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Challenges to the Democratic Project for Governing Globalization*

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My remarks are divided into three parts. The first covers the democratic project to govern the global society. The second identifies authoritarian governments, notably Russia and China, as the principal threats to the democratic project. Given time constraints, I will not be able to discuss other formidable adversaries: Religious regimes opposed to the democratic secular global state; malevolent terrorist social movements like ISIS and Boko Haram, expanding global criminal networks, preying on open societies. I will close with a brief evaluation of what is the unexpected erosion of support of the democratic project by open societies. As Walt Kelly might have said: “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

The Rise of a Global Society

Let me first sketch the global democratic project for global governance as a point of reference. We must first recognize that globalization has given rise to a global society for the first time in the evolution of the human species. We are now stuck with each other; seven and half billion people today — nine to ten by 2050: all super connected and interdependent. In greater or lesser measure, humans are mutually dependent on each other in the pursuit of their most salient values, interests, needs, and preferences — concerns about personal, community, and national security, sustainable economic growth, protection of the environment, the equitable distribution of the globe’s material wealth, human rights, and even the validation of their personal and social identities by others. Global warming is a metaphor of this morphological social change in the human condition. All humans are implicated in this looming Anthropogenic-induced disaster — the exhausts of billions of automobiles, the methane released in fracking for natural gas, outdated U.S. coal-fired power plants and newly constructed ones in China. Even the poor farmer burning charcoal to warm his dinner is complicit.

Since interdependence surrounds, ensnares, and binds us as a human society, the dilemma confronting the world’s diverse and divided populations is evident: the expanding

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scope as well as the deepening, accumulating, and thickening interdependencies of globalization urge global government. But the Kantian ideal of universal governance is beyond the reach of the world's disparate peoples. They are profoundly divided by religion, culture, language, tribal, ethnic and national loyalties as well as by class, social status, race, gender, and sexual orientation. How have the democracies responded to this dilemma? How have they attempted to reconcile the growing interdependence of the world's disputing peoples and need for global governance?

What do we mean by the governance of a human society?

A working, legitimate government of a human society requires simultaneous responses to three competing imperatives: Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy. While the forms of these OWL imperatives have differed radically over the course of human societal evolution, these constraints remain predicable of all human societies if they are to replicate themselves and flourish over time. The OWL imperatives are no less applicable to a global society.

1. **Order** refers to a society's investment of awesome material power in an individual or body to arbitrate and resolve value, interest, and preference conflicts, which cannot be otherwise resolved by non-violent means — the **Hobbesian problematic**.

2. The **Welfare** imperative refers to the necessity of humans to eat, drink, clothe, and shelter themselves and to pursue the full-range of their seemingly limitless acquisitive appetites. Responses to the **Welfare** imperative, like that of **Order**, constitute a distinct form of governing power and authority with its own decisional processes and actors principally associated either with the Welfare or the Order imperative. Hence we have the **Marxian-Adam Smith problematic**.

3. **Legitimacy** is no less a form of governing power and authority, independent of the Order and Welfare imperatives. Either by choice, socialization, or coerced acquiescence, populations acknowledge a regime's governing authority and their obligation to submit to its rule. Here arises the **Rousseauian problematic**.

The government of a human society emerges then as an evolving, precarious balance and compromise of the ceaseless struggle of these competing OWL power domains for ascendancy of one of these imperatives over the others. It is against the backdrop of these OWL imperatives — Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy — that we are brought to the democratic project for global governance.

The Democratic Project

For **Order**, open societies constructed the global democratic state and, in alliance, the democratic global-state system. Collectively these initiatives led to the creation of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the European Union to implement the democratic project's system of global governance.

The democratic global state assumed all of the functions of the Hobbesian-Westphalian security state — but a lot more. The global state became a **Trading, Banking, Market, and Entrepreneurial** state. To these functions were added those of the **Science, Technology and the Economic Growth** state. How else would we be able to enjoy the

Internet, cell phones and iPhones, or miracle cures? These are the products of the iron triangle of the global democratic state, academic and non-profit research centers, and corporations. It is a myth that the Market System did all this alone. Fueled by increasing material wealth, the democratic global state was afforded the means to become the **Safety Net** state, providing education, health, social security, leisure and recreation for its population. And as the global state's power expanded across this broad and enlarging spectrum of functions and roles, the global state was also constrained by the social compacts of the democracies to be bound by popular rule. The ironic result of the expansion of the global state's power and social functions and its obligation to accede to popular will was a **Security** state and global state-system that vastly outperformed its principal authoritarian rivals in the Cold War. So much briefly is the democratic project's response to the Order imperative.

Now let's look at the democratic project's response to the Welfare imperative. The democracies institutionalized Adam Smith's vision of a global Market System. The Market System trucks and barter, Smith's understanding of what it means to be human. But it does a lot more. The Market System facilitates and fosters the free movement of people, goods and services, capital, ideas, values, scientific discoveries, and best technological practices. Created is a vibrant global civil society oblivious to state boundaries. What we now experience is De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* on global steroids.

As for the imperative of Legitimacy, the social compacts of the democracies affirmed Rousseau's conjecture that all humans are free and therefore equal. Applied to elections each citizen has one vote. Democratic regimes are also obliged to submit to the rule of law, to conduct free and fair elections, to honor majority rule while protecting minority rights, and to promote human rights at home and abroad.

The Authoritarian Threat to the Democratic Project

The democratic project for global governance is now at risk. Let's start with the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes, with Russia and China in the lead. Both Russia and China would rest global governance on Big Power spheres of influence. Both would assume hegemonic status in their respective regions, asserting their versions of the Monroe Doctrine. Their regional hegemony would then leverage their claim to be global Big Powers. Moscow and Beijing would then have an equal say with the United States and the West in sharing and shaping global governance. The Russo-Chinese global system of Order would ascribe to Russia and China governing privileges not accorded to the states both aspire to dominate. Moscow and Beijing would enjoy unconditional recognition of their state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in their domestic affairs, but they would reserve to themselves the right to intervene in the domestic and foreign affairs of the states and peoples under their tutelage in pursuit of their hegemonic interests.

President Putin has announced that Russia's imperialism encompasses the millions of Russians living in the former republics of the Soviet Union. Russia contends that Ukraine and Belarus also fall under Moscow's purported claim to historical sovereignty over these states. Forceful re-absorption of Crimea and control over eastern Ukraine are viewed by President Putin as Russia's historical inheritances. Self-determination is not extended to these states or to other states and peoples of the former Soviet Union. Moscow rejects their right to freely align, say, with the European Union or, god forbid, with NATO.

In contrast to the democratic project, universal in its reach, the Russo-Chinese conception of a stable global order rests on more tenuous and conflict-prone ethno-national foundations. Russia's proclaimed enemies are the United States and the European Union. Any means that undermines the unity of these entities is viewed by Moscow as a gain. The endgame is a poly-anarchical interstate system, potentially as war-prone as the Eurocentric system before and after World War I, but now populated by states with nuclear weapons. Global politics becomes a zero-sum game.

Moscow has no compunctions about corrupting the electoral processes of democratic states, conducting threatening military exercises along NATO's east border, or violating the more than 30-year old treaty to ban the deployment of Intermediate-Range missile launchers, capable of firing nuclear weapons. Nothing less than the dissolution of the democratic project is Moscow's solution for global Order.

China also seeks a revision of the global Order. It declares sovereignty over the South China Sea. Rejected is The Hague Tribunal's dismissal of this claim. Beijing continues to build artificial islands as military bases in the region to assert its control over these troubled waters. If it could have its way, China would decide which states and their naval vessels, notably those of the United States, would have access to the South China Sea.

Where Moscow and Beijing depart sharply are in their contrasting responses to the Welfare imperative. Moscow has no solution other than to use its oil and gas resources as instruments of coercive diplomacy and to weaken or dismantle existing Western alliances and international economic institutions. China can ill-afford the dismantling of the global market system. In his address to the Davos gathering in January of this year, Chinese President Xi asserted that "any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries and people between economies, and channel the waters in the ocean back into isolated lakes and creeks is simply not possible." Adam Smith could not have said it better.

Both Moscow and Beijing have been particularly assiduous to legitimate their regimes. President Putin's case for legitimacy is much broader and deeper than a pure appeal to Russian nationalism. He stresses the spiritual and cultural unity of Russian-speaking populations spread across the states of the post-Soviet space. A central core of that unity is the Russian Orthodox Church, a key prop of the regime. Reviled is Western secularism, portrayed as corrupt and decadent, viewed by Putin as an existential threat to the Russian World. The Chinese regime, secular and atheistic, can hardly rely on religion to legitimate the regime. Beijing principally rests its legitimacy on its record of economic development and nationalism. The regime's success in raising the economic standards of hundreds of millions of Chinese reinforces its claim to legitimacy in two ways. On the one hand, the Communist Party can rightly claim to have raised hundreds of millions of Chinese from poverty within a generation. On the other hand, the Communist Party insists that its model of economic growth, what critics scorn as crony capitalism, is superior to the unfettered, market-driven model of the West. Hence capitalism with Chinese characteristics is more effective and legitimate than the Western alternative.

Where Moscow and Beijing do converge is in fashioning their responses to the Legitimacy imperative. They repudiate Western liberal democracy. Both reject criticisms of their human rights abuses as interventions into their domestic affairs. Dissidents are harassed, incarcerated, or, in some instances, assassinated. Journalists are co-opted, self-censored, silenced, or imprisoned. Social media is state controlled. Both the Putin regime

and the Chinese Communist Party monopolize the public narratives evaluating governmental policy. Transparency and accountability are hostage to governmental secrecy. Civil society has few effective avenues to criticize governmental actions. Moscow adds an ironic twist to these controls in manipulating national elections to produce an elected authoritarian regime.

Whether either of these authoritarian responses to the Legitimacy imperative will survive remains to be seen. Beijing's use of economic performance and nationalism to underwrite its legitimacy is a double-edged sword. If economic performance falters, then legitimacy suffers. Whether top-down nationalism will always control nationalism from the bottom-up is also problematic. In resting legitimacy on nationalism, dubious historical claims, and crypto-religious beliefs, Moscow is spared Beijing's economic performance test. That said, there is room for skepticism that in the long-run Russians will exchange lower standards of living for corrupt rule in pursuit of an elusive Russian mission antagonistic to the West. The implosion of the Soviet Union, due in no small part to its retarded economic and technological development, suggests that the patience of the Russian people has limits. Demonstrations in March 2017 against state corruption in 82 Russian cities, led largely by Russian youth, reveal these limits. They are an ominous omen for the future of the Putin kleptocracy. Meanwhile, neither Russia nor China offers much to solve the Legitimacy imperative of global governance.

The Erosion of Support Among the Democracies for the Democratic Project

Let me now turn to recent populist trends across democratic states that undermine the democratic project. Freedom House 2016 notes that 2015 marked the 10th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. Over that period 105 countries have been in decline and just 61 registered gains. Let's first examine the erosion of the Legitimacy imperative of the democratic project in the United States. We immediately observe some disquieting reversals. Even before the election of Donald Trump to the Presidency, the Supreme Court delivered two body blows to the principle of one-person, one-vote. First, Citizens United equated corporations, artificial persons created by legislation, with real persons, that is you and me. In equating money with free speech, it sanctioned labor unions, corporations, and rich individuals to form PACS, which could spend unlimited amounts of money to influence public opinion and elections. Echoing George Orwell in *Animal Farm*, all voices in the United States are equal, but some are more equal than others. Few voters except for the super-rich can match the \$100 million pledged by the Koch brothers to support their favored candidates and eliminate limits on the CO2 emissions of coal-fired plants.

Second, in its wisdom the Supreme Court also weakened federal oversight over states and principalities with a long record of electoral discrimination, principally aimed at Blacks and minorities. This ruling paved the way almost immediately for a spate of voter ID laws in North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. Acquiring a voter ID works a burden principally on poor minority voters, largely viewed as voting Democratic. A case can be made that ID laws are tantamount to a poll tax, prohibited by the 24th Amendment to the Constitution. Consider the fees that are exacted for the ID, the decrease in the number of issuing agencies with restricted business hours, and the cost of transportation and loss of income in having to take time off to acquire an ID. These impediments are poll taxes by other means. Now enters two elections, 2000 and 2016 in which the candidate receiving

fewer votes won the presidential election by acquiring more electoral votes: Approximately half a million fewer for Bush and almost three million fewer for Donald Trump.

The Electoral College favors small states. Its roots lie deep within the Constitution, permitting slave states to count slaves as three-fifths to swell their electoral votes. After Reconstruction and after a century of restricting the vote of Blacks in the South, the Southern states actually increased their electoral totals since Blacks were now counted a full one vote per person. If you now add gerrymandering of Congressional districts at the state level, you get a House of Representatives in 2016 tilted toward minority government. While Republicans gained approximately 52 percent of the total for the House, they leveraged that majority to capture 57 percent of the seats in the House. James Madison in Federalist 10 worried that a majority faction might impose their ideologies or religious beliefs on a minority or use their power to redistribute the wealth of the few to the many poor. What neither Madison nor the founders were able to envision was minority rule over a majority.

What is the Status of the Welfare Imperative Today in the United States?

Not so good. The Trump administration is pledged to revise the current workings of the Market System. Global trade, a key driver of increased Gross World and Domestic Product will now be submitted to an America First test. Efforts are underway to re-negotiate World Trade Organization and NAFTA rules to favor American corporations and workers. In pursuit of this nationalist America First agenda, the Trump administration rejected U.S. membership in the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, opening the way not only for China to dominate trade in the region, absent labor, environmental, and human rights protections, but also to leverage this economic power to have a greater say over the security of the region.

The Trump administration's proposal to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act also reveals the administration's draconian health priorities. If passed, millions would lose insurance coverage. Medicaid would be cut by \$800 billion over ten years to provide billions in tax cuts for the rich. The cost of health care would be shifted to the poor least able to provide for their health. Eroding access to affordable health care translates into deteriorating health for millions, untimely deaths, and untold and mindless distress inflicted on the sick, their caregivers, and loved ones. The recent health debacle highlights the disparity in incomes and opportunities in the United States. Measures of inequality published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development rank the United States as the most unequal in the distribution of income of major developed states. Income inequality also impedes social mobility. Here, too, the United States trails behind its counterparts in providing a leg up the income and social ladder for its citizens. So much for the American Dream. Also crippling the response to the democratic project's Welfare imperative is the administration's denial of global warming as man-created. The severe cuts it proposes for the Environmental Protection Agency will eviscerate research on global warming as well as the Agency's capacity to educate the public about this emerging disaster. The lowering of gas emissions standards for the automobile industry and the rollback on Obama limits on gas and coal-fired power plants essentially repudiate the Paris Accord by which the United States is obligated to curb harmful Green House Gas

emissions. And what can we say about the Trump administration's responses to the imperative of global Order? These also seriously undermine the democratic project.

Two are particularly significant: the failure to reduce nuclear stockpiles and delivery capabilities, facilitating nuclear proliferation, and, of equal importance, the administration's weakening of the security alliances of the Western democratic states which have kept the peace and safety of free societies since World War II. Even before the election of the Trump administration, the United States had committed itself to a nuclear modernization program over the next thirty years of \$1 trillion. In the pipeline are new missile-launching submarines, upgraded Minuteman III ICBMs, and a B-2 bomber. The Trump administration has already announced that these costly upgrades are not enough. Nullified is the obligation of the United States to reduce its nuclear forces under the Non-Proliferation treaty.

The intent and determination of the Trump administration to reduce U.S. security treaties to a financial contract directly threatens the security of open societies. It substitutes a cash payment among treaty members for their mutual commitment to the preservation and flourishing of democratic regimes around the world. The underlying commitment of the democracies to their mutual defense is transformed into a commercial transaction. Contrast this real estate broker's mentality with President Kennedy's *Ich bin ein Berliner* in 1961 or *Le Monde's "Nous sommes tous Américains"* [We are all Americans] in the wake of 9/11 attack. In insisting on increases in the defense spending of NATO allies and in demanding reparations for what the administration claims as past free riding, American military forces are cast in the unseemly role as mercenaries for hire.

What Can Be Done to Strengthen the Democratic Project?

So what can be done to preserve and extend the democratic project of global governance to all peoples in the face of its formidable adversaries and the erosion of elite and public support for the project?

In closing I would suggest that the immediate and urgent challenge is restoring confidence in the integrity of the democratic process in the United States.

The principle of one-person, one-vote must again be privileged. That would require overturning Citizens United. Money as speech means those with greater resources have a bigger voice than their fellow citizens in determining who gets elected and what laws are passed. Oliver Wendell Holmes' palliative that the market place of ideas produces the best laws and policies no longer fully applies. Access to the market is scarcely a free good. Free speech alone is not enough to meet a democratic test.

There should also be a return to federal oversight of electoral districts that persist in discriminating against minorities. IDs should not be required when there is little or no evidence of voter fraud.

Finally, with an electorate divided in presidential elections of five percent or less, there is a high probability that the Electoral College will continue to favor the election of candidates who won a minority of the popular vote. The perverse incentives generated by the Electoral College also reduce presidential election campaigning to a handful of states. This remnant of a slave legacy should be finally discarded either through the amendment process, a long and perilous route, or eliminated by the states possessing collectively 270 electoral votes.

Under the terms of the National Popular Vote Compact, the candidate who received the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia would receive all of the electoral votes from all of the enacting states. So far eleven states with 165 electoral votes have enacted the Compact. It would go into effect once states totaling 270 electoral votes would have been reached.

In seeking ways to strengthen the democratic project for global governance, it is helpful to recall Benjamin Franklin's prediction of his fate and that of the other signers of the Declaration of Independence. Scaling his prediction globally, the democracies "must, indeed, all hang together or most assuredly they will all hang separately."