Interdependence, Cooperation, and the Emergence of Global Institutions[*]

by
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It is probably not possible to survey briefly world events over the last decade without feeling intense excitement, without being aware that one is witnessing events of great historic significance. A writer for *The New Yorker* not long ago pointed out that "as the decade draws to a close, the globe seems to be spinning faster than at any time in the last forty years, blurring long-familiar landscapes." Indeed, the "acceleration in the velocity of our history and the uncertainty of its trajectory"—to use the words of a noted political observer—have become the background against which new ideas and concepts are shaping the world we live in during the initial years of the twenty-first century.[1]

One of the inevitable consequences of this faster spinning is that the associated centrifugal forces are throwing into sharper contrast some of the challenges that humanity faces collectively. Charles Dickens' reference to the French revolution in the opening sentence of *A Tale of Two Cities* seems to capture the sense and the spirit of the age in which we live: "It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times." The current age is, indeed, one of expectations and hope as well as deepening contradictions and uncertainties.

A brief discussion of the contrasts that characterize the present world situation and an admittedly personal list of some of the reasons why these are both, at one and the same time, "the best of times and the worst of times" helps to illuminate humanity's predicament.

The Best of Times

There are a number of processes currently underway that are fundamentally constructive in nature and that permit many of us to envision the future with a sense of optimism and promise.

For example, the softening of political tensions between the major powers which begun more than ten years ago and led to the end of the Cold War has had a number of beneficial implications and has perhaps provided us renewed sense of hope for the future. In particular, it has dramatically reduced the likelihood of a nuclear war that could have engulfed the entire planet and undermined humanity's future security and well-being. Many will remember the darkened international horizon of the early 1980s that prompted perceptive thinkers like Jonathan Schell to write:

> "In the face of this unprecedented global emergency, we have so far had no better idea than to heap up more and more warheads, apparently in the hope of so thoroughly paralyzing ourselves with terror that we will hold back from taking the final, absurd step. Considering the wealth of our achievement as a species, this response is unworthy of us. Only by a process of gradual

debasement of our self-esteem can we have lowered our expectations to this point. For, of all the "modest hopes of human beings," the hope that mankind will survive is the most modest, since it only brings us to the threshold of all the other hopes. In entertaining it, we do not yet ask for justice, or for freedom, or for happiness, or for any of the other things that we may want in life."[2]

However keenly one may have felt the threat of nuclear war at that time, there is little doubt that, at least on this account, the world is a safer place today than it used to be. The end of the Cold War has also made it possible (at least in principle) for governments to set in motion processes aimed at allocating fewer resources to building up machineries of war and destruction and to maintaining military establishments, thus permitting their allocation to more productive ends that are more conducive to the welfare and, to use the words Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, to "that which would conduce to the happiness to mankind."[3]

Moreover, there is increasing evidence throughout the world of a move toward the establishment of democratic regimes and representative governments and the rule of law. This has been a positive development because it is only in the context of representative governments that have derived their legitimacy through some form of popular vote that their policies can be expected to be sensitive to the needs of their populations. Increasingly, economic and social development are being seen less in terms of the evolution of aggregate economic indicators and more in terms of whether such development is compatible with equity and social justice, protection of the environment, and respect for civil and other basic human rights. One aspect of this broadening of the definition of economic and social development is the increasing on-going efforts at international economic cooperation, perhaps most dramatically seen in the context of the European Union, which now uses a common currency, is expected to accept ten new members by 2004, and to adopt a new constitution which will lay a firm foundation for the concept of "European citizenship".

Furthermore, there has been continued and remarkable progress in the fields of transport and communications, of which the arrival and the remarkable expansion of the internet, with its vast potential for magnifying human interaction, is perhaps the most dramatic example. These developments and the underlying technological innovations have contributed to bringing human beings closer to each other and forced them to reexamine many of their long-held prejudices.

Finally, although this list is not by any means exhaustive, there continues to be progress in the field of medicine, agriculture, and science in general, which suggests that in a gradual, evolutionary way science and technology are being used to alleviate many long-established economic and social problems. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of the present age is the belief that the application of the scientific method and the onward march of technological progress will eventually allow us to satisfy the vast majority of the material needs of humankind.

The Worst of Times

However, at the same time, and notwithstanding the favorable trends and processes, there are other forces at work that give cause for concern and lead many to think of these as being especially dangerous times.

For example, the rapid deterioration of our environment, including deforestation, soil erosion, the thinning of the ozone layer, global warming, and so on give a sense of the

precariousness of the world's ecological system and the extent to which unrestrained industrialization and narrowly defined economic growth can undermine the basis for sustainable development. The American astronomer Carl Sagan, who spent the last years of his life warning us about the perils of global warming, noted in a speech delivered at the International Monetary Fund in Washington in 1990 that "even if we were to substantially cut back our consumption of fossil fuels in the next several years, the beneficial effects of these measures would not be felt until the middle part of the twenty-first century." That, in fact, in the intervening years since he made this statement our collective behavior has become less rather than more responsible, highlights the ecological crises that are very likely coming our way in the future.

Moreover, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, has, in many parts of the world, become an increasing threat to domestic peace and stability. The perniciousness of this trend has acquired manifestations even in traditionally egalitarian societies. In Russia, for example, during the past decade income distribution has become less equal than it is in most large industrial countries; Russia has managed to do in a few years what it took the United States nearly a quarter of a century to accomplish. Indeed, one of the chief grievances of the anti-globalization movement is that the current international economic order and the associated international institutions which underpin it have coexisted during the last 50 years with a massive increase in income disparities which have acquired, to use the words of a recent United Nations document: "obscene proportions."

Yet another unfavorable trend is the corruption of religion, which has ceased to be, for the most part, the traditional source of spiritual guidance and inspiration and has become, instead, a force for disunity and the source of much confusion and conflict among the peoples of the world. The weakening of religion, in turn, has resulted in a general sense of disaffection and moral disorientation that transcends geographic and cultural barriers. How far humanity has moved from an interpretation of religion that sees it as a force for good and a civilizing influence on human affairs was described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh and the interpreter of His writing, at a large gathering of students and faculty at Stanford University in October 1912:

> "If religious belief proves to be the cause of discord and dissension, its absence would be preferable; for religion was intended to be the divine remedy and panacea for the ailments of humanity, the healing balm for the wounds of mankind. If its misapprehension and defilement have brought about warfare and bloodshed instead of remedy and cure, the world would be better under irreligious conditions."[4]

The forces released by the clash of these opposing tendencies, some constructive and some destructive, have given many a sense that not only is the current age a very special (albeit dangerous) period but also one filled with a number of historical challenges and opportunities. Hence it is not surprising to find heated and interesting debates on such concepts as the new world order, the "end of history", the benefits and costs of globalization and, more substantively, the kinds of institutional structures that should be built to support an increasingly interdependent community of nations.

Interdependence, Cooperation, and the Nation State

In these best and worst of times an examination of one specific aspect of the broader question of interdependence is useful. The world has been transformed during the last several decades by technological progress, which, in turn, has had a dramatic impact

on the nature of economic and political phenomena and in the way nations relate to each other. Greater economic integration made possible by rapid developments in transport and communications in particular have made evident the need for greater international cooperation. Jean Monnet, the father of the European Union, observed perceptively that economic integration was forcing nations to accept voluntarily the same rules and the same institutions and that, as a result, their behavior toward each other was also changing. This, he said, was permanently modifying relations between nations and could be seen as part of the "process of civilization itself."[5]

But greater interdependence has also created tensions arising out of the potential conflict between national sovereignty and collective welfare. Indeed, it is not inaccurate to say that at present most countries' commitment to integration and increased international cooperation coexists with a reluctance, stemming from a desire to safeguard national interests, to transfer sovereignty to supranational institutions. Therefore, one key question in the years immediately ahead is whether greater economic integration (fuelled by further technological change, no longer under the control of any single sovereign state) will inevitably lead countries to seek common ground and perhaps even to build common institutions in other areas, such as foreign affairs and defense. Will the abdication of some national sovereignty in the economic sphere also lead to a similar process in other spheres of international relations?

Most people the world over have come to recognize the need for the existence of a certain number of institutions at the *national* level to guarantee the effective working of society. Everybody understands the need for a legislature to pass laws, for an executive branch to implement the laws, and for a judicial branch to interpret the law and to pass judgment whenever differences of interpretation arise. Most would agree with the notion that a central bank and other financial institutions are needed to regulate different aspects of the economic life of a nation. Indeed, it is not inaccurate to say that a sign of development and civilization is the extent to which such institutions in a particular nation have been allowed to develop and, in the process, managed to bring stability and a measure of prosperity to the life of a nation.

Conversely, the *absence* of such institutional progress undermines the creative energies and the vitality of a nation and holds back its development. Indeed, when the experts gather together to discuss the terrible plight of the African continent and to analyze the factors why the quality of life has deteriorated to such an extent during the past several decades, a central topic of the debate is institutional failure and the reasons behind it. At the same time it is also clear that national institutions and governments, in an increasingly interdependent world, are less and less able to address key problems, many of which have acquired an important international dimension.

First, governments are increasingly unable to do the kinds of things that they used to be able to do in the past and that, in people's minds, came to be identified with the very essence of government. Richard Cooper, one of our most insightful international economists, provides some interesting examples of this. He observes that a number of econometric studies have shown that in the last forty years there has been a marked decline in the size of what economists call the "fiscal multiplier."[6] This is a relatively simple concept that tries to capture the impact on a nation's gross national product of a given fiscal policy stimulus, such as a tax cut.[7] If the magnitude of this multiplier is compared for a number of countries over a relatively long period of time—for example, since the early 1950s—it can be observed that it has been falling steadily.

This means, that, whereas in the past governments could look to a fiscal stimulus as a way of addressing some specific macroeconomic problem (such as a stubbornly high unemployment rate), now that ability has been greatly diminished. A given fiscal stimulus by the British or French government simply "spills" into the rest of the world faster than it used to.[8] Or as Cooper puts it, "the increasing internationalization of the economy has led to an erosion of our government's capacity to do things the way it used to."[9] This, in turn, can, and sometimes has, led to a kind of paralysis on the part of governments, a sense that since the world has changed and it is no longer under their control—or at least they have less control over it than used to be case—the optimal policy response is to do nothing. Yet, publics have vastly higher expectations about economic policy and are unlikely to be placated by their leaders telling them that there is very little that can be done because the effectiveness of traditional policies has been greatly reduced by processes outside their control. The result is a profound sense of public dissatisfaction and/or apathy that one can perceive in many countries.[10]

Second, because of economic integration, government action can, occasionally, have unintended consequences, as opposed to an ineffective impact, which is the situation in the first case. Cooper again provides some examples. In one instance the United States decided to restrict European steel sales in the U.S. market. Europeans responded by restricting their own steel purchases from Brazil, Korea, and others. *These* countries, in turn, expanded their sales to the American market to compensate for the shortfall in Europe. At the end of the day there was no fundamental change. In another instance, in the early 1980s, the United States decided to tighten significantly its monetary policy while at the same time pursuing an expansive/loose fiscal policy (associated with a massive defense buildup). This led to a very sharp increase in international interest rates, which then became a key contributing factor in the onset of the international debt crisis, imposing a heavy burden on many nations and, in the end, also hurting the balance sheets of American banks.

The failings of the present international institutional arrangements in the political sphere are even more obvious. From Rwanda to Yugoslavia to Kosovo, one can see increasing evidences of the failure of the international community to address urgent and sometimes tragic problems because of the absence of international institutions charged with the power and jurisdiction to act in instances or situations that lie beyond the jurisdiction of national bodies. When close to a million people in Rwanda are butchered within a brief span of time, and the images of the carnage are relayed to every corner of the world, there seems very little that the international community can do, other than wring its hands, express regret, and helplessly stand by lamenting its impotence. This is an eloquent indictment of the tragic shortcomings of the present international political system. It was this kind of insight that led two Harvard professors, Grenville Clark and Louis. B. Sohn, in the 1950s to write about the need for the "establishment of world institutions which correspond to those which maintain law and order within local and national communities."[11]

The above considerations lead to the following question: What is the most adequate response to the erosion of policy effectiveness? One obvious starting point is realizing that much of the ineffectiveness of government actions (and the corresponding paralysis that accompanies them) stems from the fact that the actions are being carried out by individual sovereign states, acting alone, in full use of their (rapidly diminishing) powers, whereas joint, coordinated actions can restore (sometimes to a great extent) the utility of the previously ineffective policy. The realization that, in an

increasingly interdependent world, national institutions are less and less able to address problems that are fundamentally international in character and the implications that the realization carries for the exercise of political authority are the motivating forces behind many of the present experiments in many parts of the world with integrative processes and the building of supranational institutions to support and direct such processes.[12] Chief among these experiments one must note the economic, political, and institutional developments in the context of the European Union.[13]

Global Institutions

Albert Einstein, who together with Bertrand Russell and others gave a great deal of thought to the political requirements in the new climate created by the arrival of nuclear weapons, believed that one way one could address the evident failings of the international institutional framework was to create truly supranational organizations. In 1946, soon after the creation of the United Nations and very much aware of this organization's limitations, he wrote:

"The development of technology and of the implements of war has brought about something akin to a shrinking of our planet. Economic interlinking has made the destinies of nations interdependent to a degree far greater than in previous years. . . . The only hope for protection lies in the securing of peace in a supranational way. A world government must be created which is able to solve conflicts between nations by judicial decision. This government must be based on a clear-cut constitution which is approved by the governments and the nations and which gives it the sole disposition of offensive weapons. A person or a nation can be considered peace loving only if it is ready to cede its military force to the international authorities and to renounce every attempt or even the means, of achieving its interests abroad by the use of force."[14]

Russell held similar views:

> "A much more desirable way of securing world peace would be by a voluntary agreement among nations to pool their armed forces and submit to an agreed International Authority. This may seem, at present, a distant and Utopian prospect, but there are practical politicians who think otherwise. A World Authority, if it is to fulfill its function, must have a legislature and an executive and irresistible military power. All nations would have to agree to reduce national armed forces to the level necessary for internal police action. No nation should be allowed to retain nuclear weapons or any other means of wholesale destruction…. In a world where separate nations were disarmed, the military forces of the World Authority would not need to be very large and would not constitute an onerous burden upon the various constituent nations."[15]

In the aftermath of the chaos and destruction unleashed by World War II Einstein, Russell, and others laid out an important argument in favor of the creation of an international authority, explaining that the time had passed when military conflicts and their associated damage could be reasonably contained. In earlier times, because of the limited destructive power of weapons, a war between, say, France and Germany, did not, on the whole, disturb the peace and tranquility of the Incas in South America or of certain tribes in Africa. In the nuclear age, however, war had become unthinkable and its consequences universal. National sovereignty, which had always been understood to mean the right of a country to defend its interests by the use of force if necessary, but the exercise of which had assumed that conflicts would remain

largely confined to given geographic areas, no longer served the interests of anyone. On the contrary, thus understood, national sovereignty cast a dark shadow over the future of everyone. Hence the notion eventually emerged that lasting international peace will be feasible only in the context of the creation of a global institution based on the principle of collective security.

An additional argument supporting the creation of global institutions stems from the flowering of science and technology. Since this is irreversible and no longer under the control of any one government or power, the process of global integration and interdependence-what we now collectively call globalization-will continue to bring nations and peoples together and will increasingly expose the weaknesses of prevailing international political arrangements. As problems became more global in nature—from the environment to the functioning of the international economy—situations could emerge where important areas of human endeavor no longer receive adequate attention, creating the risks of ever more intense crises. Thus the creation of supranational institutions can be seen as fundamentally a preventive measure, designed to bring into being bodies with the appropriate jurisdiction over problems no longer under the control of today's sovereign states.

Yet another argument for the creation of global institutions is the enormous cost of maintaining military establishments associated with the present system of sovereign states. According to the *United Nations Human Development Report* , by the mid-1980s military spending in developing countries—some U.S.$200 billion per year—exceeded spending on health and education combined.[16] This telling statistic brings to mind the intense policy debates at the beginning of the 1990s on the scope that would be created by savings in defense spending, the so-called "peace dividend," and the uses to which it could be put. Staff at the International Monetary Fund estimated that every 1 percent increase in the efficiency of government spending worldwide (much defense spending falls under the category of "unproductive" expenditure) releases about U.S.$100 billion in resources that can be allocated to such things as human capital investment, social protection, and deficit reduction.[17] One cannot help reflecting on the words of Bahá'u'lláh, Who, in the early 1890s, when visited by the Cambridge orientalist Professor Edward G. Browne, said, "we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness to humanity," an observation that has remained tragically relevant during the next one hundred years.[18]

Although many recognize the intellectual value of the arguments for global institutions, others think it would be politically very difficult to achieve international consensus for establishing a broad and deep institutional structure, such as that which would have to underlie the creation of a world government. Still others think that such a goal, while not politically impossible, might be undesirable because it would lead to some kind of monstrous state that would eventually control every aspect of people's lives, ultimately even depriving them of essential liberties.

Part of the mistrust of global institutions comes from a somewhat strained understanding of human nature. For many, human beings are essentially selfish and aggressive, and war reflects their inner nature. From this perspective, humankind's extinction as a species is more or less inevitable. As the weapons of destruction become technologically more refined and as their efficacy is enhanced, the time will come when humanity will simply obliterate itself. This particular view of humanity is in sharp contrast with the Bahá'í view, which says that "man is a mine rich in gems of

inestimable value" and that through education these gems can be brought out into the open for the benefit of humankind. It is not a question of naively denying that human beings are incapable of behaving detestably toward one another. Unfortunately, during the twentieth century humankind has developed this ability to an extreme degree, and perhaps that century will be remembered as the time in the evolution of humanity when this ability was most horribly manifested.[19] It is more a question of recognizing that "Prejudice, war, and exploitation have been the expression of immature stages in a vast historical process and that the human race is today experiencing the unavoidable tumult which marks its collective coming of age."[20]

Yet others see a different obstacle to global institutions. They view the diversity of the human family as an insurmountable obstacle to greater international cooperation and initiatives that might lead to global governance. To have a form of centralized government machinery that would manage global affairs on a world scale, such individuals believe, one would need to have a set of universally accepted human values, something that apparently does not exist today. But this line of thinking ignores the communications revolution that has taken place during the twentieth century (and which has acquired accelerating impetus with the arrival of the internet), providing overwhelming evidence that the world has, indeed, become a global community. The revolution has clearly altered the dimensions of the planet and brought its inhabitants much closer to each other. Moreover, it has forced them to challenge long-held views about human nature and humankind's presumed inability to transcend the parochialism of tribe and nation and has contributed to a growing consciousness of world citizenship.

Beyond the impact of the communications revolution there are some universally accepted human values that transcend cultural barriers. Indeed, many see the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a broad consensus on the part of the international community on some fundamental, broadly held values. Various articles of the Declaration address such concepts as the will of the people as the basis of government authority and hence the need for the periodic establishment of the legitimacy of governments through elections (Article 21); the safety of citizens and the right to equal protection under the law (Article 7); the availability of information and freedoms of association and expression (Article 19); the ownership of property (Article 17); and the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and his/her family (Article 25).[21] In any event, the existence of international institutions or a world government does not presuppose the uniformity of values. All that is necessary is that there be certain universally accepted human values that have some relevance in the field of international relations (for example, ecological stability). Beyond this, it is possible to have a great deal of diversity within a particular international institutional framework. The variety of religions, for example, may persist, as may many other indigenous habits or customs.

Yet the creation of supranational institutions does, of necessity, imply the loss of sovereignty in certain areas. Indeed, the will to abdicate specific powers to supranational institutions—as is being done, in the context of the European Union—is itself an exercise of national sovereignty. When, in 1994, the citizens of Austria, Finland, and Sweden participated in national referenda and approved their respective governments' decisions to join the European Union, they collectively undertook to transfer sovereignty in key areas, hitherto under the jurisdiction of their national governments. They did so because it was felt that the benefits to be derived from closer international cooperation and recognition of common interests exceeded the

perceived costs associated with the loss of some sovereignty. A similar process is underway in the ten countries which are expected to join the European Union in the next wave of enlargement, sometime in 2004.

The present system of sovereign states has sometimes created delusions of freedom. Countries may, for example, use force to defend "vital" interests, as Iran and Iraq did throughout much of the 1980s, sustaining in the process large losses of human life, putting otherwise enormous strains on the social, economic, and political fabric of their respective societies. Political leaders may freely decide what percentage of the national budgets will be allocated to defend national borders. But one does not need to be very perceptive to realize that such liberties are, in fact, important constraints that limit a country's freedom to allocate resources to improve the quality of life. Maybe it would be better *not* to have the freedom to accumulate machines of war because international political arrangements have evolved and finally eliminated the need for massive spending on security, thereby liberating economic resources to fight against hunger or poverty or to invest in the future of our children. Russell has observed that:

"War has so long been a part of human life that it is difficult for our feelings and our imaginations to grasp that the present anarchic national freedoms are likely to result in freedom only for corpses. If institutions could be created which would prevent war, there would be much more freedom in the world than there is at present, just as there is more freedom owing to the prevention of individual murder.[22]

Beyond giving up certain national "liberties," one must not fall prey to associating world government with the creation of an Orwellian superstate that will control and direct every aspect of life and that will eventually suffocate the diversity of the human race, a source of vitality and creativity through the ages. Rather, one must study carefully the principle of unity in diversity, eloquently articulated by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. This principle, he said,

> "does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on the one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity…."[23]

Others argue that the creation of a world government might result in the emergence of an enormous and inefficient bureaucracy.[24] However, the creation of international institutions would presumably allow national governments to get rid of or significantly reduce the scope of many functions (for example, defense) that are integral to the current system of sovereign states and would, by the gradual elimination of overlapping areas of activity, create at least the potential for improved efficiency. Thus, rather than resulting in the emergence of a large and inefficient bureaucracy, global institutions could at least potentially streamline government and gradually eliminate the many barriers that inhibit human interaction and that have often existed when countries' actions have been motivated by fear, suspicion, or competition. In any event, inefficiencies associated with the existence of bureaucracies (at any level, local, national, or international) are to be dealt with through improvements in management and administration, including a clear identification of objectives and responsibilities, and not through the elimination of the

bureaucracies themselves. Citizens in a particular country may at times feel that their governments are neither especially sensitive to their needs nor particularly efficient in the administration of the resources and functions under their jurisdiction, but few would argue that the logical solution to this problem would be to do away with governments themselves, as if the functions they perform and the needs they fulfill could simply be assumed away or ignored. Arguing against the creation of an international authority on the environment, say, on the grounds that it *might* initially lead to an inefficient bureaucracy is not a serious argument as it implicitly suggests that the alternative is better, namely—some global environmental crisis resulting from the absence of a forum for discussion and action on problems with a strong international component.

For those who argue that a world government would inevitably lead to overcentralization, an undue curtailment of local and national freedoms, and even result in the emergence of a world dictatorship, one can point to history. It did not happen in the United States, when the colonies gave up their sovereignty to a federal government, and it certainly is not happening in Europe. It will always be possible, in the context of democratic societies living under the rule of law, to limit legally the various spheres of influence of each level of government, as is happening in the context of the European Union through the repeated application of the "principle of subsidiarity"—namely, the idea that a particular area of responsibility, such as the provision of elementary education, should best be carried out by the lowest possible level of government (in this case, local) and that higher forms of government should not become directly involved in those aspects inherent to this particular activity. Application of the principle of subsidiarity would, likewise, suggest that issues of environmental protection, economic management, defense, and security, because of their systemic nature and the high level of integration between states, should be dealt with by supranational institutions.

The Future

As persuasive as some of the arguments for global institutions are, the prevailing view on the initiatives called for by Einstein and Russell in the post-war period—and which lie at the heart of the vision of world order offered by Bahá'u'lláh more than a century ago—seems to be that they are unlikely to crystallize into concerted international actions in the near future. Skeptics might point to the objective fact that the major initiatives taken during the twentieth century in the area of international relations were all in response to, and not to anticipate or prevent, the suffering and destruction of the two world wars. Indeed, the most far reaching and ambitious of these, the creation of the European Union, brought together precisely those states most affected by those global conflicts. This suggests that truly global institutions will not emerge unless some sufficiently profound crisis, unparalleled in its intensity, universal in its character, eloquently and permanently sears into human consciousness the notion of humanity's interdependence and oneness and the dangers of preserving an international institutional framework no longer responsive to the needs of the majority of the human family. The force of adverse circumstances rather than an act of mature and collective will is what would precipitate a new stage in the political life of humanity.

But, regardless of the way in which global order comes into being, through collective pain and suffering, or as a result of the gradual evolution of new forms of international cooperation in the context of an emerging global community, the

ultimate outcome will largely be a function of humanity's exertions and initiatives and the strength of its will. Einstein was right when he wrote that "the destiny of civilized humanity depends more than ever on the moral forces it is capable of generating."[25] The long-awaited "kingdom of God on earth," that symbol at the center of the vision of the future offered by many of the world's religions, will not be established by an instantaneous act of our Creator, finally tired of humanity's weaknesses, failures, and spiritual shortcomings. If that kingdom is to be the basis for the future development of the manifest and (as yet unimaginable) latent capacities of the human race, if that future is to be sustainable and achievable, its foundations will have to reflect an appropriate degree of understanding and acceptance by the majority of the human family of the spiritual and moral requirements for peaceful and purposeful life in the new century.

This means the conviction that all human beings have been created "to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization"; that "to act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man"; that the virtues that befit human dignity are trustworthiness, forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving kindness towards all peoples….that the "potentialities inherent in the station of man, the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality, must all be manifested in this promised Day of God."[26]

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Footnotes

1. Zbigniew Brzezinski writes: "History has not ended but has become compressed. Whereas in the past, historical epochs stood out in relatively sharp relief, and one could thus have a defined sense of historical progression, history today entails sharp discontinuities that collide with each other, condense our sense of perspective, and confuse our historical perceptions." (See *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century,* [New York: Macmillan, 1993]), ix-x.

2. Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (Great Britain: Knopf, 1982) 184.

3. J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era: An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith,* 5th rev. ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980) 40.

4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*, comp. Howard MacNutt, 2d ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982) 354.

5. The philosopher Bertrand Russell, who wrote much about the implications of interdependence, said that "In the new world the kindly feelings towards others which religion has advocated will be not only a moral duty but an indispensable condition of survival. A human body could not long continue to live if the hands were in conflict with the feet and the stomach were at war with the liver. Human society as a whole is becoming in this respect more and more like a single human body and if we are to continue to exist, we shall have to acquire feelings directed toward the welfare of the

whole in the same sort of way in which feelings of individual welfare concern the whole body and not only this or that portion of it. At any time, such a way of feeling would have been admirable, but now, for the first time in human history, it is becoming necessary if any human being is to be able to achieve anything of what he would wish to enjoy."

6. Richard N. Cooper, "International Cooperation: Is It Desirable? Is it Likely?" address, International Monetary Fund Visitors' Center, Harvard University, 1988.

7. The market value of goods and services produced in the economy.

8. It may "spill," for instance, into higher imports of Japanese electronics and cars.

9. Cooper, "International Cooperation."

10. Cooper, in "International Cooperation," adds that "The United States occasionally responds to this erosion by lashing out and extending its jurisdiction to the rest of the world, leading to international friction. I see extraterritoriality, as it is called, as a natural, although not necessarily a desirable, response to the erosion of our capacity to control our own environment."

11. G. Clark and L. B. Sohn, *World Peace Through World Law* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960).

12. In an interesting Op-Ed piece titled "Sovereignty vs. Suffering," Brian Urquhart, former U.N. Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, observed that "many developments of our time challenge the validity of the principle of national sovereignty. Communications technology, pollution, radioactive debris, the flow of money, the power of religious or secular ideas, AIDS, the traffic in drugs and terrorism are only a few of the phenomena that pay scant attention to national borders or sovereignty" (*New York Times,* 17 Apr. 1991).

13. For a detailed discussion of recent developments in this area see the author's "Implications of European Economic Integration" in *World Order,* 27.2 (Winter 1995-96): 35-48.

14. Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956) 138.

15. Bertrand Russell, *Has Man a Future?* (London: Penguin, 1961), 121.

16. The *Human Development Report* is a yearly publication of the United Nations' Development Program.

17. K. Chu et al., *Unproductive Public Expenditures: A Pragmatic Approach to Policy Analysis* (Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund, 1995), 8.

18. Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Esslemont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* 40.

19. For a persuasive example, see Brzezinski, *Out of Control,* particularly the chapter titled "The Century of Megadeath."

20. The Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace: To the Peoples of the World* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985) 16.

21. One might add concern, during the last several decades, with the deterioration of the environment that has also led to a sharp realization that an important component of a stable life is ecological stability. Parents want to know, for example, that the water that their children are drinking is not going to produce brain damage some years later.

22. Bertrand Russell, *Has Man a Future?* 127.

23. Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah: Selected Letters,* new ed.(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991) 41-42.

24. On some of these points, see J. Tyson, *World Peace and World Government: From Vision to Reality* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1986).

25. Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It* (New York: Quality Paperback Books, 1990) 44.

26. The Universal House of Justice, *Promise of World Peace* 37.