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## THE END OF THE “UNIPOLAR MOMENT”

Assessing the efficiency of international institutions in the present context was bound to be a depressing affair. Most participants to the workshop were indeed duly pessimistic, some of them radically so.

The end of the Cold War was succeeded by a decade (1992-2001) of apparent quiet and progress. Positive steps such as the creation of the Euro, the opening up of Russia or the Middle East Peace Process were taken. The United States were the epicenter of the international order. But this “unipolar moment” was shattered by terrorism.

The World today is going through a new transition and is perceived as very unstable. The workshop participants listed several elements:

. *Shifts in international relations.* The war in Iraq has damaged the image of the US and they have lost their supremacy. This may even signal the decline of the West. Meanwhile, other nations rise again, such as China and India. This evolution is partly based on economic growth. Every year, more of the World's GNP is shifting to Asia. Also, Russia is getting more and more self-confident, and will not accept Western interference in the Caucasus. Russia should certainly have consulted with the US and European countries before it reacted to the Georgia situation, but it would have recognised Ossetia and Abkhazia anyway.

. *The financial crisis.* Red flags about the impending financial crisis have been ignored. There has been several crisis in the recent past: the credit crunch in the 1980's, the e-bubble burst in the 1990's. With too little regulation, complex financial products and easy money have become the norm, to the point where discrepancies between reality and the perception of it get too wide.

. *Terrorism.* The emergence of non state actors and their collusion with rogue states has promoted terrorism. Groups that support an extreme ideology and commit actions that used to be anecdotal have become more important, so much so that they alter the running of World affairs. Nations do not know how to react. According to Marie-Christine Dupont-Danon, qualifying 9-11 as an Act of War was not a good idea. It demanded that the reaction be a war, namely the “War on Terror”. However, we should rather engage with terrorist and endeavour to bring them back into the international order. A problem there is that there is no central authority for Muslims, such as a Pope, and finding the right interlocutor may prove difficult. Finally, we should be on the alert for future forms of terrorism such as cyber crimes, or even terrorist actions perpetrated by anti-globalisation groups.

There is a general feeling that present international institutions cannot deal with all this. In fact, the regime of international governance has been falling apart for a while, but there was so much money going around that no one worried. The instability has recently become worrying and possible new catastrophes are looming, such as an all-out civil war in Pakistan and the region.

Still, it is not fair to say that the World is in a pre-war situation similar to 1914. There is indeed a radical difference: nuclear weapons are with us and they may keep the World from going to war as they have done since 1945. Another difference is that there are now many fora for discussion. Philippe Moreau-Defarge points to the creation of the International Penal Court as a sign that global governance has made huge progress. More generally, people today are connected and well-informed. The World is integrated and everyone knows that we must share resources, for instance.

## RESTORING A WORLD ORDER

Should we try to set up a brand new « New World Order » or should we just find the right mechanisms to improve existing institutions? President Medvedev presented a project for a global European partnership “from Vancouver to



Vladivostok". This ambitious plan would demand new institutions. Jacques Lesourne was less sanguine: it may not be wise to set up long-term institutions while the period of transition is lasting. Concentrating on adding little increments may be a better idea.

Sergueï Karaganov suggested that we reinstate a "Concert of Nations", similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and organised around several "empires". Proposals for improving the different institutions did not always reach a consensus.

. *The UN Security Council.* Negotiations on the enlargement of the UN Security Council have been going on for a while. India, for instance, has long wished to have a seat, or maybe share a seat on the Council. However, the Council is already dysfunctional with 15 members. The reason is that countries on the Council have no sense of a superior common good. This is a substantive issue! Adding new members can hardly be a step towards better management.

There is therefore lukewarm support for this proposal. Still, the UN remains a useful forum. It acts as a mitigator of international relations.

. *The NPT.* India acquired the nuclear bomb in violation of the NPT and was rewarded by the 2004 nuclear cooperation treaty with the US. How can Iran now be told that it cannot have the bomb? Most speakers agree that the NPT is dead and that Iran will have the bomb.

. *The IMF.* The Evian conference took place in the midst of the October 2008 financial crisis. There was no question about the inefficiency of international financial institutions! Reforming the IMF by the creation of a new Bretton Woods order, regulating exchange rates and capital flows, was suggested by Jacques Lesourne.

. *The G8.* Sergueï Karaganov strongly stated that the G8 is "a joke", because it is a club without institutions. It could be enlarged to a G12 or G14, but would this make it more effective, or even more pointless is debated.

In the midst of a lively discussion, speakers agreed on several points. K. Shankar Bajpai stated for instance that governance at home is the primary factor of World stability. He presented the example of India: a democracy with diversity. The base is for all countries to accept different religions and languages as well as to respect human dignity. It will prove difficult in many cases (Yougoslavia for instance). Democracies must also learn to manage the breaking up of the state if it appear inevitable. Catalonia or Scotland are good examples of this.

This appeal for tolerance was echoed by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, who said that differences of perspectives are strong and widening in the World. The issue of terrorism for instance is viewed differently in Europe and in Asia. This fact must be kept in mind when we set about restoring a World order.