed to vote in the United States elections the citizens of the world could vote for the representatives to the UN.

Nicole

Wednesday 25 February 2004

I think that what Pabulo is saying is valid in the since that because the US plays such an important role in other countries affairs that citizens of those countries should be allowed to determine who is governing the US. However I do not believe that this topic would be up for discussion if the United States honored all of the guidelines set by the United Nations.

Keri

Wednesday 25 February 2004

In response to Paolo ("Keri - what do you mean by expanded legislative system?")...

I read your question as an idea of a way to "democratize" the American empire...and wondered if we could deepen these efforts. With this my question about an expanded legislative system, I was attempting to push your idea further. Instead of just expanding the franchise, I meant to suggest expanding the legislative body to include representatives from around the globe.

I could not finesse a way to globalize the American judicial system (the other of our three sided system of checks and balances). Maybe other folks have ideas?

Judith (again), Chapel Hill, USA

Wednesday 25 February 2004

My colleague, Alberto, refers to imperialism in his reply to Tanya. But he is not very specific. Pinochet is deemed too ill to be tried, but a warrant has also been served on Kissinger for his involvement with tortures and disappearances in Chile, and also carpet bombing in Cambodia, with enormous loss of civilian lives (estimated at 1.7 million).

The US does not recognize the International Criminal Court, which is why the case is stalled. An outstanding source on this is Geoffrey Robertson's Crimes Against Humanity. The introduction is by Kenneth Roth, director of Human Rights Watch.

Chris Balga, Chapell Hill- USA

Wednesday 25 February 2004

This is an interesting subject to say that the world should have a place in a US vote. However, this in my opinion is a very ill advised move. I don't feel it is right for the world who only sees a "spun" view of what are goes on in our government. The thing I believe the world is concerned with is our involvement in the international arena. This is what the UN is for. If you feel the US is violating you rights to govern effectively in you country then you take it to the UN or another international organization. Other countries have no right to determine our domestic policies that determine how we live. Many of these countries have far worse problems to deal with within their own areas to add on the issues of a country they do not live in. I would find it offensive to have someone in Chad had a say in how my taxes that I pay be spent. Let's get real people. We fought the revolutionary war to get a foreign power to stop making laws for us when they did not live here. Should we essentially throw out everything that our soldiers have fought to defend and protect since 1776? The world can no longer afford to be isolationist because of the every present spread of globalization. Ideas are spread through this means and though you can curtail it, eventually you must face the inevitable. What a country does can and usually will effect the rest of the world and action must be taken if it will hurt the overall stability of the world.

Paulo, Brazil

Wednesday 25 February 2004

There are many ideas and I want to respond.

Greg - do you mean a change in quantity changes the quality?

Keri - what do you mean by expanded legislative system?

Zach - can you dump hazardous residues inside US black neighborhoods and dump them in other countries too and not let them vote?

Ki - you think that America does not infringe on others' rights with currency, with IMF, WTO, the military, trade, ?

alberto moncada, so/wb

Wednesday 25 February 2004

Baltasar Garzon, a Spanish judge, subpoenaed Pinochet for his crimes in Chile and he almost succeeded in incarcerate him but England send him back to Chile for illness.

USA has always said that she is above international law not only for its refusal to participate in the approval of the International Criminal Court but also for her refusal to acknowledge crimes like mining the Nicaraguan ports. It is part of the Imperial attitude.

Joon-Suk, UNC, Chapel Hill, USA

Tuesday 24 February 2004

Alright,

here are some comments of mine on various people's statements:

"Because its [U.S.] power conflicts with peoples' universal rights, I propose that there be universal, global participation in US elections."

- It is not clear to me how exactly the conflict of U.S. power with human rights must necessarily be remedied by granting voting rights. (1) If you allow non-U.S. residents/citizens to vote and thereby participate in the legislative process, then you give also give them authority to vote on issues that have nothing to do with human rights (unless you claim any legislation has to do with human rights). It is debateable whether this is justified. (2) Infringement on (human) rights can also be addressed through the judicial system. A (world) court with enforceable jurisdiction over the entire world may be an alternative means of resolving conflicts. (3) Also, if you grant non-U.S. citizens/residents voting rights in the U.S.

are you prepared to grant the same rights to U.S. citizens/residents in all other countries of the world ? If so are you prepared for the "money politics" that will follow ? That is, well-funded U.S./Corporate interest campaign-financing elections in say Brazil, etc. ?

"This is because people who remember how the US toppled democracy in Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua, and dozens of other countries know that the US government's grand mission is not the spread of democracy, but control of the world."

- Hmm, this is a pretty grand claim. I agree that U.S. foreign policy in the past and present has been definitely motivated by economic and geopolitical interests. Also, I agree that claims that U.S. foreign policy is about spreading democracy are not very credible. But to conclude that these are the ONLY motivating factors for U.S. foreign policy seems like a jump of conclusion. To cite U.S. involvement in questionable foreign interventions in the past assumes that U.S. foreign policy has not and cannot change over time - again, a plausible belief, but for which there is a lack of actual evidence. I believe that U.S. foreign policy responds to a mix of motivations: "National interests" (whatever that may be) and "public opinion" (which quite often include humanitarian concerns).

"Perhaps it would be useful to emphasize what many citizens in the US have in common with the people of Brazil and with people throughout the world--they are victims of actions initiated by the US government and they have no real influence in shaping the policies of the US government. If we can agree that democracy is a good thing, why confine it to political institutions?"

- The (implicit) definition of "victimhood" in the above statement is a pretty broad one: Anytime I am unable to influence someone else decisions that will impact me, I am a victim. Under this definition representative democracy creates an electorate of victims who only every 4 years or so escape victimhood. Majority rule automatically makes the minority be victims. So that seems to imply, the only way to avoid victimhood is to have direct democracy and non-majority rule. The problem I have with direct democracy is that it in practice rewards the politically most active people and punishes the least active people (which on the surface of it doesn't sound so bad). But unfortunately most low-income individual often cannot afford to be very politically active. Representative democracy allows less active and also less informed people to participate in the political system as equals. Problems with non-majority rule are that it is not clear what alternate set of decision rules are acceptable. One possibility is to have "rule by non-partisan experts" or courts. I am not sure whether that's so much better than majority rule. In fact, most constitutions recognize the dilemma between majority rule and the protection of basic (minority) rights. Democracy as understood as "majority rule" always has the tendency to create "victims".

I apologize for the excessive length of my post.

[rodneyc -miami,ohio-usa](#)

Tuesday 24 February 2004

Until, and unless we are able to get past our local myopia, we will never see the globe interrelatedness of our collective concerns, and problems..

tanya, peru

Tuesday 24 February 2004

i would like to respond specifically to UNC SociKid 's statement, "Throughout history, America has been willing and tried to support the development of the democracies around the world. If you want a better life, ask for our help, but don't take what people I know have worked hard to have."

This statement is a prime example of why people who are not in the US should be allowed to at least decide that warmongering George Bush should not be in office. Perhaps people outside the US are in a better position to see that the US does not spread democracy. This is because people who remember how the US toppled democracy in Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua, and dozens of other countries know that the US government 's grand mission is not the spread of democracy, but control of the world. This is the central misunderstanding and ultimate hypocrisy. Spokespeople of the US government use a rhetoric of democracy to promote their controlling the economic and political flows of the world. This is not democracy, this is Empire.

I hope someone who is better versed in US foreign policy can jump in here and explain better what happened to Allende in Chile or the Sandanistas in Nicaragua, or any other example to demonstrate the fallacy of the US 's grand mission of spreading democracy.

Rory, Indiana

Tuesday 24 February 2004

Friends,

Judith invited me to toss my "two cents" into this fascinating and important discussion. So here it goes...

First of all, I enthusiastically support the interpretation of the USA's role in the world system that motivates Paulo's proposal. Any objective analysis would support Paulo's

claim that millions of individuals throughout the world are harmed by policies of the US government, and these individuals have no voice when it comes to the implementation of those policies and practices. Because Paulo's proposal is provocative (universal, global participation in US elections), it could potentially capture the interest of the broader public, thus sparking important discussion of the real issues behind the proposal.

However, I am wondering about how useful the proposal would be in influencing the views held by those who do not already see the situation in this light. It seems likely that we would end up "preaching to the choir," since those who are already on board will appreciate the proposal as a statement designed to call attention to injustice, while others will have difficulty getting past the imagery provoked by the prospect of global participation in US elections. We can already see this in some of the responses to Paulo's proposal.

Perhaps it would be useful to emphasize what many citizens in the US have in common with the people of Brazil and with people throughout the world--they are victims of actions initiated by the US government and they have no real influence in shaping the policies of the US government. If we can agree that democracy is a good thing, why confine it to political institutions? In the US, of course, the two-party winner-take-all system essentially disenfranchises most US citizens. But why should democracy be constrained by national borders? Why not also extend democracy to the workplace, to the family, etc...

Zach, UNC

Tuesday 24 February 2004

I think allowing people outside of our border to vote in our elections is somewhat absurd. They are not citizens of our country, and thus the decision that the president makes, although it affects everyone, affects me far greater. I would be open to perhaps a committee of foreign countries set up to vote on certain topics, related only to foreign affairs, but non-binding, and only for our country to take into consideration.

Ki

Monday 23 February 2004

I am commenting on the statement that was given earlier about the proposal for Universal participation in US elections. It is true that the US does in deed have alot of power but I dont feel that it will enfringe on people's universal rights. I feel that we can keep this seperate eventhough the government does have alot of power. The proposal for universal and global participation in the US elcetions would be a good idea. But again, I totally agree with amoncada when she says that the war is just a symbol of the will to deny human rights in general. Soc 68

Greg

Monday 23 February 2004

Forgive me if I address this issue at a pragmatic level. However, in general, I like the idea of allowing those impacted to have a voice, and I also like the idea of placing limits on the US military (more than US elections and Congress seem to be able to do). Even if it is not immediately possible, I'd love to see a project that moves (even incrementally) in that direction and is inspiring.

With that as a backdrop, I am not in favor of this proposal for pragmatic reasons. I am in the majority of US voters who DID NOT vote for Bush. Even if the US electorate is more or less immune to the flood of money and advertisements that Bush will be unleashing, I fear I may once again be in the majority and still have Bush and his neocon warriors directing US militarism. Frankly, I don't have much hope in an international election reflecting the "will of the people" when US elections already fail on that score.

Second, I think the 21st Century will witness the demise of the state as the ubiquitous global political organization. But this decline will not occur uniformly. Some of the smaller states will fail, leaving in the wake of this failure a legacy of chaos and violence (recent developments in Zaire - Congo, Haiti, Uganda, etc. might foreshadow this). But powerful states will not disappear any time soon. In fact, they are likely to exert influence far beyond their borders. By extending US citizenship around the globe, this proposal might inadvertently reinforce US neo-imperialism and even lend legitimacy to it -- while accelerating the demise of other states around the globe.

So -- here's my alternative. Hold non-binding global referenda (as a first step) -- sponsored by the UN. This would take an initial, if only symbolic, step toward global citizenship, and it makes it more difficult for great powers to negotiate with elites of other societies in the UN. Moreover, a global condemnation of a policy or embrace of an alternative would help NGOs and citizens negotiate with individual states and before the UN.

Keri

Monday 23 February 2004

Dear All,

Paulo's suggestion is a fabulous proposal for a new global governance. Although I am not certain if a direct democracy is the format for a global democratic election, I wonder how an expansion of the electoral college to the global scope might work. Perhaps instead of eliminating the electoral college (an idea which was in the air after the 2000 presidential election), the expansion of this institution would be a positive solution.

This is an especially relevant proposal, given the forces of Americanization and the power that it has around the world. If world citizens are to be changed and see changes around them produced by American policies and people, it seems fair that world citizens ought to have some agency in the selection of U.S. political leaders.

Do you think there should be an expanded legislative system as well? And if so, would this legislative body be empowered to enact global laws? How would global laws be enforced?

(Note: The United Nation claims not to be a governing body, but a membership organization.)

Paulo Martins, Brazil

Sunday 22 February 2004

Dear UNC Soc Kid and Eric:

1) Everyone praises the democratic ideals and practices of EARLY America. At one time America was a beacon light. Alas, that is no longer the case.

2) The global realities of today are very well documented, and I imagine you read some of these books and articles in your classes at UNC. Eric's points about the Brazilian economy are not quite correct. It is American domination that is responsible for Brazil's recent economic decline. For more information on Brazil see:

<http://www1.ibge.gov.br/english/default.php>. And, the US Center for Economic and Policy Research has excellent reports on IMF. See: <http://www.cepr.net/>

3) There are no practical reasons why people outside of the USA cannot vote in USA elections.

4) Sociologists without Borders is in the vanguard advancing these discussions.

I look forward to your replies.

UNC Soci Kid

Sunday 22 February 2004

Wait just a minute. Let's think back to where the powerhouse also known as the U.S.A came from: people who were fed up living life without rights and democratic government. Can you fault the U.S. for succeeding? The world let communist Russia rise and fall without wanting a piece of its seeming success story. There's no reason that anyone who is 1)too apathetic to make change or 2)too inept to make change in his own country should be able to effect the going on of America. Throughout history, America has been willing and tried to support the development of the democracies around the world. If you want a better life, ask for our help, but don't take what people I know have worked hard to have.

Eric, USA

Saturday 21 February 2004

OK. Lets get real. Brazil can't manage its own economy - hardly a good indicator of its being able to boss around Americans. Rates of GDP growth have slipped from 6.2 percent annual change in 1994 to roughly 2.5 percent now. Brazil's debt service has jumped from 1.8 percent of GDP in 1990 to about 11 percent this year. Imports are going up faster than exports. You tell me why you think Brazilians will better manage US affairs!!

Judith

Saturday 21 February 2004

Why are we discussing this within the framework of representative democracy? I contend this is old-fashioned, nation-state kind of thinking.

Instead, global democracy and global governance could be substantive - people voting, for example, on the arms race, public goods, food security - the sorts of issues that affect all people on the planet.

AMONCADA

Saturday 21 February 2004

With the excuse of 11/9, American foreign policy is more imperialist than multilateralist and with the new enemy, terrorism, USA can maintain world control indefinitely. That s why we ask to vote in the election of the Emperor

Judith

Friday 20 February 2004

Dear Paulo and Alberto – Paulo’s proposal is, we recognize, preposterous outside of the framework of globalization analysis, but heuristic and provocative within this framework. Throughout the long period of colonization and imperial rule, European monarchs, governments, corporations, merchants, and missionaries were calling the shots, and increasingly through the industrializing period, American political and economic actors were, and are, as well.

Before 9/11 many of us celebrated, first, the increasing equality among nation-states, and second, the devolution of centralized nation-states. This devolution accompanied new trade alliances in Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa. It accompanied new forms of participatory governance, and multilateral agreements.

After 9/11, nationalism gained momentum in the West, and most especially in the US. While the French do not seem to mind that Italians have a say in French practices and policies in the EU, it will take a while before the Americans come to terms with even mild forms of multilateralism.

I am enjoying this discussion, and soon we will broaden it to include other participants.

Saludos, Judith

amoncada, so/wb

Thursday 19 February 2004

Dear Judith

Of course there more ways than war to became an Empire and maintain it but the obscenity of war, specially a war against smaller and poorer countries, is a symbol of the will to deny human rights in general

Judith (again) USA

Thursday 19 February 2004

Alberto - I believe you derail the subtle complexities of the assumptions behind Paulo's proposal. Let's say that the US and Spain withdraw their troops from Iraq. In what ways then does the US -- say, through veto power at the UN, its power in WTO negotiations & the IMF, and through the freedoms it gives its multinationals -- dominate other countries? Or how does the US undermine the human rights of people around the globe?

/ Respectfully yours, Judith

amoncada, so/wb

Wednesday 18 February 2004

The Spanish Government is an accomplice of USA in the Irak war without discussing it in Congress. We are a USA colony and deserve to vote in the Emperor election

Judith Blau, UNC - Chapel Hill, USa

Wednesday 18 February 2004

Paulo launches an international Public- Sociology conversation about something that concerns everyone. Your comments are welcome, and non-members may participate.