

THE WORLD FLAG

Proposal to Show All Flags in Unity

Mr Paul Carroll of the US has designed what he calls The World Flag. His design has in the centre a map of the world. Around it are placed 216 world flags. They include every national flag, the flag of the United Nations and some flags of territories dependent in one way or other on larger countries.

The distribution is not random. The corner flags are of countries at opposite points on the globe. In the centre, the USA and Russia flank the map, balancing each other. The UN flag below the map has Japan and Bangladesh, a rich and a poor Asian country on either side. Higher up, the Vatican, Saudi and Israeli flags together represent the three great monotheistic faiths.

There is another reason for placing Japan where it is. At a distance, the white field of the Japanese flag joins with the white background of the map, forming the letter "P" for "Peace". This element might have been reinforced with the placing below the Japanese flag of others with white fields (eg. Finland, South Korea and Cyprus).

Obviously this design breaks two of the rules of "*Good Flag - Bad Flag*". There is no limit on the number of colours, nor can the flag claim "simplicity of design". Are these failings? In the strictest sense of the word, yes, they are, but there are other considerations.



The flag is a brilliantly conceived graphic, probably of great educational value to children and adults alike. At first glance one expects that at a distance the flags will blend into a mass of colour, with the loss of their identities. There are also the changes. The flags of Lesotho and Iraq are obsolete on the picture of the flag flying. Kosovo was not independent then, but now is. Your editor raised these objections with Mr Carroll,

and had his arguments comprehensively demolished.

Pictures of the flag at a distance, both flat against the façade of a building, and flying atop a flagpole, show how the individual flags do remain distinct at a considerable distance. In fact, the greater the distance, the clearer the Peace initial. Moreover, the flags are arranged so as to reduce the problem of merging to a minimum. Agreed that, hanging limp in the absence of wind, there might be confusion, but the overall design still ensures that it is recognisable.

It is still a "work in progress". Updates at intervals will correct obsolete designs and add the flags of any newly-independent states, as the graphic shows.

Having begun as a serious sceptic, your editor has been converted. This is a gallant effort, which succeeds to a quite remarkable degree. □

