

**Minutes**  
**Monthly Envoy Conference Calls**  
October 17, 2018 1pm and 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. 1pm EDT
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Bruce Knotts (UN Office, NYC)
    - iii. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church of Alton, IL)
    - iv. Astrid Trefzger (Unitarian Fellowship of Kingston, ON)
    - v. Marietta Tanner (UU Church of Arlington, VA)
  - b. 6pm EDT
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Bruce Knotts (UN Office, NYC)
    - iii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
    - iv. PJ Deak (Unitarian Society of New Haven in Hamden, CT)
    - v. Phyllis Baxter (UU Church of North Hatley, QC)
    - vi. Martha Wilson (Universalist Unitarian Church in Halifax, NS)
- II. UU-UNO Director Bruce Knotts shares news direct from the United Nations
  - a. The effects of climate change are now upon us as we've seen from huge storms, tsunamis, etc. Also leading to migration. 25% of people in Lebanon are refugees – they're dealing with it with no resources and it's very difficult. Also leading to political instability.
  - b. Much concern at the UN these days about U.S. sentiments (Trump administration) in opposition to multilateralism, International Criminal Court, climate change, etc. UN is doubling down on reinforcing multilateralism. Very disappointing to see the U.S. take this turn, as it typically played a strong role in support of human rights and multilateralism. Need a global response to epidemics such as Ebola which is making a resurgence in Congo now.
    - i. UU-UNO worked with UN and NGO/DPI Executive Committee to put together a conference on multilateralism in August – global problems need global solutions. This Monday had a session of high-level NGO leaders & Bruce was included in that group, talking about what we as NGOs can do to help the UN, looking forward to 2020. (check out [10/17 article on PassBlue](#))
    - ii. Working to make General Assembly stronger vis-à-vis Security Council. Currently the P5 (Permanent 5 members of Security Council, US, UK, France, Russia, China) tend to dominate at the UN (Bruce sometimes calls P3 because U.S., Russia, and China are most powerful), but other countries are pushing back, saying they don't want to be pushed around by the P5 anymore. E.g. banning nuclear weapons last summer is a prime example of the GA working together without depending on leadership from the P5.

- iii. Working to support as much as possible medium and small democracies (e.g. European countries, Canada, Latin American countries, & others) that are trying to assert themselves against rise in nationalism – Trump’s not the only one! Victor Orban in Hungary, Rodrigo Duterte in Philippines, Poland, etc. Plus, nationalist parties in many countries, including Sweden, Germany, Holland, France, UK, Brazil. Need more diverse leadership from other countries at the UN since the U.S. and UK are pulling back from leadership roles at the UN.
- iv. This is not the first time we’ve seen this. Any time there’s stress (economic, migration, climate) there’s a tendency for people to turn to the one leader who says “I alone can fix it.” Some people believe that and they vote for it. Saw this in 1930s around the world, and now the UN is doing everything it can to resist.
- v. Many leaders at UN GA spoke about need for multilateralism, repudiation of Donald Trump message.
- vi. US has withdrawn from Human Rights Council, withdrawn support from UNESCO, UNRWA (which supports Palestinian refugees), repudiating ICC
- vii. NGOs are concerned as well and are trying to find ways to make the UN more effective – want more civil society participation
- c. Coming up: high-profile visitors at UU-UNO/United Nations!
  - i. UUA Prez Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and President’s Council will visit the UN, take a tour, speakers = [Gillian Sorensen](#) and [Shamina de Gonzaga](#), and talk with UNO staff.
  - ii. Rev. Carlos Martinez at Community Church is organizing a similar trip for ministers in the NY area on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Hoping to enhance the commitment of ministers.
    - 1. Allison will add info to calendar of events and send a link to PJ.

### III. Questions for Bruce?

- a. Ron: How much is this a problem of racism? Many people/countries who are very racist have been in charge of things for a long time.
  - i. When the UN was founded, only 51 countries signed the UN Charter. Now there are 193 – and many of those are former colonies. Definitely a racial component. In addition to racial dimension there’s also a large country v. small country dimension. Trump seems incapable of criticizing Putin, yet is scathing in comments about China. Why one over the other? In most places, white supremacy is veiled, but with Trump there’s no hiding it.
- b. Ron: How about industrialization?
  - i. Bruce: This is a big issue for climate conversation. Developing countries are being told they have to cut back on their carbon emissions, even when the developed countries are the ones largely responsible for carbon in atmosphere. The plan (within the Paris Agreement) has been for richer countries give money to poorer countries for sacrifices they have to make to reduce their carbon emissions, but the U.S. no longer participates in this. Some American companies and foundations have donated to that climate fund. Don’t want to donate the

full amount because that would imply that the U.S. doesn't have to worry about it because someone else is donating on their behalf.

- ii. Another issue that's come up at the Security Council is Trump's withdrawal from Iran Deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) which is actually a violation of the UN Security Council.
- c. Astrid: Can you tell me more about what Trump said about the International Criminal Court?
  - i. John Bolton (currently Trump's National Security advisory) has hated the UN forever, including during term as Bush Jr.'s ambassador to the UN. What the U.S. is afraid of (that's why never ratified Rome Statute) is that the U.S. itself could be charged by the ICC for crimes in Afghanistan and etc. Probably a groundless fear. Partly b/c not signatory to the court. Also ICC only takes jurisdiction if no competent courts within country that can stand up to the administration in the areas of human rights & etc. Even so, there's a fear that the U.S. could be charged in the ICC so Trump admin wants to be done with it. Even Obama administration cooperated with the ICC, but didn't sign or ratify the Rome Statute (would need Senate cooperation)
    - 1. Ron: Important to understand the difference in attitude between Trump and cooperative few during Obama administration
  - ii. Bruce: John Bolton's approach is to ask for intelligence that proves something he thinks or wants to believe, rather than actually learn the truth (and then if intelligence doesn't provide evidence, e.g. actually there are no WMDs in Cuba, he chucks binders in face of aides/staff!)
- d. Marietta: Any chance that Bolton would be UN Ambassador again after Nikki Haley leaves at the end of the year?
  - i. Bruce expects Bolton would rather stay where he is. Much closer to the president currently. (Bolton was UN Ambassador under George W. Bush)
  - ii. Whoever Trump sends will most likely be hostile to the UN and will get frank feedback from UN community regarding the Administration's policy stances.
- e. Ron: Important issue is the possibility of a World Parliament authorized by the GA as a subsidiary body. Some support from the European Union and African Union and South American Union. Any chance anything would happen?
  - i. Bruce: Short answer is no. Doesn't mean that discussion won't continue. Bill Pace from World Federalists was at session with NGOs on Monday, discussed this. Each representative in the UN/General Assembly is representing their country's executive branch. Legislators are not represented. A parliament would be another vector to put pressure on the executives to behave themselves. However probably need to change the Charter to come up with something new.
  - ii. Ron: Don't actually need to change the Charter, just need the GA to affirm that the Parliament is subordinate to it.
  - iii. Bruce: UU-UNO helped organize an interfaith meeting yesterday with NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace, and Security sponsored by Austria, Nigeria,

Thailand, and South Africa. Small and Medium countries are really working on standing up to the larger countries in the GA to re-work how the General Assembly runs. Not sure what form it will take and reform won't happen immediately.

- f. Astrid: Can countries like Canada do anything?
  - i. Bruce: Talked on Monday about R2P (Responsibility to Protect) is a Canadian doctrine. Canadian Gen. Romeo Dallaire led UN mission in Rwanda 1994 – UN peacekeepers were not authorized to intervene in Rwanda. This doctrine obligates countries to do something when genocide is happening. Has been referred to recently with regards to genocide against Rohingya population in Burma.
  - ii. Under Harper, Canadian mission was not very active. Now they have 3x the amount of work – very highly respected at the UN. Canadian leadership is very welcome.
  - iii. Ideals are under some threat. But all leaders of small and medium democracies need to work to uphold respect for HR, int'l conventions, rule of law, collaboration to solve global problems.
  - iv. Astrid: Seems that financial resources are also important and richer countries need to step up.
  - v. UU-UNO recently recognized Norway for work on human rights, esp. lgbtq. They're doing a lot to financially support the UN, especially those areas where the U.S. is pulling back.
  - vi. Other medium-sized countries may not have the financial capacity to the same degree as U.S. or China, but the fact that they're using their money at the UN to keep programs alive that are being defunded by the US is extremely important. A lot of money from other countries to help Palestinian Refugees.
  - vii. Japan is a huge supporter of UNICEF. Do a lot of work on nuclear disarmament.
- g. Bill: We're still in! U.S. coalition of states/cities/businesses that are still committed to the Paris Agreement even though U.S. federal gov't wants to pull out. Washington State is making an effort to put a tax on carbon emissions via ballot initiative this election day. Showing that the U.S. is not disengaged – only at the federal level!
  - i. Bruce will be attending UN climate conference in Katowice, Poland this December – his first trip to a COP. Trump has said we're withdrawing from Paris Agreement – we actually can't, it's a whole long process, we're just not living up to our commitments. Meanwhile as Bill mentioned states and businesses are working to achieve some of the Paris goals.
  - ii. Bill: State-wide UU Summit on Saturday and Bill will be presenting on climate issues including the [recent terrifying report from the IPCC](#). About 20 congregations will be participating. Organized by JUJustice Washington, a new coalition!
- h. PJ: Any important take-aways from Bruce's recent visits to China, Taiwan?

- i. Chinese leaders don't like talking about human rights. Compare Chinese reality and American reality rather than Chinese reality and American ideals – much more even playing field. China has much better economic and social rights than U.S. does. U.S. has more civil and political rights. Every speaker at 3-day conference spoke about poverty alleviation. We've got millions of poor people in the U.S. but no political leaders talk about poverty – we've got a lot to learn.
  - i. Martha: Update from Nova Scotia: former UU-UNO Envoy Valerie Chapman died a couple of weeks ago and she is missed terribly.
    - i. Bruce: She was one of the most effective advocates we've had in all of Canada.
  - j. Huge thanks to Bruce for joining this Envoy call.
- IV. UN Sunday – Envoys share about plans for their upcoming UN Sunday services
  - a. Marietta: Talking about refugees during the service, will include testimony from a man who was one of the Lost Boys of Sudan and will participate in Q&A after the service. Marietta wrote a story for the Time for All Ages that will be read by a boy from congregation. It talks about witnessing the real-life impacts of climate change through the effects of Hurricane Florence.
  - b. Ron: Program committee hasn't gotten to approving a time for UN Sunday yet
    - i. Allison: Many congregations do it later in the winter, Jan, Feb, even March! Not too late if October doesn't work.
  - c. Astrid: UN Sunday service will be this weekend, Astrid just finished the Order of Service. Will show a video from UNHCR that shows a second a day from the life of a little girl in the UK who becomes a refugee (anyone can become a refugee, no matter economic status/etc.) <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/most-shocking-second-a-day-videos.html>
  - d. Ron: Don't forget Human Rights Day on December 10<sup>th</sup>! This will be the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ron is a member of UN Association of St. Louis. Program this year will focus on human rights *locally*.
  - e. Astrid: Also coming up is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWI / Armistice Day (/ Veterans' Day in U.S.) This was the first war that Canada was involved in as a country.
    - i. Ron: Big event in D.C. for Veterans Day 11/11 organized by Veterans for Peace.
  - f. PJ: Bruce will be coming in January for a full UN Sunday service. This week PJ just has about 5 minutes to talk about the UN during the service.
  - g. Phyllis: UN Sunday this week, consulting minister & Phyllis have talked about UN Sunday. Invited someone from Quebec chapter of Unitarians for social justice. Thousands of people crossing Canadian/US border illegally because afraid of being deported from U.S., many cross in Quebec. They're met by RCN officers and taken to detention centers and processed, very civilized, will find out more about that.
    - i. Best process for sending UU-UNO donations through CUC? [Here are instructions!](#) (PDF includes both US and Canadian instructions for donations)
  - h. Martha: Will talk about the Sustainable Development Goals at UN Sunday service this weekend.

- i. SDGs are UN's action planet for sustainable development for the planet between 2015-2030. More at [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment) or [www.globalgoals.org](http://www.globalgoals.org)
  - i. Phyllis: Recreational marijuana is now legal in Canada as of today – all anyone's talking about!
    - i. Bill: It's legal in Washington State – managed by the liquor board who has experience so it's managed well.
  - j. PJ: Bruce is coming to Hartford next week to talk to 75 folks who work for the Connecticut State Judicial Branch about Education for Global Citizenship.
  - k. Bill: Will bring up UN Sunday when speaking on Saturday to the gathering of UUs.
- V. Other programs going on, announcements
- a. Intergenerational Spring Seminar on Gender Equity will be April 11-13, 2019
    - i. Registration will open in December! [www.uua.org/unspringseminar](http://www.uua.org/unspringseminar) for all info
    - ii. Continuing to accept applications for Youth Chaplains and Adult Chaplains, especially from those who do not identify as white cis-gender women (decided to re-open the applications for lack of racial and gender diversity of those received). New deadline is this coming Monday, Oct. 22.
  - b. Keep an eye out for announcement about next month's Envoy call – will have guest speaker Derek Mitchell, Director of [UU Holdeen India Program](#), and a partner from India speaking about the work they do there. It will be the week of November 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. Phyllis: Congregation recently had a speaker from Bishop's University, and spoke of program in Canada – World University Services of Canada – whereby the gov't encourages universities to bring refugee students to Canada. WUSC has representatives that go to refugee camps and take applications from people who want to go to university. They come to Canada for studies and more and more universities are doing this – had a worship service focused on this! Several other countries are doing this program as well e.g. in Scandinavia.
- VI. Adjourn