

Opening for Omnilateralism in the Long-Term ¹

Abstract:

The novel concept of “*omni-lateralism*” leads to a more participatory global governance and prevents not only clashes of civilisations (“*West against the Rest*”), but also avoids conflicts with minority cultures and provides best practices for development world-wide. The actually “Western-made” multilateral system (cf. “Washington Consensus”) must open up to those who are still merely watching in the margins, often in frustration. It must also encompass those members’ basic ‘*Weltanschauungen*’ and integrate them into its thus all-comprising legitimate rules. The present lack of legitimacy and ownership of multilateral institutions could be perceived as a ‘democratic deficit’. All stakeholders in the democratic process must feel truly represented with their own ideas. Global governance ought to feed on divergent food for thought from all different civilisations and cultures, striving for universal ‘best practices’ [examples provided]. Not the absolutism of Francis Fukuyama’s claimed “*End of History*”, but the convincing forces of cultural streams from all sources are too strong to be any longer neglected. Only with them participating as pro-active stakeholders we can together build world bodies, which are not only Western or multilateral, but truly “*omnibus*”, i.e. for and by all. Thus, nobody needs to feel marginalised and pushed to resort to violence, if we advance from unilateral action to ‘omnilateral’ conviction.

¹ The views expressed in this publication reflect only the author’s opinion and cannot be attributed to any institution. It is a short preview of a forthcoming book by the author under a similar title.

Ex oriente lux – ex occidente lex: What enlightened laws we ought to have together for global governance, omnilaterally, for and by all!

The pre-emptive strike against Saddam Hussein in early 2003 might be easily called the climax of unilateralism, but soon the USA has returned to the UN to seek wider support by members of the organisation in order to deal with post-war Iraq. It had become clear that the USA could win the war and did it unilaterally, but that "it could not win the peace alone"² as winning peace still takes more, if not all.

Already during two years saddling the turn of the Millennium, two events have brought sea changes to '*Realpolitik*' in international relations and global governance: The "*9-11 Events*" of 2001 attacking the USA at home has led the American superpower to realise that it cannot tackle this problem like a cowboy all alone on his own. Therefore, President Bush's team went out of its way to build the widest possible coalition against terrorism among the rulers of all colours on the earth, in the UN and elsewhere.

Only some 22 months earlier, the "*Battle of Seattle*" for the 'Millennium Round' of the WTO at the end of 1999 had triggered another sea change in the debate on globalisation towards a wider opening for the participation of stakeholders at all levels of democracy, especially the pro-active stream of the colourful rainbow of civil society.

Thus, that repeated shift away from 'aggressive unilateralism' by the superpower towards more respectful embrace of the others³ (starting symbolically with Bush's visit to a mosque in the wake of the attacks of 9 September 2001, Washington in 2002 rejoining UNESCO for global cultural co-operation and time and again confirmed by surveys of the US people's preference for multilateralism⁴) is shedding additional energy into the widening and deepening undercurrent of interest in the diversity of even local cultures. "Individuals are looking more than ever to identify themselves with local culture, languages and tradition." (Javier Solana, IHT, 27.7.00) That is why Huihilauakea in Honolulu could recently graduate from high school as the first child in a century to be educated exclusively in the island's Hawaiian language (IHT, 8.2.00). On the other side of the Atlantic, even the francophonic pride is now accepting

² See IHT, 4.6.2003, quoting French President Chirac at the G8 Summit June 2003" in Evian, adding that US President Bush said that he shared the same views.

³ Cf. Anthony Lewis "Cooperation Instead of Unilateralism: Bush Changes His Spots", IHT 15.10.01.

⁴ See in particular <http://www.worldviews.org>. On 2 October 2002, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) announced "Worldviews 2002," the most comprehensive survey ever conducted of U.S. and European foreign policy attitudes." They found that "the American public shows strong support for a broadly multilateral foreign policy and prefers working through international institutions and treaties. Substantial majorities of Americans support the United States participating in the International Criminal Court (71%), the Kyoto Protocol on global warming (64%), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (81%) and the treaty banning the use of land mines (75%). Seventy-seven percent of Americans believe the UN needs to be strengthened, and an equal proportion support having UN members each commit 1,000 troops to a rapid deployment force that the UN Security Council can call up on short notice when a crisis occurs."

Leading US intellectuals like Harvard's Joseph S. Nye (author of "The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone") clearly advocate the multilateral approach, see his article in IHT, 13.6.02 and in The Economist, 23.3.02.

different languages (and not only dialects!) within France of which experts have counted thirty-one in the hexagon (SZ, 8.7.99), while the number of languages spoken world-wide actually increased to almost 5000 5.

Between Seattle and Hawaii there might be the calm waters of the Pacific, but the tension between globalisation and localisation is dangerously flooding islands and continents beyond the Pacific from Japan over Eur-Asia to the rest of the world. Intolerant fundamentalism -- Christian or Islamic or others -- is at the threatening crest of these waves that can even destroy skyscrapers wherever in this world.

There are no more clear territorial fault-lines between civilisations, and it is not simply “*the West against the Rest*”. The emerging issue is rather how to civilise globalisation while cultivating localism and narrow the widening gaps in equity. How to build a bridge over the vast troubled waters between these two world-wide trends of globalisation and localisation? How to get the most out of the converging civilisations without Huntington’s “*Clash*” and make the best out of the myriad of diverging cultures that see no “*End of History*” in the sense of Hegel or Fukuyama (“*wrong in 1806 and now*”, *The Economist*, 31.7.99)⁶? And finally how to optimise the legitimacy of any global governance the dire need of which is becoming more evident daily with the advances of globalisation and even more so since ‘9-11’ in 2001 and the subsequent ‘new cold war’⁷?

The answer cannot be a simple or single one, but there will be a never-ending flow of attempts to find answers. They have to draw from the experiences from all mankind as well as other sources throughout history where ever and how ever they have been learnt on this globe. These answers have to be developed not only in the western democratic style of Lincoln’s “*for the people and by the people*”, but they have to be legitimate *omnilaterally* (i.e. all-sided). They hence must reflect the literal meaning of the Latin word “*omnibus*”, for and by all that belong to our world, all-inclusive beyond western anthropocentrism in order to be truly sustainable in nature and also to help the developing world.

“*Omnilateralism*” is a neologism in international relations. Most international travellers nowadays have flown on a European-made AirBus and about everybody in the more civilised world of today must have ridden on a motorbus as they are built in industrialised centres world-wide. However, not all people are aware that such busses are supposed to be ‘for and by all’ as derived from the Latin word “*omnibus*”.

The need and the feasibility of “*omnilateralism*” in that sense are increasingly evident today. Although most people regard globalisation as irreversible, in many parts of the world it is still seen as ‘globalization’ with a ‘z’ in the sense of Americanization, or at least Westernisation and as such as a dominance of one civilisation or even culture over the others⁸. Current globalisation represents only a limited canon of values that

5 Cf. “Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft” by Stifterverband, 3.Quarter 2002, p. 30

6 Fukuyama himself seems to take distance from his former generalisations and admits that neo-liberal economics have intellectually fallen into disgrace in view of the crises from Latin-America to East Asia (Zeit, 11.11.99).

7 Timo Kivimaki, drew the parallel with the cold war situation in the 1950’s in his presentation on 11.9.02 at the European Parliament in Bruxelles.

8 Already 100 years ago, the Boston ‘Herald’ (15.5.1900) wrote: “*Germany, England and the US as representing the dominant industrial nations of the globe ...and representing much of the same type of*

is too small and “thus causes damage to democracy, the environment and cultural values in many countries”⁹. That, of course, generates reactions and more and more backlashes (“*globaphobia*”) against the globalising power, in particular whenever it is considered as acting unilaterally as a superpower without much concern to the interests of the others. Hence, there is already an incremental “*reverse globalisation*” that leads to a two-way street where “*ideas from the rest of the world are swimming into America*” (Asian Wall Street Journal, 10.12.02).

An Aventis Foundation conference on the occasion of the G7 Summit in Okinawa in July 2000 found that “...neither the G7 nor the UN Security Council is representative of today’s world. ...Critics attack ...IMF10, WB, WTO for lacking legitimacy and democratic accountability.” The actions of these institutions¹¹ of the multilateral system¹² often amount to imposition of an outsider’s interpretation of a country’s situation without adequate legitimisation from the people concerned themselves, whatever their political order might be. In the words of the Harvard economist Paul Krugman, “*the IMF does, at least in times of crisis, get to dictate policies to sovereign states.*” (IHT, 17.2.00) ‘One for all’ remedies to solve economic crises from Mexico to Korea and back via Russia and Mozambique¹³ to Brazil with bitter pills for the people challenge the limits of social acceptability on the spot and provoke more and more defiant reactions everywhere. In particular, ten years after the World Bank published its famous World development Report on Poverty, Western concepts have proven not to be effective for poverty alleviation. At the turn of the millennium, only three countries can claim to be success stories (namely Mauritius, Vietnam and China), while in all other developing countries since 1990 the numbers of the poor are either stagnating or even growing.

That is why new approaches have been taken by the West in favour of less developed countries such as the EU initiative to open its market to ‘Everything But Arms’ while

civilisation, will come together in the formation of a joint policy for the control of the world.” In 2003, the London Economist attributes peculiarly modern social ills besetting Iran to its “Westoxification” (sic The Economist, 16.1.03).

⁹ Sic Nobel Prize recipient and former chief economist of the World Bank Joseph Stiglitz in an interview in Die Zeit, 18.10.01. Former Senegal President Abdou Diouf goes one step further when asserting “La menace n'est pas seulement celle du darwinisme culturel, ... elle peut s'exprimer aussi, y compris dans les sociétés développées, dans la spirale de l'ignorance de l'Autre qui alimente la peur dont se nourrit l'instinct de guerre.” (Le Monde, 22.5.2003)

¹⁰ In particular the IMF, although traditionally run by a European secretary general, is seen as ruled by the US if not even as organ of American policy under the dominating influence of the Treasury Department and Wall Street. Europeans have even thought of plans to bundle their vote quotas to hinder the IMF from being used foremost to cover the risk of American investors with public money (IHT, 19.10.99).

¹¹ Even in generally institution-prone Europe “*the establishment of joint institutions at global level is less of a priority than the pluralism of principles and values*” (see European Commission White Paper on Governance, Consultations, p.27,

sg-governance@cec.eu.int; http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_fr.htm).

See also Legitimacy and Global Governance: Why Constitutionalizing The WTO Is A Step Too Far, by Robert Howse and Kalypso Nicolaidis, Harvard University, Mass. 2000.

¹² Multilateralism, according to the Dictionary of World Politics, is “*A policy of acting in concert with others to achieve objectives particularly with regard to diplomacy... Since the expansion of the international system from twelve sovereign states in 1648 to over one hundred and sixty today, multilateralism has replaced unilateralism and bilateralism...*”

¹³ In the case of the Mozambican cashew industry the World Bank itself had to acknowledge after the failure of its imposed policies and to little dialogue with the local people that it had “*tried to do too much too fast*” (see IHT, 19.10.00).

the USAID is expecting a 50% increase in its financial resources over the next 5 years. Hosting the G-8 Summit in Evian in June 2003 French President Chirac invited also twelve leaders from major developing countries in the Americas, Africa and Asia to address issues affecting them in particular. However, in the long-term also important is the search for best practices in development world-wide, i. e. omnilaterally taking account of particular differences in the countries concerned. Such an attempt is the international research project for the attribution of the Bertelsmann Prize for Development and Transformation¹⁴. In the course of a multi-annual study, academic and policy-makers elaborated qualitative criteria to compare the processes of development and transformation towards democracy and market economy of fifty-six countries.

Based on numerous scientific measurements ranging from the Human Development Index of the UNDP to the Gini-Coefficient as a scale for inequality in society, the researchers complemented their work by field studies on the spot in candidate countries. Thus, particular care was taken to take account of different historical situations and institutions¹⁵ in the countries under selection. The authors of this empirical investigation came up with comprehensive tables for each country in order to provide the jury with sound material for their final decision. From this process, various individual best practices of public management of transformation and development can be selected to help countries on the route to democracy and market economy according to their own particular circumstances.

Such 'individualised' best practices would also much better meet the criticism against one-sided institutionalised globalisation that has been mounting in particular since the Asian Crises of the late 1990s. Some observers already draw dangerous parallels with the first vague of 'globalisation' of Europe and North America in the outgoing 19th century. As a percentage of GDP, the worth of international trade in goods at the time had reached a peak unseen for the following hundred years, and on some measures, capital flowed more freely across frontiers than in the late 20th (FT, 28.12.99). Growing nationalism, however, after the turn of the century raised barriers at the borders and imposed limiting rules on all exchanges (including the then infamous "Made in Germany" intended as a stigma for German exports by the UK!). That barrier-building mole of nationalism tipped the still prevailing delicate 'Balance of Power' in the region, and subsequent events culminated in the abrupt ending of peaceful exchanges of products with the murderous firing of bullets leading to WWI. It took Europe another world war to finally learn the lesson from nationalism and remedy the 'Unbalances of Power' through the peaceful pooling of sovereignty to create supranational institutions since the 1950's leading to the European Union of today.

Some critical observers of present-day Asia's uneven 'Balance of Power', more and more focussed on a 'central country' emerging as an assertive regional power, fear that the new nationalism sprouting partly from the humus left over from the Asian Crises still has to teach exactly that lesson to that region. The first reactionary wave rolled over the Pacific with Ishihara's "*Japan that can say No!*", before he was joined

¹⁴ See the comprehensive report by Werner Weidenfels (ed.) "*Den Wandel gestalten – Strategien der Transformation*", 2 volumes, Guetersloh 2001

¹⁵ The importance of institutions rather than policy for development is increasingly underlined also in academic papers as reported by The Economist, 3.10.02.

by Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir to widen the protest claiming "*Asia that can say No!*". However, more shocking should be that three young Westernising Chinese journalists joined the choir even before the American bombing of their embassy in Belgrade to write "*China that can say No!*" and hit the best-seller list¹⁶.

Japan is lowering its view from the multilateral system and engages in bilateral negotiations with Asian partners¹⁷ from Korea to Singapore. Its 'Asianisation' has become a topic again since it saw its economic interests grow in the region in the 1980's, and its pro-active push for an 'Asian Monetary Fund' under whatever cover-name, is in cheek-in-tongue defiance of the American-dominated multilateral IMF. Also nationalistic gaffes in Japan, from former Prime Minister Mori's "*shin-koku*" claim of a divine nation¹⁸ to the official visits to the war dead at Yasukuni-Shrine by his successor Koizumi, have their fluctuation in frequency. However, the fact that the youth of Japan is increasingly choosing Japanese brands and traditional conformity over western labels in order to join their 'in-crowd' and that it becomes less interested in foreign countries¹⁹ might mean much more as a "*tendance lourde*" in the long-term shifting from Haute Couture from France to Harajuku's national fashion *à la japonaise*.

On the neighbouring peninsula, signs of a soft landing not only for visiting family members from both parts of Korea, but also tourist busses going north (see IHT, 14.2.03) are increasing since the historic Summit Meeting of both Kim in June 2000. This is in spite of the North's continuing – recently also 'pre-emptive' strike -- threats against third countries. The South's Sunshine Policy, strengthened under the new President Roh, had received additional energy from Beijing's warm reception earlier that year of the North's leader. However, this energy growing out of the North and the South of Korea coming together seems to power also a dangerously commotive nationalism that officially starts with the focus on "*juche*" (self-reliance) as the first principle in their Joint Declaration. It amounts to more than just copying enthusiastically the North's Kim's fashion of sunglasses in the South. Also films like "JSA", the Joint Security Area between North and South where the duties of American troops are conveniently ignored underpin this trend. The outbreak of feelings of 'national unity' in the South might be difficult to control, and diplomatic observers have already pointed out the need for careful 'expectation management' to avoid the released power of national unity turning against necessary international aid.

While China is recognised for its useful role in bringing North Korea to start the first steps of eventually opening up to the rest of the world and also joining the coalition against terrorism, China's fluctuating 'chip-on-shoulder nationalism' reminds The Economist (2.10.99) of the 'middling kingdom's' past when her rulers saw it as centre of the universe. This leaves modern China with a cultural superiority complex, not only vis à vis Japan. Allied to China's growing military strength, such nationalism combined with a spreading "*Nostalgic for Simpler Times*" (IHT, 29.5.98) and

16 Alluding to this best-seller, the IHT headlined on 23.2.00: "*China Says 'No' To G-7 Invitation*". As champion of the developing world, it obviously preferred the wider UN forum to the plurilateral meeting of the Group of Seven in Okinawa.

17 See "*Asians Shift To Bilateral Trade Deals*", IHT, 14.11.00, and "*Bilateral Pacts Alter Trade Equation*", IHT, 13.11.00

18 Highly popular nationalist Tokyo Governor Ishihara even uses disaster-relief exercises to display Japan's military might, henceforth a taboo for the Japanese (The Straits Times, 31.8.00).

19 see Nihon Keizai Shinbun as quoted in Courrier International, p. 28, Paris 6.4.00

rehabilitation of 'traditional culture' linked to rising National-Confucianism among the leadership in Beijing could easily threaten Asia's complex Balance of Power.

In order to prevent the unbalance to turn dangerous, ASEAN has tried to engage China further in its Regional Forum discussing also contentious territorial issues of the South China Sea. But the South East Asians themselves are less and less advancing their own Association's integration. As the ASEANations, they are now more than ever "**nation**"-building, seemingly unaware that the story of defining nations is a bitter era in European history when all too often borders were drawn only as the result of destructive wars. The difficult choice between the costly multiculturalism of the EU and the homogenising melting-pot of the US is forced upon people in ASEAN countries whose multi-ethnic '**natives**' identity is often irrespective of living on one or the other side of the 'national' border. Malaysia went even as far as building walls against wanderers from neighbouring Thailand who wanted to profit from her stronger economy during the Asian Crises.

Earlier on, ASEAN might have had a chance to leapfrog the historically dangerous era of nationalism and (un-)balance of power from which Europe had to learn so devastatingly during two World Wars. However, often pushed by short-sighted selfishness of their regimes, that window of opportunity to go directly towards regional sovereignty pooling after gaining independence from their colonisers seems to have been slammed shut finally by the storm that brought the Crises in the late 1990's. In addition, the frequent lack of distinction between some leaders' private interests from the public interests of the state as such allowed them in crises to draw support from the IMF etc. without engaging the will of the people. It is the people who must ultimately pay back the loans in a new form of 'taxation without representation'. The benefits are often largely private with the regime, whereas the debt is public with the man in the street. This has created further populist opposition in emerging markets and calls for the rights of citizens as stakeholders in their country's future. (cf. Hilton L.Root, IHT, 22.2.99).

The delicate East Asian '(Un-)Balance of Power' need not lead to any form of repetition of the events of the early 20th century in Europe, however, with nationalism in the region growing, backlashes are to be expected from the former 'Far East' against globalisation pushed by the 'Far West'.

In particular, as "*Globalisation Creates Losers, Too*" (William Pfaff, IHT, 13.11.97) the widening gaps and the increasing wage inequality between skilled and unskilled labour now aggravated by the 'digital divide' within²⁰ and between countries generate social problems that need to be also addressed by global rules, not only according to the Human Development Report of the UN of July 1999. In the wake of the '9-11 Events' of 2001, also *The Economist* (29.9.01) writing about anti-globalists confirms "*At the very least, it is suggested, terrorism thrives on poverty...*". Giles Merritt, the editor of the *Human Affairs Review*, adds "*Somewhere along the line, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon stemmed from tensions created*

²⁰ The most striking example to show the future development is the US where more children are in poverty now than in 1979. A study by the National Center for Children in Poverty found in 2000 that the number of children living in poverty was higher than it was 20 years ago. California – often cited as the trendsetter-- has been hardest hit by this trend (see <http://pnnonline.org/people/poverty0814.adp>).

by the widening gulf between rich and poor nations." ("Wake Up to the Perilous Cost of the Wealth Gap", IHT, 3.10.01).

While most of Asia tends to seek old patterns of the nation-state, also the US has been --against its often shown missionary spirit in words-- increasingly shifting in deed from engagement in the multilateral system towards unilateral measures. It was the former GATT economist Jagdish Bhagwati who coined the phrase of '*aggressive unilateralism*' to characterise American trade policy since the administration of Bush senior and rebuke those who stray from the path of multilateral trade (FEER, 24.6.99). Bush junior has been expected to pay less attention to the international order altogether and the risk of "*The Paradox of Hegemony*"²¹ has been growing. In the wider sense, some analysts criticise standards of purely US origin as the basis of the rules of the economic globalisation, but justify it as an undebated 'mainstream' for the world since the so-called 'Washington-Consensus' of 1989 with Western allies (cf. Egon Matzner, "*Monopolare Weltordnung – Zur Sozioökonomie der US-Dominanz*", Marburg 2000).

However, increasingly elements of a "Post-Washington-Consensus" emerge. The United States' claim to unilateral authority morally isolates the US (William Pfaff, IHT, 12.9.00), and only drastic events like attacks seem to bring about change. Nothing has shown this more clearly than the events of 9/11. The debates in the UN Security Council in early 2003 over Iraq and the war itself by the US then turned its approval rates down drastically. According to the latest Pew Global Attitudes poll, published in Washington in June 2003, in Indonesia for instance only 15% of respondents had a favourable opinion of America: a dramatic reversal from a year ago, when more than 60% viewed America positively. Only 8% of Indonesians trusted that Bush would "do the right thing". Nearly 75% of the French and Germans, who disapprove of America, base their dislike on Bush personally. Hence, foreigners' criticism of the US has to do with its politics and politicians (see The Economist, 5.6.03) and should not be generalised as anti-Americanism (apart from otherwise offending Canadians and Mexicans).

The US has not only been absent from most multilateral agreements on sustainable development, but its 'pick-and-mix' policy also has revealed a move away from a US 'values-based' foreign policy and a higher priority given to traditional national interests (The Economist, 18.9.99). A poll in 1999 showed that almost 60% of Americans in ignorance of Ricardo's theory of comparative advantages thought that foreign trade was bad for the American economy (IHT, 20.11.00). This attitude is reflected in the US Congress where leaders call even for closing against foreign investment (the clearest case smacking of WTO violation when "*German Move on U.S. Firm Prompts Call for Barriers*", IHT, 25.7.00). Also is the US amid all its prosperity growing stingier on foreign aid as already the world's least generous donor country with less than one-tenth of 1 percent of its GDP helping the poor abroad (IHT, 26.11.00)²². The US maxim has been merely the maintenance of American

²¹ See already *The Paradox of Hegemony: America's Ambiguous Relationship with the United Nations* by Bruce Cronin University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, in *International Relations*, Volume 07 Issue 01, London, 1 March 2001 describing the inherent tension between a dominant state's role as a hegemon and its role as a great power. Hegemons have the material capabilities to act unilaterally, yet they cannot remain hegemons if they do so at the expense of the system that they are trying to lead.

²² This fact of lowest Official Development Aid (ODA) from the USA to the poor abroad stands in stunning contrast to the Americans' (from Bill Gates downwards) growing private generosity (of

sovereignty in the sense of unlimited freedom of action towards abroad (FAZ, 6.10.99). Even in the rare event of participating in a regional system²³ such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), “for the United States, it means that economic governance is a wholly domestic matter, whereas for the other two signatories – Canada and Mexico—it is clear that economic governance increasingly must take account of American policy and economic practice.”²⁴ While this is a fact apprehended in the near neighbourhood of the US, it is even more so a fact in the wider multilateral framework. There, the US often displays little attention to the interests of other participating countries. European intellectuals, hence, now openly claim a need for the EU to balance US unilateralism and develop alternative solutions from European experiences²⁵

One obvious example is the refusal of the US -- unlike about one hundred other countries world-wide -- to sign the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as if internationally recognised criminals of the US were less criminal than those non-Americans. By its absence, of course, it also overall weakens the still fledgling international crime fighting and judicial system that we all need to strengthen in order to stem the growing criminal globalisation. It is not only that other powers scurry to fill or exploit vacuums left by a string of high-visibility US rejections under the motto "my way or the highway" (sic Jim Hoagland still 6.9.01 in IHT). Apparently, it takes very drastic and tragic events for the US to become more aware that also for its own safety at home the US has to engage as a partner "*inter pares*" in the international system. The EU had already started two years before the '9-11 attacks' to co-ordinate national laws in order to fight terrorism with judges issuing warrants that could be enforced across the European continent.

Another major example where the US as a global player has not shown that it is “standing up to isolationism” in its foreign policy (FT, 19.10.99) is the Senate’s rejection to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty that rather typified the “growing isolationist mood in America” (Philip E.Clapp, IHT, 4.11.99). “Americans think and act as if their country was the centre of the world. But such unilateralism could prove damaging to America’s interests”, is the conclusion of The Economist (16.10.99). Since these interests in many regards coincide with the mainstream of globalisation as we have experienced it up to now, the backlashes inherent in American action and policies in the long term hurt the US as well as the emerging societies in other parts of the world. Those countries --including even North Korea-- are only beginning to learn to benefit from opening to globalisation. There is still some way to go to fulfil the UN secretary-general Annan’s claim at the Millennium

course, tax reducible!) that reached a peak in 1999 seen in the last 28 years, making the Time cover story, 20.7.00; details at Philanthropy News Network (<http://pnnonline.org/giving/time0720.adp>)

²³ In contrast to the perception of the US in the general public, it is the EU that is the world’s main force in liberalising trade as partner in free trade agreements with 27 countries whilst currently negotiating another 15 agreements. This led the US Trade Representative himself in testimony to Congress to call on the US (that has only two such accords) to catch up in trade liberalisation (IHT, 18.5.01).

²⁴ Peter Leslie of Canada’s Queen’s University takes as examples “the American tendency to allege that states with property rights or regulatory practices or taxation systems different from those prevailing in the U.S. itself are engaging in ‘unfair’ trading practices, or are ‘tilting the playing field’... (see his paper presented to the Panel on ‘*Les intégrations régionales*’, Rennes, September 1999, p. 10)

²⁵ See in particular "*Unsere Erneuerung*" by Habermas with Derrida in FAZ, 31.5.03,

Summit in 2000 that “*Our global diversity of cultures does exist in one universal civilisation.*”

In order to prevent these backlashes of ‘*globaphobia*’ as they are increasingly manifest in many societies and liable to turn the seemingly irreversible trend of globalisation into a destructive force, we have to develop forms and substance of global governance to address those concerns. At the same time we must bring into the equation the simultaneous trend of diverging cultures. This is in a nutshell the task that ‘omnilateralism’ in its widest sense is tackling when it attempts to benchmark best practices world-wide for a better global governance. For that purpose, scanning the wealth of world cultures could highlight for instance Asia’s holistic views of cycles in nature to better sustain our environment, Islam’s focus on social equity to cap the gap between the extremes in our market economy, or ‘softology’ to rebalance gender roles and flexibilise rules in open governance.

In the mid-1980's, Sony's late chairman Morita gave publicity to the term "*glocalisation*" by combining the words globalisation²⁶ with localisation in order to indicate the need for global business to adapt to local circumstances on the spot wherever in the world. Not only relevant for corporate governance, this concept indicates as well the increasing links between local and global in the management of public affairs. On the one hand, we can observe a myriad of cases of renaissance of local and regional cultural particularities (from cuisine to music and more), and they might enrich our daily life almost everywhere in the world nowadays, since enhanced communication renders them less territorially bound than ever. There is, on the other hand, at the same time a convergence of civilisations²⁷ that clearly defies the "*Clash*" that Samuel Huntington had predicted. This divergence of the increasingly omnipresent variety of cultures and the unifying forces of civilisational progress ought to be bridged in a constructive way by omnilateral governance, holistically, by all and for the benefit of all.

²⁶ The comprehensive discussion on (anti-)globalisation is most recently summarised in The Economist's survey of 29.9.2001 (see also its 'Books in Brief' "Pros and cons of globalisation", 14.10.00). An early best-seller for anti-globalisation was "*Die Globalisierungsfalle: Der Angriff auf Demokratie und Wohlstand*" Hamburg 1996 by Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann. A most comprehensive, detailed and profound analysis of globalisation is given by David Held and Anthony McGrew "*Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*", Cambridge UK 1999.

²⁷ The distinction between civilisation and culture is characteristically more evident in Asia, exemplified in the Japanese understanding of "*bunmei*" and "*bunka*" respectively and largely feeds the various phenomena of dualism in Japanese society. These Japanese connotations thus perhaps might be interpreted as more appropriately reflecting the growing time-gap between slow cultural changes and rapid civilisational advances that leads i.a. to civilisational diseases ranging from back-pain to neuroses and individual isolation in urban agglomerations.