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Global Governance: Prospects and Problems

Fred Halliday

Introduction: Global Governance

In the 1990s special attention is being paid to the question of 'global governance'. This is a term almost no one used a decade ago, but which is now generally held to refer to the institutions for managing relations between states across a range of issues, from security to human rights and the environment. 'Governance' in its simplest sense refers to the art of governing, to ensuring that it is morally defensible and efficient.[1] It does not imply that there should be any one institution, but rather, in the present context, refers to a set of interlocking but separate bodies which share a common purpose. Thus it covers the activities of states, but also those of inter-governmental organisations, most notably the UN, and the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and transnational movements: all of these combine, not least through influencing each other, to produce the system of global governance. The argument is not whether such a system is desirable or not: we already have a many-layered global governance system, and indeed one of the central issues is to overcome, through reform, the defaults of a system that has been up and running for several decades. The question is how to make this governance system more effective, more just, and more responsive to the changing international situation.

[...]

The discussion on global governance has [...] acquired an importance and an urgency [...]. The case being made is clear and powerful: that the problems facing the contemporary world cannot be solved either by leaving everything to the actions of individual states, or to the workings of the market, and that the existing mechanisms are insufficient to deal with them. Some proposals do suggest that existing institutions be wound up: the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), being favourite candidates. But the majority of proposals speak of developing existing institutions and, where appropriate, adding on new ones. [...]

The proposals for reform also tend to reflect ways in which the philosophies of global governance, and the concerns uppermost in the minds of the drafters, have shifted over the past fifty years [since the UN was established]. This is evident above all in three respects: first, there is much greater awareness of the importance of unspecific, 'global', problems, of which defence of the environment, an issue almost ignored up to the mid-1980s, is one; secondly, many recognise the importance, for social and economic reasons as much as for reasons of equity, of promoting the interests of women;

thirdly, there is a shift from the overwhelmingly state-centred approach of the UN Charter to a recognition of the rights of individuals and communities who may be in conflict with states [. . .].

Contentious Issues: Five Examples

These [points] present a powerful case [. . .]. What is more difficult is to match these calls for change, in institutions but also in values, against the world as we know it, and to come up with approaches that meet the challenge, and also have a chance of being implemented. That such reforms can work should not be doubted: few, before they were set up, could have believed that either the UN or the European Union would get as far as they did.

Yet assertion of the need for strengthening governance may not be sufficient: the difficulties involve not only the obstacles that currently exist to such a process, but also something less often discussed, the very inherent complexity of these questions, the conflicts that are necessarily tied up with managing the world and building institutions of governance. These conflicts are not the products of chance or political ill-will, but are also inherent ones, and will require difficult choices. Some obvious examples of such inherent problems are raised in the current public debate – that between the worldwide demand for economic growth and the need to protect the environment is an obvious one, as is that between human rights and the sovereignty of states. In what follows here I want to take five such issues pertaining to global governance and address their implications for the growth of global governance. These are intended both to illustrate the possibilities of global governance, and to underline the need for realistic thinking in regard to it.

(i) The role of the great powers

It is the assumption of most writing on global governance, and on growing international cooperation, that this will take place on a shared, multilateral, basis. Proposals for the reform of the Security Council embody such a perspective. Yet international relations has rarely been conducted on this basis, but rather on a mixture of such shared policy-making and of leadership by the more powerful members. In the UN system, for example, the General Assembly is counterposed to the, much more effective, Security Council, in which powerful states have a special place. In the field of security one could contrast the international response to the Kuwait crisis, in which one power did play a leading role, and that to the Yugoslav crisis, in which, until the NATO bombing attacks of late August 1995, this spectacularly failed to occur. In the literature on managing the world economy there is a strong current that argues for 'hegemonic stability', i.e. for the view that unless one country is willing and able to play a leading role, to set the rules and punish wrong-doers, the system will not work. The classic case is the collapse of 1929.[2] More recently the argument is that the Bretton Woods system did not 'fail' – it was destroyed by Richard Nixon in 1971. The lack of any such hegemonic system thereafter has been the source of the world's financial and economic instability. In the ecological debate, there is little point in having agreements if the richest, and most pollution-producing, states do not sign and observe them. The argument can, therefore, be made that the pursuit of international goals – peace, prosperity, safety from ecological collapse, etc. – requires that some states play a leading role and ensure that others follow the rules. This need not necessarily take the form of traditional, imperial, coercion, but can involve a range of pressures and inducements. Indeed, the evidence suggests that as prosperity is diffused, and as democratic institutions grow, then the room for peaceful, negotiated, agreements between states increases and the need for coercion and enforcement decreases.

The difficulties with this argument are many. The most obvious is that it is unjust and that the awareness of this injustice will provoke revolt: any such system will go the way of the colonial empires.[3] It is not easy to argue in favour of a hegemonic system of global governance and few of this year's sets of proposals try to do so. Even when the UN does act effectively this issue tends to be avoided: one of the most repeated arguments *against* the UN role in Kuwait was that the Security Council was 'manipulated' by the USA into taking military action, the assumption being that this in itself was sufficient reason to invalidate the result. Yet one can argue that this is the only way in which such institutions can, realistically, be supposed to operate and that it is better to recognise this. The same would apply, with obvious variations, to the international economic system: the US no doubt gains from having its currency used for three-quarters of world trade, but if this leads the US to maintain a relatively free trading system and to support some stability in world financial and currency systems, it is, arguably, a price worth paying.

There is, however, another problem with this argument, and that is that it presupposes that the great powers, their governments and populations, *actively want* to play an appropriate international role, to reap the benefits and to assume the burdens. It can be argued that a major challenge facing the international system today is that the one power capable of playing such a role shows very little interest in so doing: the US has been the dominant power in the world economy since 1945 and was handed victory in the political and military conflict with the USSR in 1991 – its response has been to draw back from those victories. Many in the USA seem to doubt whether, in any meaningful sense, they won the cold war at all, and there is scant enthusiasm in Congress for an activist US foreign policy, be this in the economic or security fields. If there is little enthusiasm for the advantages, there is, less surprisingly, little enthusiasm for paying the costs. US foreign economic aid is much smaller, as a percentage of GNP, than that of most other developed countries. When it comes to the ecological issue, the US is a reluctant participant in any policy that inhibits its own population: no one will run for office proposing that US taxes on gasoline prices, currently a third or less of European levels, are raised to international levels. The US is, as Secretary-Generals have not tired of telling us, the largest debtor to the UN. One might conclude that the one significant obstacle to the development of global governance is the reluctance of the world's leading power to assume the role that the consolidation and development of that system requires. Yet there is no obvious reason why the US 'ought' to perform these roles, whatever the rest of the world may think.

(ii) Dilemmas of peace-keeping: the Yugoslav case

Reform of peace-keeping activities is, along with reform of the Security Council and Secretariat itself, a favoured theme of writers on the UN and global governance. The

current sets of proposals are no exception: while few favour a revival of the Charter's own mechanism as originally conceived, the Military Staff Committee, composed of senior officers of the permanent members' armed forces, many see a stronger peace-keeping role as desirable and possible. Suggestions are many: more effort should go into anticipating crises and into pre-emptive diplomacy; there should be a permanent UN force, capable of rapid reaction and intervention; the member states should put up more money for peace-keeping; all should contribute forces; mandates should be clear; the 'integrity' of the UN command should be respected.

Yet of all the shadows cast over the fiftieth anniversary of the UN, that of the war in ex-Yugoslavia was perhaps the greatest.[4] Here is a war in which the UN played an active role, in the humanitarian, diplomatic and peace-keeping fields, in which the Security Council maintained an active involvement, passing many resolutions, and yet where the organisation's ability to reduce conflict was apparently little. Yugoslavia represented a crisis not just of the UN itself, not least in the organisation's failure to deliver on threats or protect those who sought refuge with it in the 'safe havens', but of international institutions and internationalist values in general: far from the 'integrity' of the UN command being respected, it is an open secret that interested states time and again sought to influence the activities of UN officials, military and civilian, in the field. At times it was unclear which international body – the UN or NATO – was in charge: certainly the bombing of Serb positions in late August 1995 was ordered by NATO, not the UN. Yugoslavia has involved a crisis for the many other organisations – NATO, EU – that have tried to play a role, for the many non-governmental organisations involved, for any belief in restraint in the conduct of war towards combatants and non-combatants alike and, not least, for any idea that the world is moving away from a situation in which ethnic communities resort to hatred and killing to resolve problems that could, on any objective calculation, be settled by peaceful means. Whatever else can be said of the period before war broke out, it cannot be claimed that pre-emptive diplomacy was not tried. The wars of former Yugoslavia seem therefore to defy much that is subsumed in the term 'global governance'.

There are, of course, some very important qualifications to be made to this judgement. In the first place, it is pure coincidence, if an unhappy one, that this conflict should have flared up in the fiftieth year of the UN: in a broader perspective, the UN's record in peace-keeping is a quite substantial one, and above all in the years since the end of the cold war. In a range of countries – El Salvador, Namibia, Cambodia to name but some – the UN has been central to the attainment of peace. In many other parts of the world – South Africa, the Israel/Palestine conflict, Ireland, Russo-Ukrainian relations – diplomatic breakthroughs have taken place, in which the UN may have been secondary, but where the institutions of global governance, NGOs included, played an important role. There is much in that achievement to build on, and for the UN to be proud of. Secondly, much of the criticism of the UN in former Yugoslavia ignores what it did achieve: the saving of hundreds of thousands of lives, the insulation of Macedonia. Above all, criticism of the UN rests upon an illusion, namely that the UN can in some way impose peace. In fact, as the UN learnt long ago, you cannot keep peace in a situation where the combatants do not want peace, and where, as they have done so spectacularly in former Yugoslavia, they use and abuse the UN, manipulating cease-fires, diplomatic initiatives and humanitarian issues for their own purposes. The first result of what has happened to the UN in the Balkans should be not to criticise it, but to identify those in every camp who have

prevented peace, and, at the same time, to *reduce our expectations* of what the UN can actually do. There have certainly been failures in the UN operation, and not a little mismanagement and corruption too:[5] but the main responsibility for what has occurred there does not lie with the UN.

Beyond these qualifications, there are, however, other issues of a more general kind, that are inherent in the present debate on global governance and which pertain to peace-keeping in general. Three of these can be mentioned here. The first concerns that of recognition of states, and of the right of groups to secede from existing states: the fighting in Yugoslavia was precipitated by the decisions of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia to leave the Yugoslav federation, and by the decision of key states in the international community to recognise them. The argument for this course of action is clear enough: the leaderships who declared independence had the support of the majority of their peoples, they were exercising their right to self-determination under the UN Charter, and those who recognise them were acting in accordance with international law and practice. But this is to ignore the contrary arguments, concerning the rights of the ethnic minorities within Croatia and Bosnia and, more broadly, the predictable international consequences of such an action. For all that the text of the UN Charter allows secession, the international community has, until the collapse of Soviet communism, been very cautious about recognising it, for obvious reasons.[6] Yet some resolution of this issue, some sense of when secession is and is not possible, is a necessary part of any system of global equity and security.

The second issue underlying the Balkan case is the relation between different forms of intervention: human rights, humanitarian, diplomatic, peace-keeping, peace-enforcement (i.e. coercive). The UN has been involved in all of these, yet they are, in many respects, incompatible: humanitarian intervention (i.e. saving lives) can conflict with the human rights approach (i.e. identifying and prosecuting war criminals) and with enforcement; diplomatic efforts may involve working with those responsible for ethnic cleansing, and may, at times, lead negotiators to accept the results of such forcible expulsions; most obviously of all, peace-keeping, with white vehicles and with a presumption of neutrality, conflicts with peace-enforcement, which involves bombing violators of cease-fires and safe havens. Behind all of these problems, and indeed behind the whole Yugoslav story, lies another problem, namely that of the international response: if there has been an international failure, including a failure of global governance, it lies not in external manipulation of one party or the other, or in the indecisiveness of Boutros-Ghali, his representative Yasuko Akashi and others, but in the lack of support *from public opinion in the developed world* for a stronger military commitment. The question of *why* the armies of France, Britain, the US or anywhere else should be actively involved with the risk of serious casualties has not been resolved: in the actions of late August 1995 NATO forces intervened, but with air power and long-range artillery. There was no commitment of combat troops on the ground, and not a little suspicion that this show of force was a prelude to a withdrawal of forces in the event of negotiations breaking down. The subsequent Dayton agreement did lead to deployment of a Stabilisation Force on the ground, but it set a timetable for withdrawal and remained restrained, to say the least, in implementing contentious parts of the Dayton programme. The issue of weak public support for peace-enforcement is the one that is most avoided, yet it is the central one in the wars of former Yugoslavia, if not in the whole future of global governance.

(iii) Economic nationalism

This discussion of the challenges to international peace and security is parallel to another issue, one that both underlies the need for global governance but also highlights the difficulties involved, namely what is termed 'globalisation'. By 'globalisation' is meant the breaking down of national barriers and the creation of a new single, world-wide, entity: this is most obviously the case in the field of finance, with the spread of a global currency market, and the attendant mobility of investment capital. But it is increasingly so with regard to trade, as national barriers come down, and production, with the rise of multinational corporations. In other areas too – in culture, fashion, information technology – globalisation is on the increase.

The globalisation issue itself has provoked an enormous amount of controversy, both as to what is actually occurring and as to what is desirable. Each of these arguments has implications for the debate on global governance. Those who argue that globalisation *is* indeed occurring would conclude that the nation state, as historically constituted, is increasingly unable to fulfil its traditional roles – of managing the economy, defending the living standards of its population, ensuring equity within its own frontiers, and even of defending security interests. The conclusion they would draw is that these functions have to be transferred to international bodies that can now manage the world economy and international welfare across frontiers: some existing institutions can be developed for this purpose – the World Bank, the IMF, the Bank of International Settlements, the Group of Seven Economic Summits, the OECD, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and now the World Trade Organization, founded on 1 January 1995 – but, they would argue, more are needed. Yet there are two obvious problems with this line of argument: the first, long made by critics from the Third World, is that international bodies reflect not the general interest of their members, but the interests of the powerful minority of rich states, and that any proposals for extending their powers or creating a new UN Economic Council would serve to protect the privileges of the rich; the second, inherent in the globalisation argument itself, is that these bodies can only function if their constituent members, nation states, are themselves strong – yet the very reason for having such bodies is said to be that nation states are now in a weaker situation than hitherto.

There is little doubt that such globalisation has produced a growing process of global economic interdependence. While the EU states have decided at their Intergovernmental Conference to take further steps towards integration (whatever the British may decide to do or not do), the other two global trading blocs – NAFTA and a yen bloc in the Far East – are being consolidated, while in South America a range of countries have created MERCOSUR. *Our Global Neighbourhood*, the report of the Commission on Global Governance, suggests a range of ways in which the promotion of interdependence and the management of the world economy may be enhanced, including the setting up of an Economic Security Council, a renewed effort to get donor states to meet the target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for official development assistance, co-operation on migration and the financing of 'global purposes' through charges on the use of common global resources.[7] The Ford Foundation proposes that the Economic Council become, in effect, a global equivalent of the European Union: it 'would promote the harmonisation of the fiscal, monetary and trade policies of the Member States and encourage international cooperation on issues such as transfers of technology and resources, indebtedness, and the functioning of commodity markets'.[8] Here the two distinct currents of thought – global governance in the institutional sense and globalisation in the economic and financial spheres – seem to meet.

There are, however, questions that can be raised about this line of argument. They suggest that all may not go as expected in this sphere, and that matters could indeed go into reverse: universities could, in a decade or two, be offering courses on the break-up of trading blocs, just as they now study decolonisation or the end of the cold war, two equally unanticipated transformations. Equally, and even if we do not see an outright retreat from interdependence and multilateralism, there are difficult, and inevitable, choices that will have to be made and which cannot be resolved by goodwill and political effort alone.

In the first place, it is far from obvious that all countries, or even the richer OECD states, would really be prepared to cede their economic sovereignty to a world body. There are tensions enough in the EU, and the kind of global planning body proposed by Ford may be a long way off. In the same vein, it is not clear that even the major states are committed to a full system of free trade. Within months of the establishment of the WTO we have seen conflicts involving the USA and Japan over automobile imports, and over US reluctance to extend the WTO's multilateral regime to cover banking, insurance and securities. The EU is committed to freeing trade within its frontiers, but has institutionalised a set of barriers to free trade in agricultural and industrial goods between its members and the rest of the world: the Common Agricultural Policy is a protectionist policy on a grandiose scale. When it comes to less developed countries, not least those with strong state sectors, then the record is even more mixed.

This reluctance on free trade reflects a growing concern in the developed world with employment levels: this is as true in Europe as it is in the USA and has led to a growing respectability for what is broadly termed 'protectionism'. Since this can take many forms – tariffs, but also a range of obstacles politely termed 'non-tariff barriers' – it remains within the range of options open to many countries. What is striking is that over the past year or two calls for protectionism have become more common in the developed world, a response both to the opening of markets and to the enduring effects of the recession. We heard a lot about it in the French elections of 1995, and more, not least from Pat Buchanan, in the US elections of 1996. At the same time, this has been as much a concern of the traditional parties of the left, influenced by trade unions, as of the right.

Interlocked with this issue is a topic that is becoming of greater and greater concern throughout the developed world, namely migration. At a time when other factors of production – capital, technology, productive capacity – are becoming more mobile, the most traditional factor of production, labour, is becoming less so. In many countries a combination of trade union defence of jobs and the rise of new right-wing parties is pushing towards a strong nationalist restriction of immigration. The old liberal regime, assuming relatively free movement of labour across frontiers, one that lasted from the early nineteenth century through to the 1960s, has collapsed: yet no one is sure what can, or should, replace it. Many individuals still hold to a presumption in favour of free movement, but no government in the world is willing to implement it. There are obvious conflicts here of economic need and political sensitivity, of universalist moral obligation and nationalist interest. One only has to look at the passions aroused in Germany by limits on the admission of refugees, or in French debates on

the Muslim immigrant population, to see how difficult it is to discuss this question in a reasonable way. Is there some means of managing, even planning, migration through instruments of global governance? This issue is not going to go away. *Our Global Neighbourhood* talks of the need to respect international conventions on migrant workers, and of the need 'to develop more comprehensive institutionalised co-operation regarding migration'. These are, of course, different things: the former is relatively easy to envisage, involving the proper treatment of people who have already migrated; the latter involves the much thornier question of freedom of movement and open labour markets.

(iv) The loss of innocence of NGOs

One of the distinguishing features of the current debate on global governance is the emphasis put on the role of non-governmental organisations. They are seen as part of a growing international civil society, and are, in various ways, incorporated into the formal, state-to-state, processes of the UN. On many issues – political prisoners, the environment, landmines, to name but three – it is NGOs which have, within countries and internationally, developed the policies of global institutions.

This growth of NGOs and of the recognition of their work is in broad terms positive, but it is accompanied by several difficulties, ones that have become clearer as the initial, first, generation of NGO activity has given way to the more complex world of the 1990s. In the first place, it is often an illusion to see NGOs as an alternative to, or substitute for, states. What NGOs seek to do is, in many cases, to influence states, to get them to keep their promises or conform in greater degree to international norms. NGOs are, moreover, often working not to fill a role but to get the state to do so – be this in the realm of welfare provision, or providing food, or maintaining order. In this sense NGOs are not a replacement for states, or a solution to attempts to reduce the role of the state: they are part of the broader support *for* the role of states. In some cases, of course, states deliberately support NGOs in work that the state itself supports but would prefer not to organise directly: British aid agencies, for example, acquire a considerable percentage of their income from the state, in the form of 'matching funds' that combine with monies received from private sources. Increasingly, moreover, and very much parallel with the growth in awareness of NGOs, states have come to influence or even control NGOs: many of the supposedly 'independent' bodies that attend international conferences on particular issues are what are termed 'GONGOs' – government-controlled NGOs, sponsored, more or less overtly, by states. They use the appearance of independence to promote the goals of their state.

This loss of innocence of NGOs has, however, been compounded by two other developments which qualify, even if they do not contradict, the initial liberal view of such bodies as constituents of international civil society. On the one hand, there is the very diversity of the programmes of NGOs themselves: some, arguably most, are participants in 'international civil society' and can be said, in broad terms, to reinforce the system of global governance; but some most certainly are not – be this in movements against immigration in developed countries, fundamentalist religious groups in north and south, or criminal and terrorist organisations. Not all that is 'non-governmental' is civil. On the other hand, NGOs are themselves becoming increasingly involved in

controversy and becoming the objects of political hostility: in the 1980s this involved, for example, disputes on the provision of humanitarian aid to guerrilla movements in Ethiopia or South Africa; in the 1990s NGO representatives have become targets of attack – murder, kidnapping and extortion, while the issue of humanitarian aid to refugees becoming embroiled with assistance to armed, criminal, groups was highlighted in the case of eastern Zaire. The killing of six Red Cross nurses in Chechnya in December 1996 and the kidnapping of NGO officials in Cambodia are examples of this trend.

For NGOs themselves the shifting contours of global governance, and the changed circumstances of the post-cold war world, have also involved questioning of their role, general and specific, that has affected their morale and performance. The Director of Amnesty International, for example, shocked many of his fellow workers in saying that Amnesty was a creation of the cold war: what this meant, in terms of mission, the focus on political prisoners and the commitment to universality, was less clear. The Red Cross has found its role, of mediating between states in war, made far more complex by the spreading of wars in which states are not the main actors, and in which traditional conceptions of military discipline, and indeed the military/civilian distinction, are less relevant.[9] The largest British aid-giving NGO, Oxfam, has been confronted with a shift in public attitudes away from charitable North–South transfers, and a questioning, by public and specialist alike, of the earlier conception of aid. At the same time it has come under increasing pressure to promote its activities in support of the needy not only in the Third World, but in developed countries. For NGOs in general, this loss of certainty and clarity from within has compounded the increase in pressures from without.

(v) Global values

Much is made, in the literature on 'globalisation' and in the report of the Commission on Global Governance, of the emergence of 'global' values, of a commitment to humanity as a whole rather than to individual states and/or nations. The Report talks of a 'Global Civic Ethic' and, in particular, argues for a strengthened interpretation of the right of humanitarian intervention, undercutting where necessary the traditional concept of state sovereignty. There is much validity in these arguments: the lawyers have made considerable headway in showing how we can talk of values that transcend individual states or peoples; there are plenty of areas – international law, signature of human rights conventions, the very language and practice of international relations – where such a common culture exists. There is also evidence to suggest that amongst younger elites the world over there is a more shared culture, of value and aspiration, and an easier interaction than would have been the case in earlier times: a brief tour of the student cafeteria at LSE will illustrate this. *Le Monde Diplomatique* has talked of the new 'cosmocratie' produced by globalised educational opportunity.

There are, however, reasons to be cautious about this perspective of continued progress towards a common humanity. First of all, the philosophers, for all their progress on some issues, are very much not of one mind about the existence of universal, or global, values. On the one hand, in contrast to the lawyers, many doubt whether it is ever possible to talk of a common, or universal, interest – differences of interest will almost always prevail, and cannot be dissolved by identifying some chimerical, harmonious, shared concern. Secondly, the main trend in moral philosophy today is away from belief

in universal, rationally justified, values towards a stress on the inevitable link between values and particular, historically formed and separate, 'communities'. These communities may debate with each other, and engage in more or less civilised interaction, but they cannot dissolve their differences.[10]

Outside the world of philosophy the picture is even less sanguine. For a variety of reasons, there has, over the past two decades or so, been an explosion in nationalist movements, proclamations of new identities, and demands for the recognition of new ethnic and communal rights. This long predated the collapse of communism but has, most spectacularly in former Yugoslavia, been stimulated by the disintegration of multi-ethnic communist states. Within many societies, not least those of western Europe and the USA, there has also been a growing assertion of diversity, of difference, in rejection of hitherto prevailing common norms. Among the majority populations of developed countries there has also, as already noted in regard to hostility to migration, been a growing resort to nationalism and intolerance. For many regions of the world, the trend is towards more difference, and more rejection of universal or common values. At the same time, with the rise of movements of both ethnic and religious character, there has been a growing rejection of the universal aspirations associated with the west – in the rhetoric of non-western states, be they China or Iran, and in that of many movements, there is a denial that any values, especially those associated with the former imperialist countries, can have universal application. One of the most common terms of derogation is to say that something is 'ethnocentric' or 'eurocentric', as if this origin is, in itself, a source of invalidity. This goes, among other things, for any attempt to establish common norms on human rights, on the position of women, or on democracy. Even amongst educated and much-travelled elites it is an open question how deep the new internationalism goes: people who work in multinational corporations or international institutions may feel some commitment to international values, but they can, at the same time, remain very much committed to their own countries of origin. More and more people may speak English, but they do not cease to speak their own languages, and they may resent the way in which globalisation of communications, through the media and information technology, has been dominated by one language. If there is much truth in the saying that 'Travel broadens the mind', the opposite has also been known to occur.

Conclusion: Democracy and Global Governance

The task of promoting global governance is, therefore, both a necessary and a daunting one: beyond the identification or evaluation of problems, and the elaboration of proposals, it involves confronting some deep resistances in the international system and some obstacles that have arisen in the very process of global change over recent years. We can see this in a range of contexts: the success of peace-keeping, for example, continues to run up against the reluctance of sovereign states to commit their forces to combat, and of states criticised by the international community to yield to UN pressure; growing awareness of the ecological crisis threatening us goes together with contention and evasion, in north and south; the rising recognition of the importance of women's position in society has produced outright rejection of change in some states, in the name of sovereignty and national tradition, and adaptive manipulation in others – there was lots of this at Beijing; a greater stress on the rights of individuals

produces denunciation of international, and specifically 'western', interference from others.

[...]

For much of the middle of this century it was held that the state had a necessary role to play in managing the economy and promoting welfare within countries: the concept of 'global governance' is, broadly speaking, a translation to the international sphere of this argument. The Commission on Global Governance and Ford Foundation reports are, although they avoid saying so too explicitly, Keynesianism on a global scale. Despite the success of neo-liberal thinking over the past decade or two, the argument is much more evenly balanced than might at first sight appear. There are many, not least the governments of the successful countries of the Far East, who insist that without state direction there can be no attainment of order or prosperity. That is, in a nutshell, the argument for global governance, an argument that may be made all the more forcefully if the obstacles, and difficult choices involved, are clearly recognised.

Notes

1. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1973) defines 'governance' as 'the action or manner of government . . . the office, function or power of governing . . . method of management, system of regulations'.
2. Charles Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–39* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
3. This is, in essence, the argument of Robert Harvey's *The Return of the Strong: The Drift to Global Disorder* (London: Macmillan, 1995).
4. On the record of post-1989 peace-keeping see James Mayall (ed.), *The New Interventionism 1991–1994* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
5. One of the less publicised downsides of global governance is the opportunities it provides for making money through fraud. The means favoured by UN division commanders in the Balkans peace-keeping operations has been to sell off fuel to the combatants and present UN headquarters with fake invoices: it is reckoned that this could earn the commanders several million dollars a year.
6. The collapse of Soviet communism has produced the fragmentation of four multi-ethnic states (the USSR, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia) and has led to the emergence of twenty-two new sovereign states. Yet from 1945 to 1989 only one state, Bangladesh, was created through secession.
7. *Our Global Neighbourhood*, Report of the Commission on Global Governance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
8. Ford Foundation, *The United Nations in its Second Half-Century* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1995).
9. The ICRC is, technically, *not* an NGO but an intergovernmental organisation. It is included here because of its independent status.
10. Note e.g. Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).