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A European View on the Future of Multilateralism

In 2003, trying to convince member states to reform the United Nations, former secretary-general Kofi Annan contended at the General Assembly that the international community was at "a fork in the road": in his mind, member states had to decide whether it is possible to continue on the basis agreed in 1945, when the UN was founded, or whether radical changes are needed. With current calls for a "new Bretton Woods" to respond to the ongoing economic crisis, Annan's judgment can be applied to the whole multilateral system today. Never has reform seemed so necessary. The coming challenges and threats call not only for collective action, but also for effective institutions, legitimate rules, and global mobilization, which is precisely what multilateralism is about.

Yet, global problems are not enough to compel global responses. Just as the 2005 UN Summit did not fully deliver on Annan's hopes, the recent apparition of the Group of 20 (G-20) is far from putting an end to the debate about multilateralism's future. While experts talk about a "constitutional moment"[1] to set a new foundation for the very structure of the multilateral system, such an overhaul is unlikely. Past restructuring has mostly occurred in the wake of major wars. The reform of the multilateral system today will be slow, gradual, and probably disorderly. It is all the more important to have clear ideas about different possible horizons, and to anticipate the problems that may develop with major restructuring. What kinds of scenarios are expected and how can they be addressed effectively? Does the international community need to develop a

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whole new logic for multilateralism to address the current crisis and avoid future ones?

Multilateralism's Middle Road

The current crisis brings forth three possible scenarios for multilateralism's future: the extremes of global governance, the absence of multilateral cooperation, or something in between. On one theoretical extreme, several scholars have tried to imagine what a world of virtuous state behavior would look like. The outcome is usually thought to be some form of confederation, or more democratic and integrated global governance, where world institutions have enlarged executive bodies and coordinate narrowly. Public goods are funded by global taxation and people's assemblies are elected through direct universal suffrage, alongside existing states' assemblies. International courts are strengthened vis-à-vis both private actors and states. Enforcement issues are addressed through a standing military force created along the lines of the San Francisco Charter.[2]

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Putting aside its practicality, it is uncertain that such a future is even desirable. One of the lessons of contemporary transnational governance experiences is that strong "subsidiary" actors are necessary for both democratic and operational reasons. Global governing bodies should take action only if, and insofar as, its objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by lower level actors. The European Union, for instance, is built upon this principle, so as to address its publics' concerns about democracy and to manage distinct collective preferences among its 27 members. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has its own version of this "subsidiarity" principle, called "complemenarity." According to the Rome Statute, the ICC has authority to intervene only if the concerned State does not respond on its own in an appropriate manner, making it a last resort.[3]

On the other, pessimistic, theoretical extreme, multipolarity, interdependence, or pressing global challenges will not suffice to bring states to cooperate more closely. Instead, big powers in particular may reject the constraints of multilateralism, or at least not succeed in keeping it alive. Whether by paralysis, desertion, or simply a slow demise, the multilateral system does not count anymore. All states act through competition and power struggles to maximize their national interest.

Collapse, however, does not imply a return to protectionism, unilateralism, or isolationism. Even in this scenario, some sort of order can also come out, leaning toward a nineteenth century balance of powers model. But it may also lead to a wide bilateralization of international relations, or regional alignments behind hegemonic powers. In such a scenario, however, nobody is really responsible, or accountable, for global order. Such an order is likely to be unstable, prone to constant recomposition or even violent frictions. From a system where each state puts at least part of its own safety in the hands of others, the world would shift to greater focus on national perspectives (e.g., security, freedom of decision, capacity of action).[4] Those who have doubts that collective security exists and is more effective than is often said would then see the difference without global and regional peacekeeping arrangements, without jurisdictional settlement of disputes, without systematic diplomatic preventative or mediating activities, and without compelling global legal obligations and rules of behavior.

Between these two imaginary extremes, there are obviously multiple possible futures. The current trend leans toward an intermediate scenario with persistent difficulties hampering the system. Multilateral institutions may still tackle some issues, but face difficulties when swift and bold action is needed or when there is a call for substantial reforms. Consensus, moreover, remains elusive on such vital matters as which issues lend themselves toward multilateral cooperation, which institutions can most effectively embody international cooperation, and which rules should be imposed upon which states.

This is not the end of multilateralism. In contemporary world politics, the principal challenge should be to manage and tackle global issues collectively and within an agreed framework in spite of diverging interests, preferences, and values. Beyond this renewed challenge, such a halfway point may also meet with a variety of structural problems.

Greater Issue Complexity

The current landscape is already quite complex. The UN system includes sixteen specialized agencies, not to mention a dozen funds and programs. More broadly, the whole multilateral system also comprises regional (e.g., EU) or functional (e.g., Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) or smaller organizations and informal clubs (e.g., Group of 8 (G-8)), and several international regimes, with or without institutions (e.g., climate). Mandates and geographical jurisdiction areas keep on evolving and frequently overlap. Even within the UN system, each of the specialized agencies—not only the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Bretton Woods institutions—retain a large autonomy. This is problematic for a number of reasons. For one, memberships do not coincide. Even if they did, it would not ensure consistency between decisions, due either to states' inconsistency or to different decisionmaking rules.

Moreover, the number of institutions is likely to keep growing. Older institutions are scarcely suppressed. Yet, to a certain extent, the world still looks underinstitutionalized.[5] Migrations, environment, or regional security in East Asia or the Middle East remain "homeless" issues.

In this context, problems can only deepen. Operational coordination is already a major issue (including within the UN system) be it for peacekeeping, humanitarian action, or development assistance.[6] This issue is broader than just congruence of operations on the field. Difficulties may also arise from the absence of a clear norms hierarchy, or at least of any agreed procedure to settle disputes between two sets of norms.[7] Not only is there no watertight allocation of tasks in the current architecture, but growing interpenetration between areas of action makes such a clear-cut allocation purely theoretical. This is also a major source of trouble for developing countries. Multilateralism plays a tremendous role in their situation and that of their people. Yet, less advanced countries do not have the resources to play their part, even in the most important institutions. For instance, some twenty members of the WTO do not even have permanent representation in Geneva.[8] This absence paves the way for unexpected troubles to creep up on the international community, such as the 2007 food and agricultural crisis and its security, migratory, and environmental consequences that went overlooked by many more developed states until the crisis had substantially evolved.

Growing Institutional Competition

Institutional proliferation may also enhance competition. Duplication already exists. It sometimes reflects a political rift, as when the UN Conference on Trade and Development was created in 1964 to impose a "one state, one vote" rule against the weighed voting that prevails at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It may also be part of a "several irons in the fire" strategy. Francis Fukuyama suggested building two regional organizations in Southeast Asia. China would be included in only one of them and the other would be used as a sort of insurance against Beijing's hypothetical aggressive behavior. More broadly, Fukuyama recommends a "multi-multilateralism" approach, where international institutions of various nature and composition not only overlap, but are actually put into competition with each other.[9]

Not far from Richard Haass' "multilateralism à la carte",[10] the idea is to have several tools at one's disposal and be able to pick the most suitable one. Freedom of choice is said to favor the selection of the most appropriate institution according to the challenge. Realistically, it would most probably be used to pick the body where one's influence has the most chance of prevailing. The North

Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) intervention in Kosovo has often been interpreted as a way to promote the alliance as an alternate legitimizing body to the UN, be it to pressure the UN Security Council or to bypass it. Yet, competing mechanisms to authorize the use of force hardly make a consistent world order, even if just one power behaves so. Even before Iraq, most Europeans refused to see Kosovo as a promising precedent rather than as an unfortunate exception. Recent years have made clear that such a policy only undermines both the credibility of the main authorizing mechanism and the legitimacy of the military intervention.

Institutional competition often means that scarce resources are spread too thin.

Under such an approach, it is likely that states would also avoid forums where they believe they will face a hard time. That's what the Bush administration did with the Human Rights Council. Even after announcing that the United States would return, the Obama administration chose not to attend the recent Durban Review Conference. The EU itself went divided, some pulling out and others attending as mere observers. An empty chair does not make for a strategy, and the results of Durban II may actually prove the British and French approach more sustainable and effective, even in the short run.[11]

Competition already takes place in a crucial, yet overlooked battleground: funding. At the UN, so-called "assessed contributions," which are compulsory and are derived from assessment rates, have been under tight control for years. As a result, in spite of a growing workload, the UN's budget growth is a result of voluntary contributions. Some argue it is the most efficient way to allocate resources.[12] Yet, reality shows otherwise. For instance, to face the financial consequences of the current peak of peace operations, some expenses were switched from mandatory to voluntary funding, leading essential tasks (such as reintegration of combatants or mission security) to suffer from underfunding.[13]

A more compelling explanation derives from the burden sharing ratio. At the UN, the ten biggest contributors account for 75 percent of the regular budget, and it is obviously legitimate for them to ask for some control over expenses, both to limit and to earmark them. Yet, the current system leads to a situation where only richer countries' priorities can be fully funded. It favors a short list of issues that have recently become prominent such as AIDS, climate change, food security, and sustainable development, and also favors the biggest institutions that are better equipped to raise funds, as evidenced by the shifting agenda of the World Bank. Far from efficient allocation, competition often means that scarce resources are spread too thin and often change target, to the detriment of

overlooked challenges,[14] of the poorer countries' priorities, and of the real competence and expertise of each institution.

Restart from Scratch?

Another floated idea is to reorganize the whole multilateral system around a new institution replacing the UN. Transitioning from one to another would create its own set of problems. Yet, it is this very approach to multilateralism reform that raises major concerns. For some time, NATO was considered a serious candidate.[15] Now, a union of democracies is the latest one.[16] Hopes are that it could be both more effective due to limited membership as well as political convergences, and more legitimate. Yet, difficulties are numerous.[17] The first one has to do with establishing criteria for membership. The second comes from the fact that many international challenges such as the environment, terrorism, trade, and weapons of mass destruction do not cause divisions along a democratic fault line. Not only is there no consensus between democracies, but these issues require a global rather than a partial response.

A union of democracies is closer to the logic of alliances than to multilateral cooperation.

Not all supporters of this idea contend that such a substitution for the UN should take place.[18] Some talk about an institution that would serve as a complement or even as an incentive for UN reform. But an alternative to legitimize the use of force would hardly be a complement to the UN. If it is to supplement the Security Council, how will it distinguish between situations when the Council fails to authorize the use of force and when it decides to oppose military intervention? And how would such an institution prompt reform without making itself a possible alternative?

It seems that the sort of legitimacy that supporters of such a union are seeking has more to do with what is legitimate in the eyes of democratic countries and less with global legitimacy. Even within the EU (itself a union of democracies), there is strong reluctance to this project. Most non-western democracies are also reluctant to buy into this whole concept. Such an organization would probably lead to fragmentation of the global multilateral system and the return of a renewed logic of blocs, primarily because a union of democracies is closer to the logic of alliances than to multilateral cooperation. Multilateralism may not be an end in itself, but its weakening and fragmenting could hardly help to address the real issues.

Another substitution option would be to set up a directorate outside the UN, more or less based upon an enlarged G-8. With the current economic crisis, the

need for a "new steering group," as Robert Zoellick put it, is getting more and more obvious.[19] The Washington and London summits under a G-20 format show that there is room to move forward. Yet, this idea also leads to various questions about membership, mandate, and legitimacy, not to mention the place of poorer countries.

Moreover, it is particularly important to clarify that this new body would still have to coexist and deal with the rest of the multilateral system. It is rare that the G-8 tackles an issue alone. Whatever the impediments of other institutions, they are usually needed both for political and technical reasons. An enlarged group, such as the G-20, could probably better play its part as a forum for anticipation or pre-negotiation.[20] Yet, it would hardly be able to coordinate and organize the whole multilateral system. Already, the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, the Financial Stability Board, and the European Commission take part in G-20 format meetings. Regardless of its numerous merits, it is doubtful that the G-20 could substitute for wider reform.

Multilateralism's Diverse Logics

The so-called "middle of the road" scenario actually covers a wide and varied range of options. The question is not just to find the right level of consistency and coordination in international cooperation, but to develop a sound rationale for future policies. After all, all possible futures for the multilateral system are not limited to a choice between more or less integration implied by the two extreme scenarios above. Other options include coalitions, regionalization, and privatization.

Coalition of the Willing

"The mission has to determine the coalition, not the other way around" famously said then-U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in 2002.[21] The idea is to avoid working with partners that will hamper the mission or harness the coalition, downgrade initial goals, and constantly reopen negotiations. Operation Iraqi Freedom is neither the only, nor the best, example of this logic. Yet, to begin with, it made clear that collective action is not necessarily multilateral, since in this instance, command remains within one state's hands. It also clarified that ad hoc coalitions may just as well bring more liabilities than effective contributions to the table. The limited capabilities of some of the coalition partners, combined with the lack of control over the chain of command and the absence of the institutional experience of working collectively, created numerous unforeseen problems for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

All coalitions are not as criticized, and some are even praised, such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), whose purpose is to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, or UNITAID, the international drug

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purchase facility. Yet, these examples are not located outside the multilateral system. The FATF was created by the Group of 7 (G-7) and receives support from the OECD. UNITAID was designed to complement existing multilateral efforts and is hosted and administered by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Bush administration realized this necessity when it created the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which was devised to respect international maritime law and achieve Security Council support. The core group initiated by Washington to react to the tsunami in 2004 eventually joined the broader UN umbrella, benefiting from both its expertise and legitimacy.

An approach geared toward effectiveness can not be blamed. Yet, in the longer run, ad hoc arrangements disclose their drawbacks. In such coalition-based frameworks, collective action may not enjoy what true multilateralism can bring in: legitimacy, cost-sharing and resource-releasing, reducing uncertainties through procedures and rules, and wide mobilization. Broader institutionalized multilateralism has its own constraints, but when states play by the rules, it allows for easier compromise through what professor of political science James Caporaso called "diffused reciprocity," because members "expect to benefit in the long run and over many issues, rather than every time on every issue."[22] Coalitions of the willing can prove useful to better mobilize states committed to the mission, but not to bypass members or institutions who oppose it.

Regionalization

"Regionalization of the world" is a growing trend in recent decades. Multilateral regional structures, from the Council of Europe to the Pan American Health Organization to the Economic Community of West African States, already are one of the essential modes of world governance. Existing difficulties in the EU should not overshadow gains within Europe, nor regional dynamism in other regions from Latin America to Southeast Asia. Regional approaches are thought to be more efficient when dealing with local crises. Greater homogeneity in collective preferences and greater responsiveness are some of the arguments for presumed better decisionmaking. Such assertions deserve to be discussed. Yet, on this basis, some observers imagine, more or less explicitly, a region-based global order, believing that this would be all the more suitable in the coming multipolar world.[23]

Yet, the international system can hardly be divided into consistent regions, with overlapping institutions and trans-regional issues. Beyond the obvious concern not to create "spheres of influence," other difficulties should be noted, like the case of some countries for which it is not clear in which region they should be included and could be accepted (e.g., Australia, Iran, Israel, Turkey), not to mention the fact that some regional organizations (e.g., EU, NATO) intervene out of area. It is likely that region-based governance would not be as clear and consistent as it seems.

Articulation between regional and global institutions is also complex. The debate about African peacekeeping underscores one question: can the international community fund and legitimize African forces without exerting close control, as asked by the former chairperson of the African Union to the Security Council? Can it accept that such a crisis as the Darfur situation is only for Africans to decide how to deal with? [24] On the other hand, the current global crisis and its impact on the poorest countries in Africa underline the solidarity problems raised by projects of regional funds as envisioned in Asia in the wake of the 1997 crisis and more recently in Latin America.

Could global institutions be composed of major regional groupings, as suggested in 2002 by then-Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium?[25] One immediate problem is to ask: which institutions would be seated? Would Europe, for example, seat the EU, NATO, Council of Europe, or even the OECD? More pointedly, these regional organizations would often not be able to have a common position within their own membership to start negotiations. Even the EU, in spite of major progress in its common foreign and security policy, does not share a unique diplomacy. On such issues as the ones addressed at the Security Council, the European representative would then be driven to abstention, a situation that is in the interest of neither the EU nor the UN. Even the bloc's unique monetary policy does not make it easy for euro area members to achieve common representation at the IMF.

Global threats and challenges are such that worldwide cooperation is needed. On some major issues, such as trade, collective security, or the current financial crisis, a solely regional approach could weaken multilateralism rather than strengthen it.

Privatization

Private actors have been part of the multilateral system almost since its inception. The International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a tripartite representation of its members at its founding in 1919. During the interwar period, the Rockefeller Foundation was a key actor of the League of Nations' efforts for global health. In 1945, the UN Charter included provisions that allow for consultations with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).[26] And the

International Red Cross Committee has always played a central role in upholding international humanitarian law.

The number of these private actors is increasing all over the world. They organize in an effort to weigh in more effectively in multilateral bodies. *Lex Mercatoria*, the international law of merchants, is a classic example of private world governance, and the activity of the International Court of Arbitration shows no sign of weakening. But this private governance is expanding to new territories. Transnational communications were an historic rationale for the rise of multilateral cooperation, with the establishment of the International Telecommunications Union in 1865 and the Universal Postal Union in 1874. For the World Wide Web, technical regulations, interoperability, and standardization are ensured by ICANN, a private nonprofit corporation dedicated to keeping the Internet secure and stable.

States and private actors find themselves on an increasingly equal footing. Last year, in more than 10 percent of cases at the International Court of Arbitration, at least one of the parties was a state or parastatal entity.[27] Of its 20-member board, the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria has five representatives from NGOs, firms, foundations, and communities living with, and affected by, the diseases. Be it for trade or human rights issues, more and more legal systems allow for individuals to sue states in the framework of local or international tribunals. Moreover, some of these private actors reach a size heretofore unheard of. The most striking example is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, whose expenditure in favor of public health now compares with the WHO's budget. Donors of private organizations also act independently, such as when Warren Buffett offered $50 million for the creation of an international nuclear fuel bank under his own terms.

Even without mentioning better documented cases such as multinational firms or proliferation networks, the growing role of non-state actors is a true challenge for multilateral organizations. Side events opened to NGOs, consultative status, and enhanced transparency joined in an attempt to reach out to civil society will not be enough. The question is truly about the place of private actors within the multilateral system. Even if the current crisis brings nuances, resorting to private actors (e.g., mercenaries for peacekeeping, subcontractors to assume weak states functions, NGOs for human rights promotion, not to mention philanthropy to provide funds) is obviously tempting, for a variety of reasons.

Yet, coexistence on the field between international organizations and private actors (from humanitarian NGOs to security firms) is complex. All multilateral organizations have to contend with demands for a direct role for civil society. Regulation by private actors seems easier, yet sometimes proves insufficient, and often comes too late. Thus, it could only be useful to find ways and means to

associate more closely with private actors, for profit or not, and to establish a clearer political and legal framework for their activities, so as to build upon existing initiatives such as the UN Global Compact that attempts to promote corporate social responsibility. This is all the more challenging since these actors, out of their growing assertiveness, can only be more tempted to seize their autonomy and favor their own instruments and priorities.

Even more options could be studied such as the rise of networks of independent public authorities (e.g., tribunals, central banks, or regulators) and the legitimacy, accountability, and coordination issues they raise.[28] Without claiming exhaustiveness, it seems these different trends allow for a clearer landscape of the various directions the multilateral system could take. Yet, the problem is not where it *could* go, but where the international community *wants* it to go and how policymakers *should* proceed.

Multilateralism's Parts

States are still key actors. Their role will be all the more important as their number continues to grow—from 51 original members in 1945, the UN reached 192 in 2006. Their ability to assume international responsibilities, including in their domestic sphere, will play a key part in the effectiveness and credibility of multilateralism. Great powers will particularly play a major part. The reason why the Security Council, Bretton Woods institutions, or the G-8 must be reformed is not so much about improving representation. After all, India would not represent South Asia anymore than the United States currently represents the Americas. Rather, it is because powers that have the means and the will to play a substantial role should be given a chance to contribute and engage in cooperation. Yet, even after the failure of unilateralism, most powers are still reluctant to commit to multilateralism, not to mention to its reform.

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Finally, non-state actors already play a crucial role. Progress should be made in many areas of the multilateral system and discussions over public-private partnerships, be it on development assistance or during stabilization operations, should be less theological. But key questions on these actors' legitimacy, accountability, and efficiency, as well as the necessity to inscribe their activities within clear and regulating frameworks, should not be ignored.

Beyond institutions and actors, other parameters have to be taken into account. The idea of a "rules-based" world order is central to multilateralism.

Yet, the role for international law is not becoming clearer. French professor of comparative law, Mireille Delmas-Marty, underscores the challenge of admitting pluralism (not only between values, but also diverse systems of law and even different sets of norms to deal with trade, human rights, and sovereignty, respectively) without renouncing a shared law.[29] The major powers' reluctance to legal constraints and the difficulties for public international law to tackle private transnational threats are other challenges. Some of the most recent successes of multilateralism, such as the WTO's dispute settlement body or the ICC, show international law can still prove useful. Yet, challenges are paramount.

Available instruments are another point to be taken into account. The multilateral system has been quite innovative so far. But the issues it needs to tackle are still asking for a broader toolbox. Peacekeeping was not even mentioned in the San Francisco Charter. It is now one of the most striking achievements of the UN, despite many shortcomings. Yet, even after lessons of the 1990s have been identified, peacekeeping is again on the brink.[30] Many voices call for not engaging the UN in the most perilous situations. Yet, the concerned crises have to be addressed. Hence the question: how do we give these peace operations the human, financial, military, and political resources to fulfill their "impossible mandate"?[31] Other instruments should also be considered for further efforts. Sanctions have already been fine tuned from the brutal total embargo imposed on a whole country and its population to more targeted measures, aiming at individuals or non-state actors, focusing on financial networks, assets, or access to flights. Climate change prompted a market-based approach, with the creation of an emissions trading mechanism, which allows taking into account private actors and local governments. In fighting hunger, the World Food Program has recently experimented with insurance mechanisms against drought in sub-Saharan Africa.

Multilateralism will not bear being all decision and no action. The issue of the ways and means the system will have at its disposal to implement its policies is key. Funding is a vital question, which will be even harder to tackle in the current context. Human resources are also important. The international civil service, for instance, has been through many revolutions these past years adding new issues (e.g., accountability, growing deployment of staff on the field, downgraded security conditions, and accelerated turnover) to classical challenges (e.g., independence, expertise and, to a lesser extent, geographical balance). Merely cutting layers of bureaucracy and reducing expenses is not the management reform most multilateral organizations need.

Last, it is important to state that the system's effectiveness is not the sum of the effectiveness of each of its institutions.[32] The system itself is just as important. Its effectiveness and its accountability ask for some fragmentation as

much as for coordination, as Robert Keohane suggested.[33] Part of the solution for better multilateral global governance is a more diversified system, where each institution can impose checks and balances on others, more than a rationalized structure. Development, for instance, is better off with both the UN Development Program and the World Bank offering diverse views, strategies, and expertise than with one dominating the other. Thus, in lieu of further integration, it would rather be necessary to achieve better cooperation and coordination, greater balance between institutions, and enhanced articulation between each level and scale of multilateral action.

Success Lies in Cooperation

The current financial crisis, with its impact on security, environment, poverty, and food security, underscores the fact that the first challenge the international community faces is to handle world affairs (be it regulating globalization or dealing with classical power politics) collectively. Yet, current trends are so strong that the "middle of the road" scenario of a mildly effective multilateral system struggling to keep up with dynamic transnational security challenges suddenly seems rather optimistic. For instance, the U.S. National Intelligence Council contended, when anticipating the world in 2025, that "the need for effective global governance will increase faster than existing mechanisms can respond."[34]

Even a mildly effective multilateral system suddenly seems rather optimistic.

Starting from scratch to enhance cooperation and improve institutions is not going to happen, at least not without a major conflagration no one should hope for. The 2005 UN Summit exemplified how difficult momentum is to seize. Even the current crisis does not prompt any kind of systemic overhaul, beyond the fragile emergence of the G-20. Yet, reform is no less imperative. The fact that it will be a long process is no reason not to think about the balance we want to strike between these various possible futures. On the contrary, we have to develop a vision and a strategy to go there and to engage all stakeholders.

In this context, developing countries have a key role to play. But for them to take the current system and its discussed reforms seriously, multilateralism has to gain some credibility, answer their problems, be taken more seriously by bigger powers and richer countries, and give them more options than "exit or loyalty."[35]

This responsibility is all the more important in the case of emerging powers. They still have to live up to the responsibilities to which they aspire. Climate is an obvious test case, but many other issues from nuclear proliferation to human

rights would be more easily addressed with a more cooperative and less protesting posture from these countries.

It is also important that Europeans follow the "effective multilateralism" motto the EU officially adopted in 2003.[36] The EU is already doing a lot. It pays for more than a third of the UN regular budget, more than two-fifths of UN peace operations, and about half of all contributions to UN funds and programs. It bore the largest share of the burden for the last IMF reform to allow for greater representation of emerging countries without penalizing low-income countries. It recently prompted the emergence of the G-20. Europe also benefits from a deep experience with cooperation, rules-based order, and multi-scale multilateralism. Therefore, it has a special responsibility that it should continue to uphold.

Last, the United States has a major part to play. Under the Obama administration, Washington is expected to return to collective action, but that does not say much. The first steps are encouraging: commitment to international law; key campaign advisers nominated to ambassadorships in international organizations, with a cabinet-level rank for its UN post; proclaiming the intent to get back to the infamous Human Rights Council to engage its agenda and weigh in its needed reform; and call for a more cooperative response to the international economic crisis. Inevitable failures, tensions, and constraints will indeed challenge these good intentions. Policymakers in Washington, however, should prevail to allow the United States to come to terms, in a consistent manner, with its pretense to renewed leadership.[37] If it wants to carry all its weight in forging the future of the multilateral system, the United States has to move beyond alliance thinking, cost reductions, and crisis management to build up a true multilateral strategy.

Notes

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