Global Responsibility – Reaching Beyond National Sovereignty

The concept of federalism has fallen out of favour within the British political debate. It is misrepresented as a political philosophy in favour of a large centralised superstate taking power from national governments and democracies. In recent years, the debate over globalisation has begun to cover issues of how global decisions should be taken. But this debate is taking place without a key philosophy underpinning or informing it. As a consequence, the institutional solutions put forwards to solve global problems all too often lack the key elements which will help to ensure greater democratic involvement.

The Reform of the United Nations

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The Concept of an International Community

Before one can begin to talk about what changes are necessary, however, it is crucial to begin with a definition of the concept of the international community. It is not uncommon to read about the ‘international community’ as though it had some form of personality beyond the sum total of all the disparate nation states that exist in the world today. The international community does not ‘have an opinion’ or act in collective fashion except in very particular circumstances following a great deal of discussion, negotiation and compromise. There is no one who has the authority to speak for the ‘international community’; to adapt Henry Kissinger’s famous comment about Europe, “One cannot pick up the telephone and ask to speak to the International Community.”

Similarly, the United Nations is frequently perceived as an independent agent of world opinion, as though it had an independent personality and authority to make decisions and impose its will upon events. That is misleading. To a degree the problem is semantic and depends on the definition of the word ‘community’. To Europeans, the word has a very strong meaning and goes back to the origins of the European Community in the immediate post-war period. For those closely involved with the origins of the European Community, the word ‘community’, whether actual or imagined, had an important, value charged meaning. It meant a grouping of countries that not only created; in reality, the experience of the UN is crucial to the development of more effective methods of international decision-making. What it needs is not denigration but constructive reform.

The key questions this pamphlet seeks to address are: (1) what changes in the United Nations are necessary to make it a serious player in today’s world, and (2) what lessons might be learned from the experience of the circumstances that led to the creation of the EU?

The war in Iraq has forced the issue of world governance, and especially the role of the United Nations, onto the international political agenda. It has stimulated new concern among those who feel the UN is insubstantial, those who wish to use it as a vehicle to stop unilateral action by the United States and, of course, those who wish to see the UN strengthened as the pre-eminent instrument of global governance.

The Reform of the United Nations

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The keys to what is the second in the One World Trust pamphlet series entitled Global Responsibility – Reaching Beyond National Sovereignty. This series examines the relevance of federalist ideas to the globalisation debate.

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At the same time, there is a questioning of values and a growing lack of trust in international institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, which have been at the centre of international diplomacy and decision-making for the past half century. For example, meetings of the World Trade Organisation in many countries have been accompanied by angry demonstrations.

Recognising these major changes, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, speaking to the UN General Assembly in September 2003 said:

“All of us know there are new threats that must be faced – or, perhaps, old threats in new and dangerous combinations: new forms of terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But, while some consider these threats as self-evidently the main challenge to world peace and security, others feel more immediately menaced by: small arms employed in civil conflict, or by so-called ‘soft threats’ such as the persistence of extreme poverty, the disparity of income between and within societies, and the spread of infectious diseases, or climate change and environmental degradation...Excellencies, we have come to a fork in the road. This may be a moment no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded.”

Kofi Annan was referring to the urgent action that needs to be taken cooperatively at the international level to combat the threats facing the world today. And, for such action to be taken there needs to be a reform of the one international institution that can provide a forum for such decision-making – the United Nations. While others argue that the UN has failed and that a new set of institutions need to be created, in reality, the experience of the UN is crucial to the development of more effective methods of international decision-making. What it needs is not denigration but constructive reform.

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This pamphlet does not rely on aspirations that ignore the continuing importance of the nation state as the key unit of decision making in the world today. Nor does it pretend that the changes that need to be made to the UN can come about without the support and backing of the United States of America. Whatever criticism there may be of the way the US has chosen to exercise its power as the only global superpower, its cooperation is needed to create a workable system of international governance. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly clear that the US administration has to look to its partners in the UN to support its policies. Many of them may not like those policies, but there is no doubt that the improvement of the UN system is in the general interest, including that of the US, and it is on that central idea that this pamphlet is predicated.

The Concept of an International Community

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the whole world. The enormous loss of life, compounded by the holocaust and the unprecedented bombing of civilian populations, led to a determination among many thinking people to find a lasting solution to the horror of war. The drafters of the UN Charter were filled with a passionate determination to seek alternatives to conflict; indeed, their aspirations are set out clearly in the very first sentence of the preamble to the Charter: “We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life time has brought untold sorrow to mankind…”. The leaders of the five victorious ‘great powers’ who formed the permanent membership of the Security Council used high-brow rhetoric to describe their aims. But in reality they were far more preoccupied with determining the shape of the post-war world, and the cold war confrontations that were beginning to take place across the occupied with determining the shape of the post-war world, and the permanent membership of the Security Council used high-blow powers to the preamble to the Charter:

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Vandervelde, Treaty, and to take concrete, practical steps that could begin to integrate the economic and political structures of both the victorious and the defeated nations. This was the thinking behind the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty.

The European nations that had been ultimately responsible for the two world wars and taken the brunt of the destruction and suffering appeared (except for the Soviet Union) to have begun to learn their lesson and make the psychological adjustment from seeing war as a method of national aggressandism to understanding the link between permanent peace and prosperity. For them, the future lay not just in creating a forum in which to discuss and seek to defuse impending conflict but in creating institutions and instruments that could build an integrated future. They had the fundamental insight that peace and security required the pooling of sovereignty in certain key areas. At the heart of the European project was a balance between federalist principle and functional projects that could incrementally apply those principles.

Unlike the broad brush concepts contained in the UN Charter, the first treaty signed by the original six had the rhetorically unimpressive title of A Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. But contained within that treaty were the first steps that enabled the growth and development of the European Union we see today, now 50 nations and considering a constitution.

The creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) avoided a purely inter-governmental system like the Council of Europe, which, without the important addition of the European Court of Human Rights, could only have become a talking shop for national parliamentarians. Jean Monnet and others who designed the ECSC anticipated that the constitutional features would be acceptable to the governments of participating states. That did not go far towards creating a federal state but in the words of Robert Schuman when he launched the negotiations to establish the Community: “The pooling of coal and steel production would immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe…”

But the ECSC initiative was not followed by any early move towards a federal state. The initiatives to create a European army responsible to the institutions of a European Defence and Political Community failed, and the European Community which was established soon afterwards applied most of the institutions of the ECSC to the creation of a common market together with a wide range of economic cooperation without encompassing the hard core of sovereignty. So, by trial and error, the European Community process was re-launched and demonstrated, in a pragmatic fashion, how a federal objective could be combined with institutions that were acceptable to the member states’ governments.

What is clear is that to build a community of nations, there had to be an institution that was recognised as legitimate, independent, fair and impartial by all the key players, and most especially, by governments and parliament. It had to be given the legitimacy to determine what was in the best interests of all the people across national borders, to make proposals on their behalf, and then to open a dialogue with representatives of the national sovereignies – the governments of the member states. In the European context, that institution was the European Commission.

The Commission was designed to be the engine to drive the European Economic Community forward, able to stand outside and above national interests. And the way that was chosen saw all the institutions the legitimacy they needed was to begin to be in not governmental. Indeed, the legitimacy of the entire community then and as it developed over the next 50 years was based upon a series of treaties negotiated between democratically elected governments. Supranational institutions derived their legitimacy from national governments. The Commission helped national governments identify what was in the collective interest of all of the people of Europe as a whole, and then to find ways of adapting the narrow national view to the collective interest. Rather than rely on inter-governmental negotiations, which too often degenerate into horse-trading, the Commission was mandated to formulate a completely independent point of view, not neutral, but above national interest.

Further democratic legitimacy was provided by a European Parliament, initially consisting of members of the national parliaments but eventually representing the people of Europe directly through universal suffrage. Indeed, once the European Parliament was directly elected, it increasingly used the powers that the Treaty had given it to ensure that the Commission should be equally answerable to itself as much as to the Council of Ministers, which represented the governments of the member states. This was a key step in the strengthening of legitimacy through democratic procedures.

At times, governments, and most especially heads of governments, have tried to weaken the independence of the Commission. Over the years, some have clearly wanted to transform the Commission into a secretariat not unlike the Secretariat’s office in the UN – a good technocratic institution with the disposal of national governments – but they were prevented from doing so by the growing realization that this was both anti-democratic and against the wider interests of the people of Europe.

Those who wish to attack the system still try and denigrate the Commission as being technocratic but the crucial point is that the members of the Commission are in fact, political, and, in the final analysis, responsible to the European Parliament as seen when the Santer Commission resigned as a result of pressure by the Parliament, backed by its power of dismissal. This independent legitimacy was fundamental and critical to the success of the whole project.

Once the Commission decides to make a proposal, the views of civil society – unions, corporate interests, non-governmental organisations etc. – are canvassed. It takes both officially and unofficially to government and its civil servants and it guides its proposals through a process of standing committees before they are presented for decision by the Council and the European Parliament. All that is the prerogative of the Commission, which is crucially a political body, not just a civil service.

The Commission was created sui generis – there was nothing like it...
before, but it was the creation of a small and largely homogeneous group of six countries that had gone through a traumatic experience and recognised that the security of all could only be safeguarded by building a deep and lasting relationship between them. Its success was such that its substance for institutions and powers were strengthened and its membership enlarged to become the European Union of today.

The Reform of the United Nations

The key questions posed by this pamphlet are: Is this experience relevant to the whole international community in a world, consisting of nearly 200 countries which are facing a whole variety of problems that threaten their survival and are not emotionally engaged with some recent cataclysmic catastrophe? What kind of impetus is required to start things moving in the direction of global governance? And is it possible to reform the existing United Nations or is there a need to begin again?

While there are others who think we should begin again, the United Nations, for all its faults is the repository of a vast amount of invaluable experience and expertise. To think that something new would magically capture public imagination and overcome the problems the UN has faced is a fantasy. It is far better to use what already exists and to see how it can be made to meet the problems the world faces today.

One major change is that the great issues confronting the world – hunger, disease, environmental damage, the need for climate control, terrorism and many others – are perceived today at a level in a way which they were not fifty years ago. Then, there was the shared tragedy of war but not a universal perception of global challenges. The communications revolution and the ubiquitous media has ensured that at least people learn about the problems they are facing, even if the method of presentation is frequently trivialized. Powerful and dramatic images, such as the destruction of the World Trade Centre or famine in Africa are sent round the world. What is important to recognise is that UN reform is not simply the preoccupation of western liberals. Two other members of the Security Council, China and Russia have increasingly made it clear that they also see the need for the UN to be more intimately involved in the whole area of human security, even if they would not wish to see any interference in their own national policies.

Beginning reform

Reform should begin with the calling of an inter-governmental conference by the United States as well as other members of the Security Council. Very little can be achieved without this and it is by no means unrealistic to hope that this will be done.

The conference must be composed of delegates from all member-states in the UN. It should be asked to look comprehensively at how sovereign states can work together to overcome the common problems they face, balancing the ambitions of national sovereignty against the common good. A white paper that can be used as a basis for further discussion should be prepared. This paper should address the state of the world now, the problems facing it, the reforms that might be considered, the diplomatic procedures needed to implement them.

Such a conference need not begin within an intellectual vacuum. For example the Bretton Woods institutions, including the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, and new powerful agencies such as the UN Environment Programme, the World Food Programme and, most importantly, the World Health Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the UN Environment Programme, the World Food Programme and, indeed the whole UN system, is the product of the other institutions whose mandate directly affects global governance, for example the Bretton Woods institutions, including the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, and new powerful agencies such as the UN Environment Programme, the World Food Programme and, most importantly, the World Health Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the UN Environment Programme, the World Food Programme and, indeed the whole UN system.

It will be essential that each of these agencies should have at its head someone who is chosen not simply as an administrator but someone who can understand the politics of change in that sector. As the directors-general of these agencies, or whatever title they are given, they will be the agents of the transnational institutions and, most importantly, global action in their own sector, this new role for the Secretary General and his cabinet would not be restricted to the process of reform but would be at the heart of all future UN activity, transforming it from a fundamentally administrative to a dynamic political institution.

Proposals for change and policy should come from agencies charged with looking to the common good of all the people in the world, not just one group. One of the many reasons that the recent trade talks in Cancun failed is that developing nations were being asked to react to proposals that had been, to all intents and purposes, already concluded between the US and the European Union in advance of the official talks.

What is clear, watching the development of global trade negotiations, is that the US and Europe maintain that whatever they propose is in the interests of the global community as a whole though it is quite evident that they represent primarily their own special interests. In a sense, it could only be that way. It is quite improbable to believe that powerful nations of their own accord will propose something that is not designed to maximise their own benefit. The same applies to the Group of 20, who will also claim to understand the global interest while, in reality, representing their own interests.

If instead, the Director General of the WTO were appointed by representatives of the world community, charged with trying to determine what was in the best global interest, and had the power of proposal, then the other participants would be able to discuss the issue on the basis of his proposals, rather than the proposals that have arisen from the most powerful interest groups.

The key is to politics the Secretary General’s office and the cabinet or commission that surrounds him. He must be recognised not as a civil servant but as an international statesman in his own right – something that has been made much easier by the personality of Kofi Annan, whom many already see as statesman, though he does not presently have that power. And, like any politician, the Secretary General must have the ability to present his case in the key forums when it comes up for debate.

Once the right of the Secretary General and his cabinet to make proposals has been established, the next step is for those proposals to be considered before the Security Council.

2 The Security Council

The key to the reform of the Security Council, which is top of the list for many UN reformers, is not to take away the veto from the permanent five members. It is clearly an anachronism that the victors of a war that was fought two generations ago should still have such control over world affairs but the truth is that nothing will induce them to surrender it and it is futile to try. We have to accept the practical politics of the situation and that is that the permanent members both can and will retain their veto. Instead, the veto be extended to all members of the Security Council in the following way.

Firstly, the composition of the Security Council requires revision. The five permanent members would have to remain but they would be joined by regional representatives representing a broad geographical division of the world. The membership of the qualified majority voting, not just because it would unquestionably be blocked by the existing permanent members but because it could still allow pressure to be placed on smaller countries by the more powerful members to accept the latter’s interests. It is used as a way to force some countries to accept what the larger countries often discuss beforehand in bilateral diplomatic discussions.

The possession of the veto by all members of the Security Council would force all its members and most especially the representatives of the regional groupings to take its very seriously. The fact that they
would have to account for its use would not only make sure that they would have to be able to justify its use in the wider forum they represented but it would also make them far less vulnerable to arm twisting from the bigger countries. We saw in the Iraq crisis, how the French, British and Americans went to the African countries and applied enormous pressure upon them to vote one way or the other. Under the system we propose, they would have to bear in mind their requirement to justify their vote on the use of their veto to the other members of their region.

The possession of a veto would clearly bring important responsibilities and have the secondary effect of forcing a public debate in the other member states of the region when voting takes place.

It is clear that there was a lot of support for this move, but it is important to remember that the European experience has shown that in a surprisingly short time, the use of the veto has declined enormously and, indeed, it is rarely used in the UN any more, except by the US. The weight of events and the sheer logic behind the need to keep things moving reduces the effectiveness of the veto. It is far more sensible to let it ebb on the vine than to try and cut it off at all once.

The proposals in this pamphlet fall into 3 broad categories: (1) the empowerment of the Secretary-General and his cabinet with the right of policy proposal, (2) the extension – not the removal – of the veto, and (3) the creation of a UN Parliamentary Assembly alongside the General Assembly and the right of the Secretary-General to insist on a debate on matters of common interest in these chambers.

The proposals made by the Secretary-General and his commission or cabinet, if agreed by the Security Council, would then be placed before the two assemblies for their endorsement. Exact voting numbers, whether a simple majority or a two thirds agreement on some issues from both assemblies would have to be determined. But it can be assumed that if the proposal has not been vetoed by the Security Council, it is unlikely to meet with massive opposition from the two assemblies.

The two assemblies would not be able to over-rule the veto of a member of the Security Council. This may sound wonderful in theory but would not have the effect of being binding on the member members who, it must be understood, hold the trump cards. No proposal for reform can ever be accepted without their approval – that is reality. However, in special circumstances, the veto might not necessarily prevent other member states from adopting proposals that could not be imposed on the member state exercising the veto.

But, and this is the crucial point, whoever exercised their veto would be required to justify it before the two Assemblies in a public debate with the Secretary-General or the relevant member of his commission or cabinet. The Secretary-General would have the right to insist on a public debate.

The country or countries exercising the veto would be required to explain exactly why it has been used. Take, for example, the US and the Kyoto agreement, which, in any case, was not the result of a discussion on the basis of an independent assessment, but a compromise between governments in the developing and the developed world. Suppose on the question of climate, a proposal had been made by the Secretary-General and vetoed by the United States, the American administration would have been forced to explain why it was opposed to the proposal of the Secretary-General, who would be able to argue the case before the two assemblies.

Public opinion throughout the world, including within the United States, would be informed about what was at stake because it would be heard by both sides of the argument. There would have to be a debate both in the international arena and within the domestic environment.

There would be a vote in the assemblies – whether by a simple or qualified majority is not immediately relevant. If the Secretary-General won the case, then the choice would be given to the country threatening to use the veto as to whether they chose to maintain it or to accept the common good as defined not just by the Secretary-General but by a majority of both assemblies. In other words, by the institutionalised expression of world public opinion.

That choice – whether or not to persist with the veto – would be very important. If the country concerned chose to withdraw the veto (which might on occasion be an easier option and one that could be sold to their own population by reference to the overwhelming weight of international opinion) then the proposals would be ratified.

If, however, the veto is maintained, then the Secretary-General should have the right to continue to negotiate with the country concerned to see whether there may be some form of compromise or opt-out, in much the same way as the United Kingdom opted out of the introduction of the Euro while maintaining its membership of the European Union.

If either assembly rejects the proposal, then the proposal falls. National sovereignty must have a way to express itself and so must the common interest. But there is always room for negotiation: those who don’t want a proposal may be able, in certain cases, to remain outside the remit of the proposal but not prevent others from going ahead. It is a way to say: “You are not ready, you don’t want it, but we are ready and willing to go ahead. If one day you want to change your mind, the door is open. But you cannot close it for us.” In other words, to introduce a political idea that can move back and forth between public opinion, global interests and national sovereignty. It becomes a globalised debate between what are perceived as national interests and the growing importance of global interests.

It would not be a complicated process but would create a constant and dynamic flow of ideas which could transform what the UN is able to do, without threatening legitimate national or regional interests. It would give a new dimension to the constant diplomatic negotiations that take place within the UN and transform the ‘faking shop’ into a dynamic process always moving forward global governance. The new system would enhance the growing and important role of civil society, which would be in a position to suggest new ideas to the Secretary-General and his cabinet and then lobby globally for their implementation, again enhancing the democratic purpose.

The key to the reform of the Security Council is not to take the veto from the five permanent members but to extend it to other members instead.

Eventually, there may be a need for a court to be able to deal with disputes and effective implementation but at this beginning, it would have to be sensitive to the enormous differences that still exist in the world between different systems of justice. It could not go as far as the European Court, which deals with countries that broadly share common traditions of jurisprudence. But there is reason to suppose that interaction and common activities could over time bring about a narrowing of the differences and a wider acceptance of a common legal authority.

A serious issue will be the degree to which the international community has the responsibility to protect those who are threatened by some overwhelming threat to WE – the issue increasingly known as ‘human security.’ In such case, it is extremely unlikely that a country could exercise a veto and justify it to its own regional group. Indeed, it would bring the regional grouping into the debate. It is not feasible in the short term to give the UN powers to over-rule a veto in the Security Council.

But, it must be remembered that whoever exercised that veto would be taking direct responsibility for the continuation of the genocide, which would be an extraordinarily profound moral burden.

Furthermore, the resolutions placed before the Security Council would not be coming from a member state but from the Secretary-General and would carry the fons and legitimacy of world opinion. It would be very different from what happened before the recent war in Iraq. Most of the resolutions voted on in the Security Council had been prepared partly in Washington and partly in London, not by the Secretary-General. They represented the interests of the countries framing them and so were, in a very real sense, corrupted from the beginning. The principle of the war divided the Security Council but the Secretary-General was not in the position to express the view of world public opinion; to set out what might have been the common interest.

It is also important to remember that the European experience has shown that in a surprisingly short time, the use of the veto has declined enormously and, indeed, it is rarely used in the UN any more, except by the US. The weight of events and the sheer logic behind the need to keep things moving reduces the effectiveness of the veto. It is far more sensible to let it ebb on the vine than to try and cut it off at all once.

Historically, there have been attempts by the UN to move forward the world agenda. For example, the Brundtland Commission, which was set up by a UN Secretary-General, did what the Secretary-General’s cabinet should do in the future. Similarly, the Brandt Commission, which consisted of high-level independent people making proposals and suggestions that tried to represent the views of the world community. But what happened to those proposals?

They were simply shelved because they had no recognised legitimacy or institutional force behind them. In the system we propose, they would have had to be debated at a variety of institutional levels and then considered seriously by the world’s media and governments.

A question that will be asked is: what kind of sanctions would be placed upon countries failing to accept or endorse resolutions that were accepted by the institutional process we have described? The answer is that unless the Security Council were prepared to sanction the use of force or agree to some form of sanctions, as it has to today, there could only be moral pressure, but of a much more profound nature than presently exists.

For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, which is a scandal, the world community pays lip service to change but things continue to worsen. In the system we propose, when Mugabe began to violate the Lancaster House agreement, the UN Secretary-General working with his own intelligence and consulting other African leaders, for example
The US is correct in saying the UN, as it is today, does not have either the credibility or legitimacy to undertake the work it needs to do. The US position has had the merit of bringing the issues out into the open and make the debate about the future of the UN and global governance even more urgent.

The Realpolitik of Change

Many people will question the practicality of these ideas. They may appeal to Europeans, the Venetians of Robert Kagan’s analogy, but what about the US, which he likens to Mars? Is it likely it would see the benefit? The American system is changeable and flexible. Even the present administration has the great merit of being forthright in its arguments: it was not willing to wait for the approval of the UN before invading Iraq, it made clear its disdain for the UN process. Nevertheless, it now finds that it will need UN support in the future if it is not to bear all the costs of policing the world on its own. But the US is correct in saying that the UN, as it is today, does not have either the credibility or legitimacy to undertake the work it needs to do. The US position has had the merit of bringing the issues out into the open and making the debate about the future of the UN and global governance even more urgent. It is also worth noting that addressing the 45th session of the UN General Assembly on 1st October 1990, President George Bush (Senior) made the remarkable statement: “I see a world building on the emerging model of European unity, not just Europe but the whole world, whole and free.”

The key to the process of change, however, is that it must be incremental. It does not seek to go too fast nor to challenge immediately and directly the five permanent members of the Security Council. They will not accept in the foreseeable future any challenge to their veto and nor is there any power that can make them. But, what is evident in the European experience is that practical politics will surely diminish the use of the veto until a day may arrive when it will wither away. What we must do, however, is to get started!

Zimbabwe would have to do so publicly. And then, in the final analysis, the Secretary-General would be able to recommend action to the Security Council. But by that stage, the pressure by itself might have produced results.

The key is to introduce a stronger political element into the present diplomatic and often secret procedures. Diplomacy would not disappear; indeed, the pressure on Mugabe would be much greater because the Africans would have had to commit themselves. And if the Secretary-General did propose action and it was agreed, it would have a far greater legitimacy than exists today.

In other less contentious areas, for example verification of trade and environmental agreements that countries have signed up to, the Secretary-General acting on behalf of the UN would be charged with verifying that what has been signed up to is carried out. Slowly but surely, processes and procedures of governance would grow, based upon precedents that would carry greater legitimacy.

In more minor cases of non-compliance, NGOs could be useful. If publicly agreed decisions are not being carried out, let them play a part. An historical example is the role played by the “third basket”, human rights provisions in the Helsinki Agreements that were introduced in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria in the 1970s. These provisions established an internal legitimacy for challenging decisions that had been agreed by the signatories, which included the former Communist governments of the Soviet Union and its satellites. This was seemingly a small reform but it had enormous consequences and contributed to the eventual dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the communist regimes in central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

If a government signs up publicly to certain commitments but later does not respect them, forces will arise, working within the country, to enforce the decision. Even in China today, you have groups which will challenge the government, including the business community. China’s membership of the World Trade Organisation came about largely because of the pressure applied by its business community and the modernisers in the government. But they could point to good economic and trading reasons for doing so.

Monsel himself in the post war period wanted the Common Market to force France to modernise. In China, there are certainly members of the central committee of the politburo who will say, “We are members of the WTO, we have to make changes or we shall lose the benefit of membership.” The global dimension opens the internal political debate and the dynamic opens up the society. It is a very pragmatic approach.
The One World Trust is a non-profit organisation that lobbies decision-makers to develop global rules and organisations to achieve the eradication of poverty, injustice and war. It conducts research on practical ways to make global organisations more responsive to the people they affect and on how the rule of law can be applied equally to all.

Its guiding vision is a world where all peoples live in peace and security and have equal access to participation and opportunity.