

Toward a *Necessary* Utopianism: Democratic Global Governance

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Imperatives

Unless the emergence of an effective form of global governance is adequately democratized it will not only reproduce existing acute inequities and exploitative patterns of present world order, but will almost certainly intensify these malevolent features. Such forebodings are based on the assessment of present global trends that document increasing disparities among peoples, races, and classes, but also call to our attention the growing struggle over dwindling oil supplies and the overall harmful effects of global warming and various associated forms of environmental deterioration. (Kunstler, 2005) Without drastic normative adjustments in the interaction of states and regions, as well as an accompanying

social regulation of the world economy, global governance is almost certain to adopt highly coercive methods of stifling resistance from disadvantaged societies and social forces.

The Bush presidency in the United States, while bringing to the fore an extremist leadership that is likely to be repudiated by the American electorate in the short run, may still be a crude forerunner of future hegemonic efforts by the United States to stabilize the unjust global status quo to the extent possible. For continuity of recent American hegemonic behavior see Neil Smith (2005). There are no indications that any plausible new political leader in the United States will draw back the American militarization of the planet under its sovereign control, including oceans, space, world network of military bases, global intelligence and special forces presence. (Johnson, 2004, 2006) Global governance under any such auspices, even if less manifestly dysfunctional than this currently failing neoconservative experiment to provide security for the world as administered from Washington, is almost certain to falter without ambitious moves to establish an inclusive consensual, cooperative, multilateral, and

constitutional framework built around a truly operational global rule of law. (National Security Strategy 2002, 2006; Muravchik, 2007) At present, there seems to be grossly insufficient political agency available to support mounting a credible challenge along such transformative lines to existing world order arrangements. That is, the neoconservative American vision of global governance has been defeated by resistance, but as matters now stand there is no alternative and it is likely that this vision will be altered to accommodate a more liberal style of promotion. It is due to this inability to depict a plausible path leading from the here of dysfunctional Westphalianism to a more democratically constituted and institutionally centralized global governance that makes any current call appear 'utopian,' that is, not attainable except imaginatively.

Against such a background the advocacy of world government seems constructive and responsive, yet I would argue that to push for world government at this time is dangerously premature. Such a post-Westphalian governmental restructuring of global authority, particularly in

relation to war making, in the unlikely event that it were to become capable of enactment, would almost certainly produce a tyrannical world polity. Such a result seems almost certain unless the realization of world government was preceded by economic, social, and cultural developments that reduced dramatically current levels of material unevenness, poverty, and inter-civilizational antagonisms. So long as this unevenness persists any centralization of political authority is certain to be coercive, exploitative, and oppressive. Perhaps, in the decades ahead the raw struggle for human survival may yield this kind of outcome misleadingly described as ‘world government’, and may make it seem an acceptable or even the best attainable world order solution for the peoples of the world. This survival scenario is a rather realistic expectation, given the likelihood that pressures in relation global warming and energy supplies and prices will soon reach emergency levels. What is politically possible in a circumstance of imminent catastrophe or at the early stages of an unfolding catastrophe cannot be foretold, but given our best understanding of present political realities, the present advocacy of world government is both

utopian (unattainable) and dystopian (undesirable). If this is correct, then the contemplation of a benevolent world government is an idle daydream that we as humans concerned for the future can currently ill-afford.

An alternative approach, suggested by a similar understanding of the same set of planetary circumstances involves a focus upon the preconditions for achieving a *humane* form of global governance. An early attempt to depict a post-Westphalian benevolent world order was made by Falk, 1995. From this perspective the major premise of analysis is that without the emergence and eventual flourishing of global democracy the world seems assuredly heading for dystopia, if not irreversible catastrophe. Any reasonable approach to the future must exhibit an awareness of the probable relevance of crucial unanticipated developments. (Taleb, 2007) Given this outlook, it seems useful to distinguish among several horizons of possibility when contemplating the shape and viability of global governance in the relatively near-term future. Current policy debate, including mainstream reformist proposals and projections, takes place in a political space that seems

consistent with horizons of *feasibility* (that is, policy goals attainable without substantial modification of structures of power, privilege, authority, and societal belief patterns); such horizons can shift abruptly during moments of crisis and emergency. In a negative manner, horizons of feasibility receded dramatically after the 9/11 attacks making recourse to aggressive wars by the U.S. Government much easier to justify, generating strong political backing at home. A more positive illustration involved the establishment of the International Criminal Court in the aftermath of the Cold War despite the opposition of several leading governments, but with impressively organized and intensely motivated support from civil society forces. If such a project had been launched in the 1970s or 1980s it would have been quickly dismissed as utopian, yet in the late 1990s it became a realized goal of a group of moderate governments working in tandem with a coalition of transnational civil society actors. Horizons of feasibility shift and evolve, and not necessarily in a linear and incremental rhythm, but by jumps, discontinuities replete with contradictions. (Jencks, 199-)

It is not enough to ponder the future through calculations and assessments made by reference to horizons of feasibility. We also require some sense of preferred alternative ways of sustaining life on the planet along lines that accord with scientific and professional judgments as to how to improve the material and social quality of human life for all persons. To do this is not just a technical matter. It is also ethical, calling for special efforts on behalf of those now poor, excluded, subordinated, and otherwise disadvantaged. It also presupposes that far longer term perspectives inform public policy at levels of social integration than are now associated with domestic electoral cycles. As well, the shaping of a democratic form of global governance cannot be effectively or beneficially managed on the basis of either a world constituted almost exclusively by territorial political communities enjoying sovereign rights or a world that is controlled by either single or multiple hegemonic centers of territorial power of global and regional scope or by market based global business and banking elites. (Knutson, 1999; Falk, 1999) To devise what will work to ensure a sustainable human future that does not rest on naked

force and entail grossly exploitative distributions of wealth and income requires a scientifically and ethically informed vision of what is needed, treated here as horizons of *necessity*. It is the gap between feasibility and necessity, as well as the fragility and complexity of current world order, which largely explains what is appropriately described as the deepening crisis of global governance. In this regard, the petroleum-based technologies of the 21st century, military and otherwise, make the consequences of failure and breakdown so much more consequential than earlier. This observation is particularly obvious with regard to any assessment of the destructive impacts of major wars fought with nuclear weapons as distinct from wars fought with bows and arrows or machetes. But the same condition exists in many other domains of international life, including of course, the use of the global commons as a dump for greenhouse gas emissions, as for various other kinds of waste disposal.

By itself this polarization of perspectives may not do more than help us understand the gathering gloom about the future of humanity by focusing our attention on what is

needed, yet seemingly unattainable, rather than to be content with what is feasible. With this consideration in mind, it seems useful to look closely at what is desired and desirable with respect to the multi-dimensional challenge of global governance. In this respect, reflecting on horizons of *desire* is not entirely impractical, but rather provides an inspirational foundation for the mobilizing energy that will be required if horizons of necessity are to motivate action without adding to human suffering. The emphasis on democracy as the ground upon which global governance must unfold, if it is to be successful and benevolent, is an acknowledgement, with risks attached, of the political significance of desire and the desirable. For comprehensive treatment see Archibugi, 2008. As suggested, tyrannical forms of global governance might, although at great human costs, could more easily satisfy the imperatives of necessity, at least for some decades, but dystopically. The preferred alternative is to embrace the utopian possibility of conflating horizons of necessity and horizons of desire, which seems only imaginable if global governance is radically democratized in the near future. Whether that

conflation would help fashion the political agency required to establish a credible political project of global democratic governance cannot be foretold. There is also some support, especially in American neoliberal and neoconservative circles, for embracing benevolent hegemony, even empire, as the most attainable form of effective global governance. (Ferguson, 2004; Bacevich, 2002). As with world government, hegemonic or imperial solutions, even if arguably responsive to horizons of necessity should be rejected because they do not appear on the horizons of desire. This position is most elaborately argued by Michael Mandelbaum, 2002.

Global democracy seems necessary and desirable, although its realization, assuming obstacles can be overcome, may turn out to be not altogether positive. Much can go wrong by way of implementation: corruption, militarism, even repression and exploitation could easily occur along the way, if the mechanisms of governance are not constrained by a robust regime of law that is itself responsive to the values and implementing procedures of a human rights culture and to demands for global justice. This regime of global law is

particularly needed to offset to some extent the effects of gross inequality and disparity that currently exists, and seems built into the operational workings of the world economy. (Harvey, 2003) The final test of social justice globally conceived, recalling Gandhi's criterion of 'the last man' and John Rawls' emphasis on the most disadvantaged elements in society, will be how those at the margins of human vulnerability are treated, including the impoverished, the unborn, the indigenous, and the deviant. Procedural benchmarks will also be indicative of a more inclusive democracy that is not yet: progress toward accountability for wrongdoing by political actors, regulation of economic regimes to ensure the material and human wellbeing of all persons and groups, implementation of prohibitions on recourse to war as a political option, a dynamic of demilitarization, and behind everything, a rule of law as administered by an independent and available judiciary so that there is a growing impression that legal equals (for example, governments of sovereign states) are being treated equally. In contrast, the present world order shocks the moral conscience by the extent to which powerful

political actors are being given an exemption from criminal accountability while weaker figures are increasingly prosecuted and punished. Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic are prosecuted but George W. Bush, Tony Blair, and Vladimir Putin are de facto exempt from even indictment. More broadly, hegemonic actors are enjoy an informal, yet fully effective, right of exception with respect to adherence to international law, expressed both by the veto given to permanent members of the UN Security Council and by the operational freedom of maneuver enjoyed by major states.

This chapter will not attempt to look at this entire global canvas of democratizing initiatives but limits itself to an inquiry that highlights the place of the individual as ‘citizen’ of this unborn global polity and the creation of an institutional arena that can give meaningful expression to democratizing sentiments and express grievances that come from below. In this rendering, the spirit of democracy is derived from respect for the authority of the grassroots, giving some sort of preliminary outlet for legitimizing processes of popular sovereignty. (Kaldor, 2007)More concretely attention will be

given to a futuristic conception of citizenship—the citizen pilgrim—and to the establishment of means for collective political deliberation—a global peoples assembly or global peoples parliament.

It needs to be understood that both structural aspects of Westphalian world order: the horizontal juridical order encompassing the interplay of formally *equal* sovereign states and the vertical order exhibiting the geopolitical structure of grossly *unequal* states now exhibit almost none of the characteristics of democratic governance. The clearest embodiment of the horizontal juridical order may be seen in the functioning of the UN General Assembly. Governments are somewhat equal with respect to one another, but this body is denied the authority to decide or the power to enforce of and there are no opportunities given for meaningful and direct participation by representatives of global civil society. The clearest expression of the vertical geopolitical order can be observed in the UN Security Council where many sessions on crucial issues of peace and security are held in secret so that even transparency is absent in the context of debate. The UN is

a quintessential Westphalian institution with respect to membership and operational responsibilities, although these realities are to some extent hidden behind the normative architecture of the UN Charter, which at least purports to impose major behavioral constraints on all states, including geopolitical actors. A slightly deeper scrutiny discloses a veto power that almost completely nullifies the Charter constraints, and looking still deeper reveals an operational code in which the main hegemonic actor(s) overrides in almost all circumstances the autonomy of ordinary sovereign states, despite their formal rights of equality based on membership.

This presentation of current world order does not take account of the rise of non-state actors both as participants and challengers. (Andreopoulos, 2006) These post-Westphalian elements of world order are arrayed around market forces, humanitarian voluntary associations, and mobilized social forces. Characteristic arenas of activity for such actors included the World Economic Forum, conflict zones, and the World Social Forum. These actors, although outside the formal framework of interacting governments representing sovereign

states, are also not subject to any consistent criteria of democratic governance. Their current main roles as gadflies or adjuncts to states, makes their absence of democratic practices of less present concern, but if there future contribution to the shaping of democratic global governance is to retain credibility then appropriate forms of democratization of civil society actors need to be established.

Citizenship

Discussions of citizenship in the modern era focused mainly on the evolving relations of citizen and state in liberal democracies. This concept of citizenship in the last half of the 20th century became increasingly associated with a normative model of legitimate national governance, incorporating both the rise of international human rights and reliance upon private sector economic growth. The authoritative character of this model was universalized, at least rhetorically, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the entry of China into the World Trade Organization, and the emergence of a consensus among governments in support of neo-liberalism as the foundation of

national economic policy. George W. Bush endorsed such an understanding of governance when he started his cover letter introducing the important document, National Security Strategy 2002 of the United States of America, with the following sentence: “The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.” (National Security Strategy, 2002) What is striking here is the regressive and revealing failure to mention any duty to protect those materially deprived by providing for basic human needs, as well as the arrogance associated with claiming to be the embodiment of the single model of societal success. To show respect for social and economic rights of individuals and groups was deliberately avoided in the Bush approach, presumably because it would be regarded as an acceptance of the welfare state, and might attract conservative criticism as a backdoor acceptance of socialism. (Marshall, 1950 on the evolution of Westphalian citizen rights). Although this American retreat from a conception of citizenship that

includes the responsibility of the state for the material wellbeing of its citizenry has taken an extreme form, it does reflect a wider trend that is partly responsive to the supposed imperative of a neoliberal global economy, partly a reaction to the failures of state socialism as embodied in the Soviet Union, partly a consequence of a weakening labor movement in post-industrial societies, and partly reflective of a rightward swing throughout the industrial world in relation to state responsibility for the welfare of their citizenry.

Traditional forms of citizenship, then, at its best involved meaningful participation (rights and duties) within national political space, especially, the enjoyment of civil and political rights (freedom), the opportunity to participate in an open political process that is framed by a constitutional document (rule of law), subsidized opportunities for education and health, the assured protection of private property and national and transnational entrepreneurial rights (trade and investment), and some measure of support in circumstances of material need. Such a view of what might be called Westphalian citizenship included a reciprocal series of duties

the most onerous involved obligations of loyalty and service to the state. The crime of treason, continues to be punished everywhere with great severity, legalizes a radical denial of a globalized moral conscience, presupposing that even if the state acts in defiance of international law, universal standards of morality, and self-destructive imprudence, it is a crime to lend aid and comfort to its enemy. In this respect, there exists an unresolved tension between accountability of even government officials to international criminal law and the continuing claims made by governments to the unwavering, and essentially unchallengeable, allegiance of citizens. From the perspective of moral and legal globalization it seems like an opportune moment to advocate the abolition of 'treason' as a crime. A serious debate on treason and conscience would serve the purpose of rethinking the proper vector of citizenship with respect to changing values, beliefs, and conditions, as well as to acknowledge the global and species context of human action. As matters now stand, the absolutizing of allegiance to the state that confers nationality and citizenship undermines both human solidarity and respect for norms claiming global

applicability. Such an allegiance inculcates a tribalist ethos that anachronistically privileges the part over the whole at a historic moment when the parts that make up the whole increasingly depend on the wellbeing of the latter. The Nuremberg ethos that held German, and later Japanese leaders legally responsible for their official crimes, almost obligates citizens of state embarked on a course of international criminality to advocate treason, and certainly requires a rejection of blind obedience to the orders and policies of a state. Of course, this Nuremberg legacy is ambiguous, starting out as victors' justice and persisting as a normative framework that effectively exempts geopolitical actors and their servants from all efforts to impose criminal responsibility upon those who act on behalf of the state. The unsuccessful pursuit of the former American Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, for his role in authorizing torture illustrates the de facto immunity of those who act on behalf of hegemonic states.

Beyond this, there is the question of citizenship that is not tied to the national space of the sovereign state. To some extent

this has been formally recognized by the conferral of a secondary layer of European citizenship on persons living permanently within the countries belonging to the European Union. (Maastricht Treaty, 1993; Balibar, 2004) This formal acknowledgement has a rudimentary corresponding structure of regional governance as especially embodied in such institutions as the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament. More challenging, however, is the failure to take account of the partial disenfranchisement that has occurred globally both by the operations of the world economy and by the emergence of the United States as a global state, that is, exercising its authority as an override of both the sovereign rights of other states and through a self-decreed exemption from either the authority of the United Nations or of international law, especially in the areas of war and peace. This disenfranchisement has the effect of precluding the meaningful exercise of democracy on the level of the state for many countries, particularly in the ex-colonial countries. If we could imagine an adjustment by way of allowing persons outside the United States to challenge policy affecting their wellbeing by

way of binding referenda or even by casting votes in national elections held within the United States, the leadership role of the United States in shaping global governance would likely be altered for the better (as measured by the principles of the UN Charter or by most accounts of global justice) in fundamental respects, and there would be a far better fit between the ideals of democracy and the benefits of citizenship. The Westphalian territorial grip on the political imagination remains so tight that such a recasting of electoral arrangements is almost unthinkable, conveying sentiments that have the ring of ultra-utopianism.

The ageing of the Westphalian structure of world order is exhibited by the emergence of new arenas of global policy formation that are more responsive to the influence of non-state actors.(Falk, 2004, 3-44, 81-103) For instance, the World Economic Forum (WEF), especially during the 1990s, provided global market forces, and their most important representatives, with an influential arena. The WEF was established after the Trilateral Commission, which was an elite-oriented private sector initiative that was supposed to

offset the inter-governmental influence on world economic policy attributed to the Non-Aligned Movement, and its efforts in the early 1970s to achieve a new international economic order. In many respects the WEF shaped a policy climate that conditioned the behavior of governments and international financial institutions. In reaction to this post-colonial West-centric non-governmental continuing effort to steer the world economy in a manner that widened disparities between rich and poor within and among countries, civil society actors in the South formed the World Social Forum (WSF). The respective ideological and geographical centers of gravity of these opposing initiatives was expressed by the WEF meeting annually in Davos, Switzerland, and the WSF meeting initially for several years in Puerto Alegre, Brasil. In a certain sense, these opposed initiatives represented forms of self-created 'global citizenship,' established without the formal blessings of states or international institutions, and yet producing meaningful forms of participation by non-state global actors. Such participation is quite likely more meaningful than what was possible through either individual and group participation

in many national political processes. Of course, these two types of arena are not necessarily contradictory when it comes to policy, and could be partially understood as complementary undertakings to overcome the limitations of a purely statist world order. Kofi Annan, while serving as UN Secretary General, told the WEF at one of its annual gathering that the UN would only remain relevant in the new century if it found ways to incorporate both market forces and civil society actors significantly into its activities.

Whether intended or not, the former UN Secretary General was signaling the somewhat subversive opinion that the Westphalian era was over, or at least coming to an end, unless the purely statist structure of authority was modified at the UN, and presumably elsewhere in global policy arenas, to make room for certain non-state actors to take part in meaningful ways. Of course, these demands for access are not symmetrical. It is far easier for statist structures including the UN to accommodate private sector market forces, which already exert a huge influence thorough their strong representation in the upper echelons of officialdom in many

governments. To varying degrees national governments have even been instrumentalized by domestic and global market forces. This reality is accentuated by the fact that civil society actors are unrepresented in governmental circles. It remains a rarity for activist representatives of civil society to exert any direct influence on governmental policy formation or operations. Such a generalization is particularly true with respect to peace, security, and foreign economic policy. In the humanitarian domain of conflict management, civil society actors often collaborate with governments.

This structural challenge to Westphalian conceptions of world order remains unmet, and has unleashed a statist backlash. (Falk, 2004) Annan's rather mild efforts to implement his views on the future of the UN, especially with regard to the role of civil society representatives were effectively rebuffed by statist forces, a story largely untold. For instance, Annan proposed having an assembly of representatives of NGOs hold a meeting, intended as perhaps the first of an annual event, at the UN as part of the millennium celebrations in the year 2000. Even this largely

symbolic gesture to civil society was opposed to such an extent behind the scenes by leading governments that the gathering had to be held in a diluted form outside UN premises and on the assurance that this meeting was a one-time event. This same Westphalian backlash has led the UN to abandon the format of highly visible world meetings on global policy issues, which became in the 1990s important opportunities for transnational social forces to organize and network globally, gain access to the world media, and to help shape the policy outcomes by influencing Third World governments. (Pianta, 2003, 169-194)

The rise of non-state actors and the formation of non-state arenas seem to be reshaping the nature of citizenship in the 21st century as concept, as behavior, and as aspiration.(Keck, 1998; Andreopoulos, 2006) If modes of participation and psycho-political identities are shifting to take account of the realities of globalization, it is misleading to continue to reduce citizenship to a formal status granted by territorial governments of sovereign states, or even by such inter-governmental entities as the European Union. Such an

opinion is not meant to deny that citizenship of the traditional variety continues to provide most individuals with their most vibrant and useful sense of connection to a political community, especially in determining entitlements and rights and duties, as well as accounting for dominant political identities. What is being claimed, however, is that additionally *informal* modes of belonging and participating should begin to be acknowledged, encouraged, and evaluated as integral aspects of ‘citizenship.’

There is also emerging a new outlook on citizenship identity, and community. It reflects a growing preoccupation with the unsustainability of present civilizational life style, and petroleum based modernities. Putting this preoccupation more positively emphasizes the relevance of *time* to an adequate contemporary conception of citizenship. This acknowledges that discourses on citizenship, even if visionary, were essentially related to *space*, including those that articulated the ideal of ‘citizen of the world.’ See If concerns for unsustainability and of responsibilities to the unborn are added to the desirable, and possibly necessary, adoption of a

pacifist geopolitics are the substantive facets of this future-oriented perspectives on citizenship, it would be useful to signal this enlargement of outlook by adopting the terminology of ‘citizen pilgrim.’(Falk, 1995, 211-212)The pilgrim, although it has some misleading religious connotations associated with holy journeys, conveys the overriding sense that normative citizenship in the early 21st century involves a pilgrimage to a sustainable, equitable, humane, and peaceable future. The citizen pilgrim is on a journey through time, dedicated to what is being called here ‘a necessary utopianism.’ In contrast the traditional citizen is bound to its territorial space, and at most can call on her government to be sensitive to long-range considerations.

The calling of the citizen pilgrim is to act without regard to territorial boundaries or the priorities of national interest when these conflict with the human interest in a sustainable future. As well, the citizen pilgrim is engaged in the project of global democratization in any of a multitude of ways, including establishing positive connections of affection and appreciation based on human solidarity and shared destiny. Sustained by an

ecumenical spirit, the citizen pilgrim rejects the secular/religious binary that supposedly separates the modern from the traditional, and finds spiritual as well as mundane wisdom and visionary hope embodied in all of the great world religions.(see Hurd, 2008)

Global Parliament

Democratizing global governance raises a variety of issues, including greater degrees of accountability, transparency, and equity throughout the United Nations System, as well as establishing spaces for non-state participation. The most promising and practical way to acknowledge the challenge and organize a response is to establish *in some form* a global parliament with the mandate to incorporate transnational and futurist non-state civil societal priorities. (For range of views see Widener Symposium, 2007). I have collaborated for some years with Andrew Strauss in the development of support for this initiative. (Strauss, 2007; Falk & Strauss, 2000, 2001, 2003; Falk, 2007) Such an innovative step has been prefigured by the existence for several decades of

the European Parliament, as well as the far newer African Parliament. Although a bold challenge to Westphalian notions of world order based on exclusive international representation by the governments of sovereign states, a Global Parliament is a flexible format that can be initiated modestly. In conception, the establishment of such an institution is a less radical innovation than was the International Criminal Court that proposes a capacity to hold leaders of sovereign states accountable for certain enumerated crimes. Whether this mission will be fulfilled, especially with respect to leading states, seems doubtful at present, but the existence of the institution is a recognition of a principled approach to the uniform imposition of a global rule of law on all who act in the name of the state. A Global Parliament is capable of evolving into a lawmaking institution, but its initial phase of operations would be primarily to give the peoples of the world a direct ‘voice’ at the global level, with a strong networking potential of benefit to the strengthening of global civil society and an institutional embodiment of populist concerns.

There are many organizational mechanisms that could be

used to establish such a Global Parliament. (See Falk & Strauss, 2001, 2003). Undoubtedly, the easiest approach would be to rely on national parliaments to designate a given number of representatives proportionate to the size of their population or reflective of some formula for civilizational distribution. But such a starting-point, although likely the most manageable, would seem likely to reproduce Westphalian attitudes in such a way as to defeat the main purposes of the Global Parliament. More promising, although potentially cumbersome, would involve the voluntary decision by a given number of governments, say thirty, to agree by treaty to the establishment of a Global Parliament via direct elections arranged either nationally or regionally.

It has been encouraging to experience reactions of growing receptivity around the world to the whole project of establishing a Global Parliament. I believe this represents both a gradual globalization of political consciousness and the spread of the idea that global governance needs to avoid hegemonic solutions, which requires a variety of moves in the direction of global democracy. The disappointing and

alienating results of the American use of its unipolar geopolitical position has also contributed to this receptive atmosphere, as has the halting, yet cumulative progress toward the establishment of a European polity based on consent and an ethos of democracy. These developments suggest a slow merger of horizons of necessity and desire, as well as less remoteness from the horizon of feasibility. As a thought experiment the emergence of a Global Parliament seems in 2008 less unlikely than did the establishment of an International Criminal Court a decade before its establishment in 2002. Of course, what happens to such an institution to make it live up to the hopes of its sponsors involves an equally difficult struggle.

There now exists much support for the Global Parliament idea throughout global civil society whenever world order reform is at issue. What is needed is a campaign, perhaps modeled on the collaborative efforts between coalitions of moderate governments and civil society actors that were so successful in relation to the treaties banning anti-personnel landmines and establishing the International Criminal Court.

The campaign for a Global Parliament could initially aim to achieve support for convening a treaty making negotiating session that might itself break ground by combining governments of states with transnational civil society actors as negotiating partners. What would hopefully emerge from such a process would be a treaty that would not come into force until ratified by national constitutional processes and by referenda in participating societies, which need not necessarily be configured as ‘states.’

As with the idea of citizen pilgrim so with the Global Parliament, much of the benefit would flow from the process itself. This process would shape a consensus as to organizational format, including membership, funding, constitutional status. A big issue is whether the Global Parliament would be formed as a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly or take some more autonomous character within the UN System. It might also turn out to be impossible to gain agreement for situating the Global Parliament within the UN in which case it might be established for a trial period as a free-standing international institution, which is the case,

for instance, for World Trade Organization.

Conclusion

This essay, and its recommendations, proceed from the belief that politics as the art of the possible cannot hope to cope with the multi-dimensional, intensifying crisis of global governance. At the same time, it seeks to root its analysis and prescriptions as coherently and responsively as the imagination allows with respect to what has been called horizons of desire and necessity. Its main utopian element is to encourage a radical revisioning of citizenship that currently continues to serve mainly nationalist and even tribalist values. To be a citizen pilgrim in such a global setting is to be a lonely voice in the wilderness, yet representing an ethically driven commitment to truthfulness, human and natural wellbeing, and an overall quest for sustainability and equity. Similarly, to advocate a Global Parliament, given the structure of the United Nations and the resilience of statist geopolitics, is to whistle in the wind, but yet the wind can shift allowing the

impossible to become abruptly feasible. Again, the rationale for establishing a global parliament rests on desire and necessity, not feasibility.

This leaves the question as to whether such a framework for advocacy can ground the struggle for global democracy, and ultimately hope in the human future, under present world conditions of denial, strife, oppression, exploitation, and alienation.

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