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EFFECTIVE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE WITHOUT EFFECTIVE GLOBAL GOVERNMENT: A CONTEMPORARY MYTH

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Although the recent collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union has significantly reduced the near-term probability of nuclear disaster, it constitutes wishful thinking to imagine that meaningful and effective global governance is possible in today's world. The term "global governance" suggests and implies a degree of order and control in the international community far beyond that which presently exists, and that in fact could only be achieved by means of a global government. The global governance myth has emerged to help people cope with the uncongenial and presumably unavoidable reality that we are living in a world in which global government is impossible, and in which therefore the international condition is most accurately described as "international anarchy." A *dysfunctional* myth is a belief that not only is false, but that discourages and deters thought and action toward overcoming uncongenial realities which are *not*, in fact, unavoidable. Global governance, in all likelihood, falls into the category of dysfunctional myth.

KEYWORDS: Globalization, global governance, global civil society, global government, world government, international relations, international organization.

In a general sense, a myth may be defined as any belief—not capable of compelling support by means of empirical observation and/or logical reasoning—that assists individual human beings to cope with uncongenial and unavoidable realities. To say that such beliefs are not capable of compelling support by means of empirical observation and/or logical reasoning is not to aver that these beliefs are necessarily invalid. An unsupportable belief may in fact be correct, especially if it is interpreted in a general and symbolic sense, as opposed to a specific and literal sense. On the other hand, mythical beliefs may certainly be invalid and even dysfunctional. A dysfunctional myth may be defined as a belief that is not only invalid, but that also discourages and deters positive thought and action toward the amelioration of uncongenial realities which are not, in fact, unavoidable. In this essay I propose to explore the possibility that the fairly widespread belief that effective global

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governance may be achieved in the absence of effective global government does in fact fall into the category of dysfunctional myth.

Global governance has become one of the leading mantras of the contemporary age. Alternatively known as “global civil society,” it may be defined as the totality of institutions, policies and initiatives by which humanity is currently endeavoring to cope with such universal (global) problems as violence and warfare, poverty and exploitation, explosive population growth, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation. The term was apparently invented in the latter 1980s, and came into wide usage in the early 1990s with the formation of the Commission on Global Governance in 1992 and the publication of such seminal works as *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (1992), edited by James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel. In 1995, the quarterly professional journal *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* commenced publication to provide an outlet for the burgeoning number of contributions on the subject. In addition, several books and symposia have recently appeared on global governance/global civil society: for example, Simai (1994), Desai and Redfern (1995), Lipschultz and Mayer (1996), Weiss and Gordenker (1996), Diehl (1997), Paolini et al. (1998), Hewson and Sinclair (1999), Vayrynen (1999), Tehranian (1999), O’Brien et al. (2000). Over the last few years, no treatise on globalization, international relations and/or international organization would be considered complete without substantial discussion of global governance: for example, Falk (1995, pp. 215 ff.), Held (1995, pp. 91 ff., pp. 285 ff.), Zolo (1997, pp. 106 ff.).

The sudden and dramatic popularity of the term “global governance” is plausibly attributed to the sudden and dramatic demise of the Soviet Union. Throughout the Gorbachev era of perestroika and glasnost, there were increasingly encouraging indications that the Soviet people were seriously reconsidering their longstanding commitment to communist ideology. Apparently some critical mass of dissent from the traditional orthodoxy was eventually reached, a societal chain reaction ensued, and within an amazingly short period of time, the Communist Party had been ousted from the position of political leadership and social domination it had held since 1918, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had transformed itself into the Commonwealth of Independent States, a loose confederation comparable, at most, to the British Commonwealth, and the various component states of the ex-USSR and its Eastern European satellite fringe were busily endeavoring to convert themselves into democratic capitalist nations in the image of the United States and the Western European nations. This amazing transition was all the more remarkable for being, on the whole, non-violent. A lesson was provided to the world on the possibility of swift, peaceful and progressive elimination of highly dysfunctional conditions that had until very recently seemed immovable and impermeable.

The fact that the dominant superpower of the communist bloc of nations suddenly changed its mind about “burying” capitalism and Western-style democracy, and decided that it wanted these institutions for itself, had a rapid, significant and highly beneficial effect on international relations. A number of nations, especially the United States and the Russian Federation, quickly commenced programs of deep cuts in military expenditures and armaments. The fears and anxieties that

had plagued a generation—that human civilization would be suddenly devastated by a nuclear world war—dissipated virtually overnight. The general public, the intelligentsia and the political leadership alike displayed almost indecent haste in their eagerness to forget the Cold War—to “bury” it. After more than 40 years, the policy of containment had finally worked as intended by its originators. The future was (and remains) bright.

There is no reasonable doubt that the epochal developments of the early 1990s considerably reduced the short-term threat of all-out nuclear war among the superpowers. This is certainly just cause for a considerable amount of relief and rejoicing. But among those with a deeper understanding of the contemporary world situation and its historical origins, it should be clear that joy should not be completely unrestrained. Human civilization continues to confront very serious long-term problems, problems of such gravity as to pose a threat of reduction to barbarity, if not of physical annihilation. Global problems such as war and poverty did not suddenly emerge at the time of the emergence of the “communist menace” in 1918; it follows that these problems will not disappear along with the disappearance of this menace. Throughout modern history, the sovereign nation-state system has been seriously implicated in the aggravation of these problems. The sovereign nation-state system has not been significantly affected by the collapse and dissolution of the USSR and the ensuing decline of the Cold War. It follows that this system is likely to continue generating debilitating and potentially deadly problems into the unforeseeable future.

The notion of a global government that would encompass all the nations and the peoples of the world, and that would therefore provide an especially effective means of curbing war and its associated and ancillary problems, has a long tradition in the history of ideas. Despite this long tradition, it is widely (if not quite universally) assumed that what would be idyllic in theory would (alas) be disastrous in practice. According to the conventional consensus on global government, such a government would: (1) soon degenerate into an oppressive tyranny; (2) soon generate devastating civil wars; (3) soon spawn a massive, suffocating bureaucracy; and/or (4) all of the above, plus additional liabilities. Humanity will only be ready for global government (continuing according to the conventional consensus) when it has achieved a very high level of economic, political, social, linguistic, religious, cultural and ideological homogeneity—and such complete and comprehensive homogeneity is unlikely to develop for hundreds if not thousands of years. In the meantime, we will have to rely on the rationality of humanity to avoid disaster. Mankind is not rational enough to establish a global government, but he may (hopefully—although there are no compelling reasons for believing this) be rational enough to avoid global disaster.

The working hypothesis of this essay is that in reaction against the uncongenial and presumably unavoidable reality that global government is out of the question—a reaction catalytically inspired by the decline of the Cold War following upon the demise of the Soviet Union—the myth of global governance has arisen. But to go from the improvement in the short-term odds against nuclear disaster to the notion that there is now a “virtual global government” in existence through the mechanism of “global governance” or “global civil society” is quite likely an example of

over-optimistic and over-enthusiastic wishful thinking. It is quite possibly a very dangerous delusion to think that the level of effectiveness which can reasonably be achieved by the current international system in the pursuit of the long-term interests of the entire human species is equivalent to that which could reasonably be achieved by an effective global government. Thus, use of the term “governance” to describe international relations in a world full of self-righteously independent and jealously sovereign nation-states may be an over-statement, an exaggeration, a seriously misleading paradigm. The term itself carries a Panglossian connotation that “all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds” (interpreting “possible” as that which is consistent in a practical sense with presumably inevitable constraints). As such, it may cultivate a complacent attitude, foster inertial conservatism, and deter progressive thinking toward a qualitatively higher form of international organization than that manifested by today’s United Nations.

Most contemporary analysts who make use of the term “global governance,” if pressed on the literal accuracy of the term, would be quick to voice disclaimers to the effect that they realize full well the very important distinctions between governance at the global level in today’s world and governance as it is practiced domestically by the national government of a typical nation-state. But if these distinctions were indeed adequately appreciated, quite likely the term “global governance” would be far less utilized than it actually is. Although parenthetical caveats and qualifications are often found in the literature on global governance, there is a relative paucity of full-scale critiques of the concept. One such critique is that of Robert Latham, the thesis of which he expresses as follows (1999, p. 24):

Perhaps governance is a way to retain the oceanic sensibility without feeling so helpless. . . More than this, governance conveniently allows us to avoid articulating a single vision of order for fear of being taken for naive rationalists or, worse, ethno-centric techno-imperialists. It offers international policymakers, bureaucrats, and corporate “custodians” a means of pursuing a well-mannered multilateralism without having to proffer a globalized project of grand order-making. Global governance has the benefit of appearing open and diffuse, if not a little noncommittal. Those are attractive qualities in an era of ambiguity, uncertainty, and flux. . .

But I wonder if there is a seduction going on here. . . The question I will pursue in this essay is whether global governance is a too-comfortable vessel for both analysis and advocacy. Global governance may just fit too neatly into the global *Stimmung*, or mood of the times, match too closely the rhetoric of policymakers and bureaucrats, and make us too complacent about what is at stake in structures and practices that can sometimes be oppressive. The latter include those associated with predatory states and TNCs, repressive social relations and local power holders, or international economic regulatory agencies, such as the IMF, advocating structural adjustment programs.

Although there is considerable overlap in specifics between the critique of global governance offered here and that of Robert Latham, I am less concerned with the proposition that the realities of global governance are such that they put considerable power into the hands of individuals and organizations who are inadequately

subject to democratic accountability, and more concerned with the proposition that the global governance concept is itself of a fundamentally mythological character. That is to say, I am not so much concerned with the misuse of authority as I am with the absence of authority. It is not that control is in the hands of the wrong people, but rather that there is *no* control.

The remainder of this essay is organized as follows. Section II briefly criticizes the conventional wisdom that global government is an undesirable and/or impossible mechanism of genuine global governance. I do not argue that this conventional wisdom is necessarily wrong, but merely that it deserves—now that the confrontation between communism and non-communism no longer dominates international politics—careful reconsideration. Section III considers the use and misuse of terminology: specifically, how the utilization of certain terms subtly conveys a viewpoint that might be more easily questioned and challenged if more neutral terminology were utilized. Section IV goes on to review the nature and purposes of myth in human civilization and culture. Section V briefly reviews two predecessor myths in the area of international relations: collective security, and Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). Section VI constitutes the heart of the argument: that there has not been a sufficiently fundamental revision of the international regime since the demise of the Soviet Union to justify use of the term “global governance” or “global civil society” to describe this regime. The discussion embraces commentary on military forces and armaments, economic inequality and the environment, global interdependencies in trade and communications, and the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the international regime. Section VII briefly summarizes the argument.

THE UNEXPLORED ALTERNATIVE

The “unexplored alternative” is that of *limited* global government. Ever since the dramatic but highly ephemeral “world government boom” in the immediate aftermath of World War II, both the opponents and the proponents of world government have envisioned it as a very powerful, authoritarian and centralized political entity which would stand in relation to the member nations much as the federal government of the United States stands in relation to the component states.¹ Proponents see in this powerful world state a highly desirable safeguard against nuclear world war; opponents see in it a highly undesirable avenue leading directly toward global tyranny. Neither the proponents nor the opponents have as yet sufficiently grasped the possibility of a middle way: of a global government sufficiently influential and cohesive to make a significant contribution to the evolutionary development of genuine global governance, and at the same time sufficiently limited and constrained to guarantee the natural rights of its component nations and peoples. The existing opportunities for general recognition of this middle way are greatly hampered by the severe neglect of the global government concept in the contemporary professional literature on international relations and international organization.

The extent to which discussion of global government (i.e., world government, world federation, world state, etc.) has been veritably purged from the professional literature may be gauged from the treatment (or more accurately, lack of treatment)

of the concept in the Report of the Commission on Global Governance. The Commission, consisting of 28 eminent individuals from many countries and all walks of life, received a high level of support from the United Nations, several national governments, and a number of private organizations. Its final Report, entitled *Our Global Neighborhood*, was published by Oxford University Press in 1995. Within the 410 pages of the Commission Report there are exactly two references to world government. The first occurs on page xvi of the Co-Chairmen's Foreword:

As this report makes clear, global governance is not global government. No misunderstanding should arise from the similarity of the terms. We are not proposing movement towards world government, for were we to travel in that direction we might find ourselves in an even less democratic world than we have—one more accommodating to power, more hospitable to hegemonic ambition, and more reinforcing of the roles of states and governments rather than of the rights of people.

This definitive pronouncement, supported by no argumentation whatsoever either here or anywhere else in the Report, is reminiscent of nothing so much as the calmly complacent dogmatism of a medieval theologian. The second and final reference to world government is perhaps even more arbitrary (Report of the Commission on Global Governance, p. 336):

States remain primary actors but have to work with others. The United Nations must play a vital role, but it cannot do all the work. Global governance does not imply world government or world federalism. Effective global governance calls for a new vision, challenging people as well as governments to realize that there is no alternative to working together to create the kind of world they want for themselves and their children. It requires a strong commitment to democracy grounded in civil society.

The Report does not discuss or even take notice of the abundant literature produced over the course of the twentieth century by numerous proponents of world federalism. The 700 pages of Clark and Sohn's *World Peace through World Law*, for example, are apparently not even worth a dismissive footnote. In a volume which purportedly deals comprehensively with global governance, this arbitrary dismissal is veritably insulting to the many talented and dedicated men and women, past and present, who have argued the case for global government. One can only wonder at the distorted attitudes responsible for a lengthy and pretentious document on global governance that casually but definitively rejects, without discussion, the concept of global government.

In justice to the members of the Commission, it is fairly obvious that their Report was planned, designed and drafted by a team of professional social scientists and political analysts drawn mostly from academia and government. Any suggestions from Commission members that perhaps the idea of global government was worthy of more careful consideration were no doubt strongly discouraged by the professionals on grounds that any such consideration, even if it tended toward criticism and rejection, would adversely affect the credibility of the Report, and

hence the odds that any of its specific recommendations would be adopted. The irony is that without exception the practical proposals of the Commission would in fact involve strengthening the United Nations and moving it (slightly) closer to a world government (despite the explicit assurances to the contrary). Examples of Commission proposals include establishment of a permanent UN Volunteer Force of 10,000 soldiers under direct UN command, increasing the peacekeeping reserve fund to facilitate rapid deployment, establishment of a UN Economic Security Council to enable more vigorous pursuit of global economic development, establishment of a Global Competition Office as a UN specialized agency, gradual phase-out of the veto power in the UN Security Council as well as expansion of its membership, effective budgetary control by the General Assembly, all member nations of the UN to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and so on and so forth. Needless to say, little if any of this has been implemented. In the end, the Commission's disavowal of any world government aspirations availed it nothing. Conservative guardians of national sovereignty immediately dismissed the Report on grounds that it may as well have been presented by the World Federalist Association. Meanwhile, the small minority of world federalists also dismissed the Report as insufficiently bold and original. It failed to capture the attention and imagination of either the proponents or the opponents of world government, and it has had little perceptible impact.

Obviously it would be outside the scope of this essay to undertake a serious re-examination of the global government concept. However, I will offer a few brief comments to the effect that a serious re-examination of the concept at the present time would probably be well merited. To begin with, if one examines the various dismissals of global government to be found in the international relations literature over the second half of the twentieth century, one finds very heavy emphasis on the Cold War conflict between the communist and non-communist nations as precluding the possibility of such a government.² But the Cold War has faded very considerably since this thinking was done—and so also has the plausibility of these dismissals. In addition, it scarcely requires much emphasis that the amazing technological progress of the recent past has abrogated the communications and transportation impediments to political unification that figured so prominently in earlier human history.

Of course, even without the ideological gap, and even granting that there remain no serious communications and transportation impediments to global political unity, there does remain the very serious economic gap. A tremendous gulf has emerged between economic living standards in the rich nations and the poor nations. The rich nations are concerned that a global government would engage in drastic redistribution of world income; while the poor nations are concerned that a global government would become an instrument for the re-imposition of colonial-style economic exploitation. There are other impediments to global government aside from ideological and economic issues—for example, racial and religious differences. But the ideological and economic issues would appear to be by far the most significant. After all, a great many nations, including the United States, have achieved a high degree of internal cohesion and harmony despite considerable racial and religious diversity among their respective populations of citizens.

Not all world government proposals are created equal, as far as apparent practicality is concerned. In the immediate aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a great many world government proposals were put forward that envisioned universal membership by all nations from the date of foundation, the illegality of secession by any member nation from the world federation, the surrender by all member nations of all heavy armaments, including nuclear weapons, to the world government, and voting principles in the world legislature which would have ensured that representatives from the populous poorer nations of the world would exercise a heavy majority of voting weight. These plans were relatively heedless of the possibility of a global tyranny emerging as a result, for example, of a determination by the populous poorer nations in favor of a global welfare state. In the judgment of the devisers of these plans, the threat of a nuclear World War III far outweighed the threat of global tyranny. But, of course, the judgment of the vast majority of humanity went the other way.

The fact remains that there are existent alternative global government proposals that would address most if not all of the perceived problems and hazards of a global government in a relatively plausible manner.³ It is not necessary, for example, that all nations be members of the world federation from the outset, nor that secession of member nations be forbidden. For example, Canada is no less a nation for the fact that if it became necessary, it would peacefully assent to the departure of the province of Quebec from the Canadian national federation. Nor is it necessary that member nations be deprived of all heavy armaments (including nuclear weapons) from the outset. Universal membership of all nations in the supernational federation, and comprehensive disarmament of the member nations, could be long-term goals rather than short-term objectives. In response to the objection that such a global government would not immediately and definitively eliminate the threat of nuclear war, it could be pointed out that there is no immediate and definitive way to eliminate this threat under the present international system, and that the existence of a supernational government would be more likely to facilitate evolution toward a global system in which this particular threat would be, if not completely extinct, at least vestigial.

As for the problem of global economic inequality, a possible short-term solution would be a dual voting scheme in the supernational government legislature by which a given measure, budgetary or otherwise, would have to be approved on both the population basis and the material basis (in which the voting weight of a given representative would be proportional to the revenues derived from that representative's district). Representatives from the populous poorer nations would dominate the population vote and hence would exercise veto power over measures which they perceive as re-imposing colonial-style economic exploitation. Meanwhile, representatives from the less populous richer nations would dominate the material vote and hence would exercise veto power over measures which they perceive as implementing drastic redistribution of world income. Only measures on which both the populous poorer nations and the less populous richer nations could achieve a reasonable consensus would be capable of passage on both the population vote and the material vote. The long-run solution to the global economic inequality problem would be a massive multilateral development assistance

program along the general lines of the post-World War II Marshall Plan, only on a far larger scale both geographically and financially. Such a plan would be more likely to be pursued to a successful conclusion if a supernational federation (with long-term aspirations toward being a global federation) is in existence, than if it is not in existence. As to the objection that such a massive program would constitute merely a prodigious waste of resources, it may be pointed out that despite its widespread acceptance, this proposition is nothing more than a speculation. Such a program has never been tried, and until it is tried, predictions of failure are mere speculative opinions.⁴

At the present time, the majority of political scientists specializing in international relations and international organization tend to be self-righteously passive with respect to thought and study of global government. A pervasive attitude is that only when the general public and/or the political leadership commences to take global government seriously, will it be worthwhile for specialists to take a serious interest in the subject. It might be asked, however, what is the point of having a specialized intelligentsia if it will not take seriously its natural responsibility for useful, progressive and innovative thinking in its area of specialization? What would happen, for example, to the rate of medical progress if medical researchers took the attitude that they will only concern themselves with potential remedies for such deadly diseases as cancer and AIDS if these remedies are already being applied in folk medicine?

Whether or not the global governance concept constitutes a myth is not affected by whether or not a benign and effective global government is a possibility. But the latter issue *does* affect whether or not the global governance concept is a *dysfunctional* myth. If benign and effective global government is impossible, then the global governance concept may be a myth, but it would not be a dysfunctional myth because the uncongenial reality with which it copes (international anarchy) is indeed unavoidable. But if benign and effective global government is in fact, despite the heavy contemporary consensus to the contrary, a possibility, then the global governance concept is a dysfunctional myth because it deters thought and action toward the elimination of the uncongenial—but not unavoidable—reality of international anarchy.

TENDENTIOUS TERMINOLOGY

A tendentious use of language may be defined as the putting forward of a controversial proposition not by means of direct, explicit statement but rather by indirect and implicit means that utilize certain terms with generally understood and accepted meanings, according to which the proposition would be true. An immediately relevant example of this would be to utilize the expression “global governance myth” casually and/or approvingly—but without explanation. According to the generally understood and accepted meanings of “governance” and “myth,” the intent of this particular expression could be summarized as follows: “It would be invalid to deem the current international condition as manifesting any sort of meaningful global governance.” This is indeed the proposition being argued here—but this essay does not constitute a case of tendentious terminology because in this essay

the controversial proposition is being explicitly stated and argued. There is, on the other hand, a tremendous amount of tendentious terminology appearing in the international relations and international organization literature today that puts forward the opposite proposition: "It is valid to deem the current international condition as manifesting meaningful global governance." This proposition is being advanced whenever some author utilizes, casually or approvingly, and without explanation, the term "global governance."

An illuminating example of this phenomenon occurs in the context of ideological disputations over the relative merits of capitalism versus socialism. A proponent of the capitalist economic system might habitually employ the term "entrepreneur" (or even more obviously, "self-made entrepreneur") as a synonym for "capitalist," while a proponent of the socialist economic system might habitually employ the term "rentier" (or even more obviously, "parasitical rentier") as a synonym for "capitalist." Obviously the employment of such loaded terms for "capitalist" would be unacceptable in the context of a professional discussion of the relative merits of capitalism versus socialism. Professional discussions are in fact often polemical in nature, but even if they are polemical, ideally they rely far more on coherent argumentation based on factual evidence and sound logic than they do on propagandistic appeals to prejudice and preconception. Given that the objective is to put forward an objectively, intellectually persuasive argument either to the effect that the typical capitalist under capitalism earns his income by means of productive contributions (enterprise management, establishment of new enterprises, innovation, discovery, risk-taking, saving, etc.) or to the effect that the typical capitalist under capitalism receives unearned income (equivalent to "Ricardian rent" in classical economics), use of either one of these terms—"entrepreneur" by a proponent of capitalism or "rentier" by a proponent of socialism—would constitute a case of assuming that which is to be proved. However successful they might be as propaganda, discussions using these terms would be intellectually disreputable.

Another example of tendentious use of language, this one from the field of international relations, is Hedley Bull's "anarchical society." The term "society" normally implies the institutions and mechanisms of human civilization as organized within a single polity. When we talk about "social institutions," we normally mean families, small groups, business enterprises, non-profit organizations such as churches, charities, and special interest associations—all operating within an environment in which are active various branches of government such as police, the military, the legislature, regulatory agencies, etc. "Anarchy," of course, normally means the absence of the controlling and organizing force of government. The implication of the term to a tiny minority of anarchists is positive: no more having to pay taxes, no more being arrested for drunk driving by the highway patrol, no more being told what to do by government bureaucrats. The implication of the term to the huge majority of non-anarchists is negative: robbery and murder becoming rampant owing to the absence of police protection, the strong preying upon and exploiting the weak, the need to arm oneself or hire bodyguards or pay protection money, non-existent roads—or a patchwork network of rutted toll roads to proceed along which one would frequently have to stop to pay tribute to local

chieftains. Under anarchy, it is envisioned by the majority that life would be, in Hobbes' well-known descriptive phrase, "nasty, brutish and short."

The impact of the phrase "anarchical international society" is analogous to that of "global governance." Both phrases suggest the feasibility of a stable, peaceful, progressive, benign and well-ordered international regime in the absence of a unifying governmental entity. Bull published *The Anarchical Society* in 1977, when the immediate threat of nuclear destruction was much greater than it is today. The proposed instrumentality of perpetual peace then was MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction—as argued below, a myth in its own right): nuclear war will almost assuredly never occur not because a world government will be established to avert it, but rather because it would be so terrible that rational humanity will never be so foolish to start it. (Note the possible inconsistency here: if mankind is *not* sufficiently rational to establish a world government to avert nuclear war, then how is it that mankind *is* sufficiently rational to forever avoid it without benefit of world government?)

According to most reputable dictionaries, the term "governance" is inextricably linked to the term "government." In a word, governance *is* what governments *do*. Governance without government may be likened to walking without legs, flying without an airplane, driving without an automobile, or thinking without a brain. Some examples of standard dictionary definitions of "governance" are as follows:

Random House Dictionary:

1. government; exercise of authority; control.
2. a method or system of government or management.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary:

1. the act or process of governing.
2. the office, power or function of governing.
3. the state of being governed.
4. manner or method of governing.
5. system of governing.

Oxford English Dictionary:

1. the action or manner of governing; the fact that (a person, etc.) governs (controlling, directing, or regulating influence; control, sway, mastery).
2. office, power or function of governing.
3. manner in which something is governed or regulated.

American Heritage Dictionary:

1. the act, process, or power of governing; government.
2. the state of being governed.

Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary:

1. exercise of authority; direction; control.
2. manner or system of government or regulation.

Of course, the essence of any authentic government is that it has some sort of coercive power over its citizens: the capability and willingness to arrest, convict and incarcerate those citizens who violate laws. International law differs from domestic law in that there are no effective organs of enforcement. This is another way of saying that there is no analogue to the national government at the international level. Nation A can persuade—or intimidate—nation B to behave in a manner that nation A approves. But in behaving this way, nation B is not abiding by generally accepted rules of conduct enforced by an agency above and beyond nation A. For example, while it might be desirable for Mexico to resume the control over the American Southwest that it lost at the time of the Mexican-American War of 1848, this is not desirable for the United States, and the military forces of the United States deter Mexico from acting upon any temptations it might harbor on this issue. Clearly this is not a case of governance at work. Rather it constitutes a long-term bargaining agreement or negotiated settlement between the United States and Mexico—a settlement that was originally concluded following the military defeat of the latter back in 1848. The fundamental principle of national sovereignty is not being seriously challenged in today’s world. What goes on between nations in today’s world, therefore, is accurately described as negotiation and bargaining based on the potential use of force. The negotiation and bargaining leads to various agreements, treaties and alliances. In the past, these agreements, treaties and alliances have not prevented the regular recurrence of large-scale warfare. The situation is essentially the same now as it was throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It does not manifest meaningful “governance” at the international level.

NATURE AND PURPOSES OF MYTH

In the narrow sense, a myth is a traditional story of ancient lineage dealing with supernatural beings, ancestors or heroes that explains otherwise unexplainable conditions and/or justifies otherwise unjustifiable customs. For example, almost every human culture has developed myths to explain the origin of the world and its inhabitants. In those human cultures that have practiced human sacrifice, myths typically account for the origins of such practices. The development of human knowledge has cast serious doubt, among educated people, concerning the literal truth of most if not all myths of creation and of the origins of human sacrifice. Belief in the literal truth of most myths, particularly myths in the narrow sense, has declined to such an extent that today the word “fiction” is ordinarily a workable synonym for “myth.” Not only is the literal truth of most myths questioned, but so also (often) are the general principles of empirical reality and human endeavor which the myths are intended to explicate in symbolic terms to a general audience. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that throughout most of human history, myths were generally accepted as being not merely figuratively true but literally true. Myths were not originally intended as entertainment—they were rather intended to assist human individuals to cope with uncongenial and unavoidable realities. Their usefulness for this purpose would have been significantly diminished if they had been presented as anything less than completely factual and truthful.

With respect to creation myths, for example, these myths ease the strain of ignorance with respect to the origins of the earth, the universe, and humanity. According to the ancient Hebrew myth, God created all reality in six working days. According to contemporary astrophysicists and paleontologists, the actual process was somewhat more complicated, involving as it did a big bang followed by billions of years of accretion of the astral and planetary bodies, followed by hundreds of millions of years of evolution of life forms. Both the six-working-days myth and the modern account have in common that they do not trace causation back to a genuine first cause: the Hebrew myth does not answer the question: “Why did God decide to create the universe?” and the modern account does not answer the question: “What caused the big bang?” But they do get the job done in terms of providing at least a partial and tentative answer to the obvious and intriguing question: “Where did everything come from?” With respect to myths accounting for human sacrifice, these myths eased the strain of providing such sacrifices. The strain consisted not only in the loss of life, but in uncertainty that the deities being thus appeased would reciprocate by providing abundant game, fertile soil and good growing weather. Myths provided some assurance (not complete assurance) that once the gods had been appeased by human sacrifices, there would be abundant game, fertile soil and good growing weather. In civilized societies of the present day, of course, human sacrifices to appease the gods have been virtually eliminated. They have been replaced by more civilized and humane sacrifices of time (i.e., time devoted to church attendance and prayer) and money (i.e., financial donations to churches and charities).

In the general sense, a myth is any unsubstantiated belief that assists individual human beings to cope with uncongenial and unavoidable realities. It does not have to deal with supernatural beings, ancestors or heroes. Note the use of “unsubstantiated” as opposed to “false.” Conceivably the belief might be valid. However, the essential characteristic of a myth (as distinguished from a “fact” or “truth”) is that it involves a belief which cannot be validated by the kind of rational and/or empirical means that we use to support such non-mythical beliefs as “the earth is a sphere” and “dinosaurs once roamed the earth.” One of the most widespread, persistent and significant myths (in the more general sense) in human culture, is the religious myth that there exists a powerful or even all-powerful supernatural entity (e.g., the Christian God) who takes a benevolent interest in human affairs and who has therefore provided some form of afterlife so that individual human existence is not terminated by death—this myth assists individual humans in coping with the uncongenial and unavoidable reality of death. Another classic myth is that of the “hero/savior” who will come to rectify evil and injustice in the world—this myth helps human individuals cope with the uncongenial and unavoidable reality that there is much persistent evil and injustice in the world.

In modern history, myths have been developed and/or exploited to justify nationalistic and ideological purposes. Nazi Germany utilized the myth of Aryan racial superiority to rationalize and legitimize its lust for lebensraum in the East. In the ante-bellum South of the United States, the myth of black racial inferiority was utilized to rationalize and legitimize the institution of slavery. During the

nineteenth century, the myth of “manifest destiny” was developed and utilized to rationalize and legitimize the territorial expansion of the United States to the Pacific Ocean. An historically important ideological myth is the socialist myth that all economic, political and social problems will be abrogated once any and all non-human factors of production (natural resources and capital) have been removed from private ownership and placed in public ownership. Almost as important has been the classical liberal ideological myth that all economic, political and social problems will be abrogated once any and all government interventions with and restrictions upon business enterprise and the market system have been eliminated. Nationalistic and ideological myths help individuals cope with the uncongenial and unavoidable reality that the institutions, policies and behavior that they justify would be considered, by many if not most disinterested observers, to be selfish, self-serving and immoral.

In the case of the contemporary global governance myth, this myth assists human individuals to cope with the uncongenial and unavoidable reality that, although the sovereign nation-state system has proven itself, throughout modern history, to be strongly predisposed toward the production of conflict and war between nations, and although a war fought with presently existing conventional and nuclear weapons would be unimaginably destructive, and although an effective global government would significantly reduce the probability of unrestricted warfare—a strong global government is nevertheless impossible. Equivalently, an international condition that has been responsible for numerous wars in the past, and that could sensibly be described as a form of “anarchy,” is inevitable. Or at least this uncongenial reality is widely *perceived* to be unavoidable. The notion of global governance is therefore a coping mechanism: it tells us that the absence of a global government is not a matter for great concern—because we *do* have “global governance” and this is almost, nearly, practically, virtually, well-nigh as good as global government. (One can deduce this simply from the similarity of the terms.)

PREDECESSOR MYTHS

The global governance myth of the post-Soviet era was preceded by two earlier myths of analogous purpose: the collective security myth of the pre-nuclear period, and the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) myth of the Cold War period. These earlier myths have not been displaced by the global governance myth; rather the global governance myth supplements and reinforces them.

Collective Security

The notion of collective security is an extrapolation and generalization from the notion of an alliance. As such, it is descriptively referred to as the “super-alliance” concept. It might be useful to review, in down-to-earth terms, the basic alliance concept. Imagine that there are three nations: A, B, and C. Nation A is big enough and powerful enough to conquer nation B individually or nation C individually. But it is not big enough and powerful enough to conquer nation B and nation C

simultaneously. Therefore, nations B and C form an alliance according to which each one will come to the assistance of the other if the other is attacked by nation A. This strategy is simple, and so also is the counter-strategy followed by nation A if it desires to conquer both B and C: the strategy of divide-and-conquer. Nation A assures nation B that its intentions toward nation B are of the most amicable nature imaginable, but that nation C is engaging in various intolerable provocations which simply cannot go unpunished. If nation B is persuaded by these assurances, it stands aside (i.e., maintains its neutrality, avoids “foreign entanglements,” eschews the spilling of the blood of its own people to benefit “foreigners,” etc.) as nation A conquers nation C. Once nation C has been conquered and fully subjugated, nation A is then ready to deal with nation B.

The collective security concept envisions a general mutual assistance alliance among a large number of “peace-loving” nations (i.e., nations that are satisfied with the prevailing international status quo). The combined power of all these allied nations would be so overwhelming as to deter any aggression against members of the alliance by other nations. Peace would then be, in Kant’s well-known terminology, “perpetual.” An important example of collective security in modern history was the “Concert of Europe” established in the aftermath of the “French wars” from 1792 through 1815. This embodied the plan of Metternich, enunciated at the Congress of Vienna, for an informal super-alliance of the great powers of Europe to maintain the peace against future upstarts who might be tempted to emulate the example of Napoleon Bonaparte. Many historians have been complimentary toward Metternich and the Concert concept, on the basis that 99 years elapsed (1815 through 1914) without a major war among the Western European nations (the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 and a few others were not “major”). On the other hand, 99 years, while quite a long time from the viewpoint of an individual human being, is far from perpetuity. As far as “perpetual peace” is concerned, the utility of the Concert concept was thoroughly exploded by the commencement of the “German wars” in 1914, a series of two wars (World War I from 1914 through 1918 and World War II from 1939 through 1945), separated by a truce (the “interwar period” from 1919 through 1938).

The problem with the Concert concept, in the post-1914 thinking of mainstream theoreticians and practitioners of traditional balance of power diplomacy, was that it had been an *informal* super-alliance rather than a *formal* super-alliance. The proposed solution to the problem was the League of Nations established in 1919 by the post-World War I Treaty of Versailles. The League set up a formal institutional structure in support of the super-alliance. It may be worthwhile to note here that the League of Nations did in fact embody the essence of all the well-known pre-1914 proposals for a higher form of international organization, including those of Emeric Cruce, Immanuel Kant, and a host of others. Although these proposals today are commonly identified as “prototype world government proposals,” the fact is that they almost all envisioned merely a formal international association of independent nations for purposes of deterring aggression: i.e., a super-alliance. Immanuel Kant, for example, was quite insistent that his proposal was not for a “federation” but rather for a “confederation” of nations, the purposes of which would be strictly confined to peacekeeping. In their own time these proposals

were generally ridiculed as utopian fantasies by “realist” critics, on grounds that proudly sovereign nations would never accept any restrictions, however weak and problematical, upon their own freedom of action. Indeed, the arguments of these critics sound remarkably modern, and could be utilized, with little alteration, by today’s critics of world government. Nevertheless, the realists were confounded in 1919 when the proudly sovereign nations (many of them anyway) established the League of Nations.

The dubiousness of a formalized super-alliance as a means of preserving perpetual peace was strongly indicated by the League of Nations’s failure to deter Nazi Germany and its allied fascist nations from the aggressive policies that soon sparked the Second World War. The problem with the League of Nations, in the post-1939 thinking of mainstream theoreticians and practitioners of traditional balance of power diplomacy, was that its membership had not been broad enough: in particular, the United States, a superpower that had tipped the balance of World War I against Germany, had not joined the League, owing to a resurgence of isolationism generated by the lengthy American casualty lists of the just-completed “European” war. The United Nations established in 1945 was in reality nothing more than a renamed League of Nations with the added membership of the United States. During the half century that followed its foundation, the existence and operations of the United Nations had little perceptible effect on the Cold War confrontation between the communist and non-communist blocs of nations that had human civilization perched precariously on the edge of nuclear holocaust. The fact that humanity was spared a catastrophe of biblical proportions cannot reasonably be attributed to the United Nations.

The basic problem with the collective security concept, whether manifested informally in the Concert of Europe of the nineteenth century or formally in the League of Nations and the United Nations of the twentieth century, is what economists call the “free rider” problem. Each individual nation, whether a member or a non-member of the alliance, tends to reason that the alliance will be strong enough to deter aggression without its own participation. This kind of reasoning is greatly aided and abetted by nationalistic attitudes stemming from the fact that there exists no political entity in the world higher than the nation—a super-alliance composed of sovereign nations does not represent a genuine political commonwealth capable of inspiring emotions of common interest and purpose among the populations of its component nations. But if several nations put this reasoning into effect, the potential military power of the alliance is obviously diminished. For example, in 1919 the United States believed (more specifically, the majority of the U.S. Senate believed) that the League of Nations could do its job of preserving perpetual peace without the assistance of the United States. It will never be known with certainty if the United States had been a founding member of the League of Nations, the fascist nations would have been deterred from their aggressive policies. But it is obvious that to the extent that any super-alliance is weakened by actual or potential defection of its members, its potency as a deterrent to aggressive behavior by competing alliances of strong military power and revisionist intentions is diminished. The League of Nations was not, in the end, an effective deterrent against the revisionist intentions of the fascist bloc of nations. Nor was

the United Nations an effective deterrent against the revisionist intentions of the communist bloc of nations. The persistence of so much faith in collective security among mainstream theoreticians and practitioners of traditional balance of power diplomacy, in the face of so much historical evidence against its long-term effectiveness, is what qualifies collective security as a myth.

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)

In the immediate post-Hiroshima period, there was a strong tendency for people to seek solace in the thought that a nuclear world war would be so horribly destructive that the common sense of humanity would prevent its happening. For the first 15 years after the development of nuclear bombs, conventional aircraft were the primary means of delivery of these weapons. During this period, nations maintained alert and powerful air defense systems against long-range bombers, and it was thought likely that in the event of an attack, interceptor aircraft would destroy a large proportion, if not the totality, of the attacking force. From the early 1960s, ballistic missiles gained ground as a means of delivery. Interceptor aircraft would have been powerless against ballistic missiles. As the arms race proceeded into the 1970s and more and more ballistic missiles were equipped with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs), the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) gained ground. MAD was simply a further evolution of the basic idea, conceived immediately after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, that a nuclear world war is very unlikely because it would be very destructive. With (as of the 1970s) thousands of nuclear-tipped MIRVs at the ready, and no plausible air defense system against these weapons in existence, it was now true that nuclear war was very, very unlikely because it would be very, very destructive. It was not merely destruction but *mutual* destruction—and it was not merely mutual destruction but *assured* mutual destruction.

Although clearly a very reassuring idea, there are two major difficulties with MAD. The first is that the effective civilian and military decision-makers, as opposed to the general population, have never seriously believed in MAD. There is always the possibility of a limited nuclear war that would be halted after just a few nuclear detonations. There is always the possibility that a planned first strike by the other side might be discovered in time for a devastating preemptive counterstrike. There is always the possibility that the other side's strategic weaponry might malfunction in a crisis. There is always the possibility that an effective anti-missile defense system might be devised, either in the form of anti-missile missiles or in the form of satellite-mounted electronic devices to render inoperative the guidance systems of attacking missiles. It is very unlikely that the hopes and dreams underlying such acronyms as ABM and SDI will ever become extinct. Research on defensive systems against ballistic missiles is very likely to go on and on, until eventually something plausible is obtained. It is rather doubtful that any nuclear-armed nation that feels fairly secure behind its anti-missile shield will put up with a great deal of actual or perceived provocation from other nations.

The second major difficulty with MAD is that even if (for the sake of argument) it were absolutely, positively and unequivocally believed by everyone in the world

that a nuclear war would kill every human being in the world, this is not an absolute guarantee against such a war taking place. Any historian will verify that both World War I and World War II were sparked by what has been termed “miscalculated brinkmanship.” When the Austro-Hungarian government delivered its ultimatum to Serbia in the wake of the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in 1914, it was reasonably confident that the other side would accede to the ultimatum’s demands rather than risk continent-wide war. History records that the Austro-Hungarian government was in error. When Hitler carried out the invasion of Poland in 1939, he was reasonably confident that this would not lead to protracted and unrestrained warfare with Poland’s allies. History records that Hitler was in error. At the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, had Khrushchev not backed down in the face of the U.S. ultimatum, then history would have recorded a third instance in the twentieth century of miscalculated brinkmanship sparking a world war. In 1962, the high civilian and military leadership of the United States were fairly confident that the U.S. would win a nuclear war with the USSR—in a military sense at least—although the cost of the victory would have been enormous. The persistence of so much faith in MAD as a deterrent to nuclear war, especially among the general public, in the face of so much rationalistic evidence against its effectiveness, is what qualifies MAD as a myth.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

According to the ancient adage, the more things change—the more they stay the same. This adage expresses the universal observation that underlying realities are often little affected by ostensibly dramatic transitions that actually affect only superficial appearances. There is an especially strong tendency among people to exaggerate the significance of superficial transitions when the underlying realities are unpleasant and upsetting (i.e., “uncongenial”). The uncongenial reality which we must all confront is that human civilization today, for all its remarkable achievements and successes in many areas, still confronts very serious and dangerous problems. The sovereign nation-state system is essentially anarchic (however much we prefer to gloss over the fact with comforting euphemisms), and some of today’s nation-states are armed with nuclear and conventional arsenals of horrific potential destructiveness. To make matters worse, a population explosion is taking place of such magnitude as to threaten the planetary habitat within a fairly brief period of historical time. To be sure, there has been one very bright spot amid the gloom: the renunciation and abandonment of Marxist ideology by the ex-Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites. But it would be unduly optimistic and unreasonably enthusiastic to extrapolate from this one bright spot to the belief that we are now on the verge of a form of global governance that will deal successfully with the pressing problems of human civilization. In all probability, we will need far more than what we have today—specifically, we will probably need a genuine global government—before we will have achieved the kind of genuine global governance needed to cope with these problems in an effective manner.

Arguably, the most fundamental problem faced by human civilization in the contemporary age is that of warfare. Since the diminishment of the immediate

threat of nuclear holocaust entailed by the collapse and dissolution of the USSR and the ensuing decline of the Cold War, it has become customary to cite as the “number 1 world problem” the possibility of environmental breakdown. But if the expansion of the human population and the resulting over-intensive exploitation of the natural environment ever proceeds to the point of widespread economic collapse, pervasive poverty, and continuous famine and pestilence, it is difficult to imagine that these tribulations will not be accompanied by warfare. It is a natural human instinct to blame other human beings for any difficulties encountered. Nations experiencing economic woes will attribute at least some of these woes to the self-centered and unhelpful policies of other nations. Economic and environmental problems will thus intensify pressures toward warfare. Malthus listed warfare, famine and pestilence as “correctives” to over-population. In a world filled with nuclear weapons and on the verge of environmental breakdown, quite likely the most important of these correctives—in due course—would be warfare. If there were ever a truly definitive and irrevocable determination among the nations of the world to renounce warfare as an instrument for preserving and/or advancing “vital national interests,” it would be manifested by general disarmament. Such disarmament seems little closer in the post-Cold War era than it was in any prior era.

The rapid decline of the Cold War in the aftermath of the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 has certainly improved the odds on substantial arms reduction by the two nuclear superpowers, the United States and the Russian Federation, either with or without benefit of a formal treaty. The START II treaty, between the same two nuclear superpowers as the SALT treaties, was quite ambitious, calling for the elimination of two thirds of existing nuclear warheads and all land-based multiple warhead ballistic missiles. However, START II, signed by George Bush and Boris Yeltsin in early 1993, has not been fully ratified and implemented. As of the end of the 1990s, there were five nations in the world with major nuclear arsenals, plus another eight nations with declared or undeclared nuclear capabilities. According to a recent report from the National Resources Defense Council (*Taking Stock: Worldwide Nuclear Deployments 1998*), as of the end of 1997, Russia had 22,500 nuclear warheads, the United States 12,070, France 500, China 450 and Britain 380. No doubt there has been some reduction since then, but it is safe to say that there are still plenty of operational nuclear weapons in the world, more than enough to inflict catastrophe on human civilization should they be utilized. This is the situation at the present time, and it is likely to remain true for at least the next several decades.

If the 1993 START II treaty were to be fully implemented, this would leave the United States and Russia each with several thousand nuclear warheads, together with the means to deliver them to their targets anywhere in the world. If and when that point is reached, would there be further substantial reductions? It would be rash to expect further reductions if there are no fundamental changes in the world order. For several decades, both the United States and Russia have placed heavy reliance on possessing a large nuclear arsenal. Neither one is likely to abandon its arsenal unless and until there are fundamental changes in world politics. Russia has to consider, for example, the possibility of a resurgent Germany tempted by the

huge Russian land area and natural resource base in the same way that Hitler was tempted. A Russian nuclear capability will help ensure that Germany continues to resist such temptations. The United States has to consider, for example, that there are masses of poor people in the world, many of them living in Mexico and the Latin American nations to the south of Mexico. Mexico, of course, suffered what it might tend to regard as an outrageous injustice at the time of the Mexican-American War of 1848. A U.S. nuclear capability will help ensure that Mexico does not contemplate redressing that injustice, nor that the impoverished people of Latin America do not contemplate a forcible redistribution of wealth by means of a land invasion of the continental United States—an invasion possibly aided and abetted by the remaining communist nations of the Far East, most notably the People's Republic of China. Are these paranoid delusions? Possibly so, but if so, these paranoid delusions would explain why—ten years following the supposed demise of the Cold War—both the United States and the Russian Federation feel it necessary to maintain nuclear arsenals numbering in the thousands of warheads.

The same basic rationale that justifies the United States and Russia maintaining large nuclear arsenals would justify many other nations doing the same. Several nations have already taken the step. Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan have been at odds over Kashmir ever since independence and partition in 1948. Relations between India and China have also been none too warm over the years. China, as the number two power in the communist camp, felt it needed nuclear weapons—for the same reason that Britain and France in the non-communist camp felt they needed them. Since China had nuclear weapons, India felt it needed them. Because India had nuclear weapons, Pakistan felt it needed them. Saddam Hussein, the despised dictator of Iraq, would most decidedly like to have nuclear weapons. If he succeeds in this intention, then Iran will assuredly need nuclear weapons. Israel needs nuclear weapons to deter the surrounding Arab nations. Therefore, the surrounding Arab nations may need nuclear weapons lest Israel become expansionist-minded. Bosnia may need nuclear weapons to protect itself against Serbia, and vice versa. And so it goes. Most nations of the world have signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty of 1968. But that treaty is a slender reed on which to depend, because for a number of nations there are compelling reasons to acquire and maintain at least a minimum nuclear capability. These nations may not be dissuaded forever from taking this route. After all, it could be seen as a form of hypocrisy for the nuclear superpowers to preach against nuclear weapons—after all, if they truly believed in what they preach, they would divest themselves of these weapons. As more and more smaller nations acquire nuclear weapons, it makes it more and more difficult for the major nuclear powers to reduce their arsenals.

A major theme in current international security thinking is that of the “rogue state”—a small but nuclear-armed nation whose leadership gets into a bellicose frame of mind and is not afraid to die. We (the superpowers) need plenty of nuclear weapons to ensure that if these rogue state leaders ever do anything desperate, they will indeed die. But on the other hand, perhaps all these concerns about “rogue states” are greatly exaggerated. It has been seriously argued by one of the great intellects of contemporary international relations theory, Kenneth N. Waltz, that nuclear proliferation should be welcomed and encouraged—not opposed—by the

current nuclear powers (Waltz and Sagan, 1997). In a world in which any one nation could destroy any other nation (so goes Waltz's argument), nations would be compelled to treat each other with proper dignity and respect. Waltz earlier argued (1959, p. 228) that fears about nuclear war would not compel the nations of the world to establish a world government; one wonders on what basis he now thinks that fears about nuclear war *will* compel the nations of the world to treat each other with proper dignity and respect.

Waltz demonstrated the infeasibility of world government as follows: (1) the more heterogeneous a given society, the more coercion its government needs to exert to maintain order; (2) there is a tremendous amount of ideological, economic, political, social and cultural diversity among the nations of the world; (3) owing to this tremendous diversity, a world government embracing all the nations of the world would need to exert a tremendous amount of coercion to maintain order; (4) very few, if any, of the nations of the world will voluntarily submit themselves to the authority of a world government that would necessarily be tremendously coercive. With slight modifications, this logic may also be applied to argue the infeasibility of global governance sufficiently effective to "maintain order" in the world: (1) the more heterogeneous a given society, the more coercive its governance needs to be to maintain order; (2) there is a tremendous amount of ideological, economic, political, social and cultural diversity among the nations of the world; (3) owing to this tremendous diversity, global governance of sufficient effectiveness to maintain order would need to be tremendously coercive; (4) very few, if any, of the nations of the world will voluntarily submit themselves to tremendously coercive global governance. Of course, one might object that the latter argument invalidly assumes a black-or-white choice, and does not take account of the fact that there can be a broad spectrum of degrees of coerciveness of global governance. This objection is probably well taken, but it applies also to the former argument: i.e., the former argument invalidly assumes a black-or-white choice, and does not take account of the fact that there can be a broad spectrum of degrees of effective power and authority (and hence of potential coerciveness) of a global government. Limited global government is a possibility: a global government need not necessarily be "all-powerful."

Whether we are talking about global governance or global government, the basic notion of Waltz's argument is almost certainly true: the more diversity there is in the world, the more constraints there would have to be on global governance and/or government, and the less "order" could be maintained. It is for this reason that the decline of ideological diversity in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union has (somewhat) improved the prospects for genuine global governance and/or government. No doubt decreases in diversity in other areas would also be beneficial. But there are limits on what decreases are feasible. Racial diversity is a given, and so also is religious and linguistic diversity. There is considerable political diversity, especially with respect to the democratic accountability of government officials. But at least the *general principle* of democracy is honored throughout the world—even though many nations (e.g., the People's Republic of China) have not yet adequately implemented the principle. There is, however, at least one important area in which significant diversity exists—and regarding which very

few people would argue that this diversity is either desirable or inevitable. This is the economic area. Very few people would argue that it is either desirable or inevitable that the economic living standards of much of the world's population, measured in monetary terms, should be a small fraction of the economic living standards in the richest nations.

The economic gap first came into clear focus during the early Cold War period immediately after World War II. Both the First World nations and the Second World nations avidly courted the Third World nations. The communist nations perceived in the teeming masses of the Third World a huge number of potential recruits to the cause of communism. This possibility was also perceived by the non-communist nations, and foreign development assistance programs were initiated and developed as a supplement to military preparedness programs as a means of containing the global communist menace. The idea of the former was that the enrichment of the populations of the Third World nations would make them less susceptible to conversion to communism. As the Cold War matured, two propositions gradually became more plausible: (1) foreign development assistance, in the amounts being provided, was unlikely to have a dramatic impact on the productive capacities of many of the recipient nations; (2) the susceptibility of the populations of most poor nations to communism (notwithstanding some dramatic counter-examples such as Cuba and South Vietnam) was apparently not as great as had initially been feared. As a result, the spending of the United States, the central superpower of the allied non-communist nations, on foreign development assistance commenced a gradual but steady downward trend during the painful era of Vietnam involvement.

The idea of a "global Marshall Plan" to eradicate poverty throughout the world has been periodically broached ever since the time of the original European Recovery Program of 1948–1952. Advocates of a massive multilateral foreign economic development assistance program often suggested that the program be financed by expenditures reallocated from military purposes. A world from which poverty was being eliminated would be a safer and more secure world, and hence the military establishments of the nations could be much smaller. It was proposed that while military expenditures merely addressed the symptoms, economic development expenditures would address the root causes of world problems. Mainstream analysts and policy-makers dismissed these arguments, regretfully or contemptuously as the case may have been. Of course, the major cuts in military expenditures consequent upon the decline of the Cold War throughout the 1990s presented an unprecedented opportunity to the rich nations to increase their commitment to foreign development assistance programs. The opportunity was wasted, and very little if any of the so-called peace dividend was reallocated to economic development. Although disappointing to some, this outcome was not a surprise. Throughout the history of foreign aid, its major purpose had been to help contain the communist menace. With this menace in abeyance, there was far less reason to support foreign aid.

The implication of this, as we look forward to the next few decades, is the continuation of the economic gap. Although many Third World (and Second World) nations are making significant economic progress, by and large the economic progress in the First World nations has been even higher, and as a consequence the gap between the richest and the poorest nations in the world is getting wider.

If the economic gap is considered to be an insuperable obstacle to the formation of a global government, it seems fairly obvious that it is also going to present a formidable obstacle to the development of meaningful global governance. We can expect the continuation of the natural envious resentment of the poor against the rich; and we can expect the continuation of the natural counter-resentment of the rich against the poor. These resentments form fertile soil for the germination and growth of hostility and conflict.

The environment is an obvious source of conflict between rich and poor nations. Inasmuch as the productive efforts of humanity involve utilization, exploitation and despoliation of the natural environment, it follows that environmental purity and/or diversity has a cost in terms of reduced production. These costs are more easily borne by the populations of the rich nations. For the most part, efforts to “save the whales,” “save the rain forests,” etc., originate in the wealthy nations. It is unreasonable to expect the poor nations, most of whose populations confront a daily struggle for survival that can only be imagined by the populations of the rich nations, to take as deep and sincere an interest in environmental issues as do the rich nations. Therefore, it is unreasonable for the rich nations to expect a nation such as Indonesia, for example, to make a serious effort at suppressing slash-and-burn methods that may result in serious global atmospheric pollution, but which may mean the difference between life and death for subsistence farmers and their families. After all, according to the World Bank’s *World Development Report 1999/2000*, in 1998 the per capita income of Indonesia was \$680, relative to the United States per capita income for the same year of \$29,340. In light of this huge difference, it is not particularly amazing that Indonesia and the United States are not seeing eye-to-eye on many issues, including what should be done to preserve the global environment.

The dramatic recent technological advances in communications are often cited as a major contributor to the development of effective global governance. These advances also clearly contribute to the feasibility of effective global government, and it would require a rather subtle argument to show that contemporary communications technology is more important to global governance than it is to global government. Aside from that, however, it should be recognized that instantaneous communications has a downside as far as the development of international harmony is concerned. Comparing the dissemination of news at the turn of the twenty-first century relative to the turn of the twentieth century, it is not hard to see that the broadcast of a videotape of a crowd in Tehran or Baghdad burning an American flag on the same day the incident occurs, might have a greater adverse impact on the attitude of the American public toward Iran or Iraq than would a newspaper account of such an incident published some weeks after its occurrence. But in any event, the relationship between international communications and international relations should not be exaggerated. The Internet is one of the legitimate wonders of the modern world. But another great leap forward in the realm of communications, as wonderful in its own time as the Internet is in our time, was the Universal Postal Union founded by the Treaty of Berne in 1874. The UPU did not preclude World War I, World War II, and the Cold War that came perilously close to precipitating a nuclear World War III. In a word, it would be naive to

expect that enhanced communications will automatically guarantee international harmony and the preservation of peace.

It is widely believed that ongoing advances in transportation foster global governance. But there is also a downside to fast international travel and migration. For example, a jet aircraft will bring potential immigrants to the United States much quicker than did the ships that did this work in the nineteenth century—but today's potential immigrants will have far more in the way of demoralizing and demeaning encounters with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service than did their predecessors in the nineteenth century. Those immigrants who are allowed to stay may end up almost as alienated against the United States as those who are turned away. It is equally simplistic to think that ever-increasing international trade and investment necessarily generates conditions favorable to genuine global governance. Many workers lose their employment or find it seriously jeopardized by freer trade, and they tend to focus their resentment on the foreign nations from which competing commodities are imported. As for foreign investment, that also can lead to bad feelings: employees of foreign-owned enterprises often feel mistreated and exploited by foreign owners, while at the same time the foreign investors are likely to feel cheated by bureaucratic meddling and endemic corruption within the host nations. The trade and investment ties among the nations of Western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century were at least comparable to those currently existing at the world level today—and those ties did not preclude the Western European nations from going to war with one another. In a word, it would be naive to expect that enhanced transportation and expanded trade and investment will automatically guarantee international harmony and the preservation of peace.

A very great deal is made in the global governance literature of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A pervasive notion, often implied although rarely stated, is that we can have benign and progressive development throughout the world because it will be designed, organized, coordinated and guided not by nasty, corrupt, bureaucratic, oppressive and coercive governments but rather by unpolluted, idealistic, open, democratic and voluntary non-governmental organizations. The fine and noble people who staff such fine and noble organizations as Greenpeace International, the Worldwatch Institute, Amnesty International, the International Red Cross, and so on and so forth, will run the world—and what a wonderful world it will be!

This attractively idyllic view might well be, as Latham puts it, a “seduction.” The fact is that by far the most powerful non-governmental organizations active in the international arena are the transnational corporations (TNCs), the purposes of which are largely focused on the earning of profits for the benefit of their owners. TNCs possess the power of financial coercion (which can be as effective as—if not more effective than—physical coercion) over thousands of paid employees. TNCs are certainly not concerned with human welfare in a wider sense. Their operative hierarchy of interests is as follows: (1) owners, (2) employees, (3) customers, (4) society at large. (4) is only considered at all because potentially society at large can intervene in the enterprise's business operations to the disadvantage of (1), (2), and (3). In the first flush of unrestrained enthusiasm for *laissez faire* in early nineteenth century Western Europe, it was believed by such ideologues as Jean-Baptiste

Say that the less regulation of and intervention with business enterprise by the government, the better. However, as the decades passed, it was found from much experience that a certain amount of regulation and intervention was economically and socially beneficial. The national governments and lower-level governments provided this regulation and intervention. But there is no comparable mechanism for this at the international level. From the point of view of TNCs, there are disadvantages and advantages of there being no effective international regulatory agencies: the downside is that they have to operate within many different national regulatory systems; the upside is that they can utilize natural competition among nations for investment capital to obtain relatively light regulation and taxation.

The “nice” NGOs are organizations such as Worldwatch, the Red Cross, etc. But what about the “not so nice” NGOs (leaving aside the TNCs) such as the American Medical Association, the National Rifle Association, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and so on? Would it be a good idea to entrust the destiny of human civilization to the people who run these latter kinds of NGOs? Winston Churchill once said that the worst form of government of all was the democratic form—except for all the other forms which have ever been tried. It might also be suggested that the worst way to organize and coordinate human society is the government mechanism—except for all the other possibilities that might be tried such as anarchy or NGO oligarchy.

But in actual fact, it is simply a delusion to think of NGOs as independently powerful. NGOs lack the power of physical coercion. Any significant power they have is indirect and derives from their ability to influence governments. For example, any successes which Greenpeace may have achieved in slowing the slaughter of whales did not come directly from sending small boats to harass factory whaling ships. Those forays were simply publicity stunts. The actual successes depended on getting national governments to establish and enforce regulations on the whaling industry. As Chairman Mao so memorably put it, “All power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” This is true in a very fundamental sense—although of course one must gain some sort of control by intellectual and organizational means over the minds of those holding the guns. Mao’s gun-toting revolutionaries, for example, were individually inspired by the Marxist vision of a classless society and collectively tightly organized by the Chinese Communist Party. NGOs, in and of themselves, whether “nice” or “not so nice,” simply do not possess enough guns to achieve their objectives directly. If NGOs are to achieve their objectives, whatever they may be, they must work through governments. Essentially these organizations lobby governments, at whatever level may be appropriate, to try to get governments to adopt policies that are beneficial (or perceived to be beneficial) to the NGOs and their clientele. If there were a world government, NGOs would lobby the world government in the same way they now lobby the national governments. Quite possibly the lobbying process would then be less complicated and more effective.

It remains to be seen whether the horrific events of September 11, 2001, will alert humanity to the dangerous and potentially disastrous instability of the current international situation. On that fateful day, to the horror and consternation of much of the world population, hijacked civilian airliners were deliberately crashed into

both towers of the World Trade Center, and also into one side of the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Thousands of people were killed, most of them in the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. The results of the attack were so overwhelming that no individual, group, or national government took credit for it, possibly for fear of nuclear retaliation by the United States. The suicidal hijackers were quickly identified as Islamic extremists with ties to the shadowy al-Qaeda terrorist organization guided and supported by the renegade Saudi Arabian millionaire Osama bin Laden. At the time of the attack, bin Laden was the “guest” of the Taliban government of Afghanistan, which publicly averred that the attack could not have been the responsibility of bin Laden because he had been “forbidden” to engage in terrorist operations. This suspicious disavowal did not satisfy the United States government, which immediately initiated a large-scale diplomatic and military campaign to bring bin Laden and his associates to justice. At the time of writing, the final outcome of this effort is uncertain, but it was recognized by all, right from the beginning, that the elimination of Osama bin Laden personally, even if it could be accomplished expeditiously, would only be the first step in a prolonged war to eradicate organized terrorism.

Realistically, it will probably be no more feasible to “eradicate” terrorist attacks than it has been proven feasible to eradicate crime generally. Despite heavy investments in law enforcement systems, every national society in the world continues to be afflicted by non-negligible crime incidence. Therefore it is not a question of “eradicating” crime so much as it is a question of keeping the costs of crime to an acceptably low level. Even in a world that was veritably utopian by present standards, there would almost certainly be individuals sufficiently disaffected and fanatical to launch terrorist attacks, suicidal or otherwise. But such attacks would be less frequent and less deadly if there were fewer individuals motivated to engage in them. And there would be fewer individuals motivated to engage in them if—for one thing—there were less economic inequality among the nations of the world. The argument here is not that economic inequality was the only factor underlying the hostility that led to the September 11 attack, nor even that it was the dominant factor. However, it was indeed a *contributory* factor—and economic inequality is a contributory factor that conceivably could be greatly ameliorated by economic progress. It is not realistic to expect any major changes in the fundamental doctrinal differences between Islam, Judaism and Christianity. And it is not realistic to expect Israel to surrender territory it won in various wars commencing in 1948. But it *is* realistic to envision substantial reduction in the present-day global economic inequality situation by means of organized human action. The pursuit of worldwide economic equalization would be far more vigorous than it is at present if there were a tangible global government in existence. “Global governance” as we know it today is demonstrably inadequate to make serious inroads against the widening economic gap between the richest nations and the poorest nations. But “global governance,” as we would know it under an operational global government, would probably make real progress against this problem.

Terrorist attacks are directly harmful to their victims and their victims’ families and friends. But they are unlikely, in and of themselves, to inflict serious death and damage on worldwide human civilization as a whole. From a larger perspective,

the real danger of terrorists attacks is that they will lead to confrontations between powerful nations, and that these confrontations, in turn, will lead to general warfare. The assassination of only two people (the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife) on June 28, 1914, by the Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip commenced the terrific cycle of violence known as World Wars I and II. Something similar to this might easily happen again. To be sure, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were horrific. But it is easy to imagine circumstances under which they would have been worse and their ultimate consequences would have been devastating to the entire human population. The attacks proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are individuals and organizations in the world today who are both technically competent and under no constraints of conscience. It is obvious, in the light of these attacks, that had the al-Qaeda organization possessed nuclear weapons on September 11, they would have been used on New York City. Instead of thousands killed, there would have been hundreds of thousands killed, perhaps millions. Now also consider the possibility that the Soviet Union had *not* capitulated back in the early 1990s, and that it still welcomed and supported almost any kind of misfortune and disruption in the West, on grounds that these misfortunes and disruptions weakened its sworn national enemy. Now suppose in the aftermath of September 11, that this unregenerate Soviet Union had proclaimed that there must be no military action against Afghanistan, by the United States or anyone else, because there was no incontrovertible proof that anyone in Afghanistan had had anything to do with the attacks. The stage would have then been set for that single incident of miscalculated brinkmanship that will unleash a nuclear holocaust upon the world. At the present moment the United States and the Russian Federation are “friends and allies”—to a limited extent. But throughout the history of human civilization there have been innumerable instances of the friends and allies of yesterday becoming the implacable enemies of today. If we wait long enough, serious confrontations and conflicts will inevitably emerge among powerful nations. It is merely a matter of time—unless the human race moves forward to a qualitatively higher form of international unity than we possess today.

There is no definitive safeguard against the possibility that in the future a terrorist outrage of some sort will set in motion a chain of events leading to ultimate disaster. But the probability of such a thing occurring will be less to the extent that the material and psychological divisions within the human race are less. It is mere wishful thinking that there can be an adequate amount of global governance—in the absence of a tangible, recognized, operational global government—to seriously reduce the probability that an unexpected terrorist action, coming out of the blue, will become the fatal instrumentality of the downfall of humanity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The term “anarchy” has always indicated the *absence* of authoritative control by a governmental entity. Until very recently (i.e., until the recent emergence of the “global governance” concept), the term “governance” has indicated the *presence* of authoritative control by a governmental entity. Since by no stretch of the imagination or semantic hyperbole can today’s United Nations be deemed

a governmental entity, it follows that—according to what was standard usage until very recently—the present global situation is more accurately described as “global anarchy” than it is as “global governance.” The anarchic condition of contemporary international relations is an uncongenial reality that most people believe to be unavoidable, owing to the (perceived) fact that an authentic global government would likely give rise to tyranny, civil war, suffocating bureaucracy, etc. Myths, as we have seen, are beliefs which are not supportable by empirical evidence or logical reasoning, but which do assist human individuals in coping with uncongenial and unavoidable realities. The obvious possibility emerges, therefore, that global governance falls into the category of myth. More than that, it may well fall into the category of *dysfunctional* myth. A dysfunctional myth is a belief that not only is false, but that discourages and deters thought and action toward overcoming uncongenial realities which are *not*, in fact, unavoidable. If, despite the contemporary consensus to the contrary, it is actually true that benign and effective global government is possible, then global governance is a dysfunctional myth because it fosters complacency and inertial conservatism, and thereby discourages innovative and progressive thinking toward the possible characteristics, structures and policies of such a government.

This essay is addressed to political scientists and other professionals involved in the study of international relations and international organization. I will conclude by suggesting to this audience that there could be very rich dividends from additional thought and study invested in the idea of global government. At the present moment, it is a very commonplace attitude that it would be futile and pointless to work on global government because there is virtually no interest in the possibility among the general public and the political leadership. But quite possibly a major factor in the disinterest of the general public and the political leadership in global government is the disinterest of the specialized intelligentsia in global government. What, it may be asked, is the use of society supporting a specialized intelligentsia in a certain branch of human knowledge if that specialized intelligentsia declines to engage in innovative and progressive thinking toward the amelioration of very serious problems within its area of specialization?

Is there not an apparent inconsistency in the proposition that government is beneficial at the local level, government is beneficial at the regional level, government is beneficial at the national level—yet government is *not* beneficial at the international level? Is there not an apparent inconsistency in the proposition that global governance is good—but global government is bad? Is it not also an apparent inconsistency that effective global governance is feasible—but effective global government is infeasible? Is it actually beyond human ingenuity to develop a plan of supernational government that would achieve an appropriate balance between the competing objectives of providing effective coordination of worldwide human civilization, but of not representing a serious threat of degenerating into worldwide totalitarianism? Despite being widely accepted today among both proponents and opponents of world government, it is a very dubious proposition that in order to make a worthwhile contribution a world government would have to be extremely centralized, powerful and authoritative from the moment of foundation. In actual fact, a world government could initially be quite limited and constrained—but the

very existence of such a government could and probably would greatly facilitate and accelerate the gradual and evolutionary development of the kinds of institutions and attitudes under which global governance would be an existent reality and not merely an empty phrase. Considering what is at stake, this possibility deserves far more attention than it is presently receiving.

NOTES

1. See the account of this period in Derek Heater (1996): pp. 139–142. Probably the most widely publicized world state proposal of the immediate postwar period was that of the Committee to Frame a World Constitution, chaired by Robert Hutchins, then chancellor of the University of Chicago. The secretary of the committee was Giuseppe Borgese, who included the “Preliminary Draft of a World Constitution” as an appendix to his book *Foundations of the World Republic*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1953. At about the same time Grenville Clark and Louis B. Sohn commenced work on their magisterial tome *World Peace through World Law*, all three editions of which (1958, 1960 and 1966) were published by the Harvard University Press.
2. For example, Stephen Goodspeed explains the basic problem as follows (1967, p. 663): “If, in some desperate effort to solve the problems dividing the Soviets and the Western world, the United Nations were to be transformed into some form of world government with the General Assembly made a legislature based on the democratic principles of popular representation and majority rule, could it succeed in the absence of a majority possessed of common values, interests and goals? The answer is a categorical ‘no’ since the struggle between East and West would not dissolve merely because the setting was changed. The possibility of establishing a limited world government at the present time is as remote as it has been for centuries.” Illustrative passages of a similar nature are found at the following locations: Gerard Mangone (1951, pp. 64–65), Kenneth Waltz (1959, p. 228), Inis Claude (1971, p. 430), Richard Falk (1975, p. 245), Roger Hilsman (1975, p. 574), Hedley Bull (1977, p. 261).
3. The more recent pro-world government literature is far more sensitive than was the earlier literature to the inherent problems of world government, and reflects much careful deliberation on how these problems might be addressed. See, for example: John C. K. Kiang (1992), Errol E. Harris (1993), James A. Yunker (1993), Ronald J. Glossop (1994), John C. de V. Roberts (1999), Roger Hilsman (1999). See also the critical symposium on the Report of the Commission on Global Governance edited by E. E. Harris and J. A. Yunker (1999).
4. J. A. Yunker recently supplemented his political analysis of world government (1993) with a detailed economic analysis (2000) of a potential large-scale foreign economic development assistance program along the lines advocated in George J. Church’s 1978 *Time* essay: “The Case for a Global Marshall Plan.” Benchmark computer simulations show the possibility of a dramatic increase in the living standards of the poor nations over a 50-year period, at the relatively minor cost of a slight retardation in the rate of growth of living standards in the rich nations.

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