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Virginie ROBERT

Tobby, maybe you can address the confusion and imbalances. Is there a way to impose some governance on this?

Tobby SIMON

Thank you Virginie. First, I want to thank Thierry, Song-Nim and the organisers of the World Policy Conference for inviting me to take part in this session. I would like to briefly share the objectives, the paradox and the challenge, and outline four key issues that will have a bearing on the way we live in a hyper-connected world. I would also like to touch upon the need for effective global governance as a means to optimise the benefits of a connected world, or otherwise be prepared to face collateral damage.

Let me first state the objective. It is to identify the gaps between yesterday's structures and today's complex problems in a connected world, and here lies the paradox. Globalisation, while it is the most progressive force in history, can also be the cause of the most severe crisis of the 21st century. Consequently, citizens will see integration as risky and could become xenophobic, protectionist and nationalist.

What is the challenge? It is quite evident. The future is quite unlike the past, and the capacity to manage current global events has not kept pace with the growth in the complexity and danger of those events. The biggest challenge at the national level for politicians and policymakers worldwide is the need to balance the enormous benefits of global openness and connectivity with national priorities and policies, for example the need to protect local jobs and industry.

Let me also state the four issues that I wish to speak about. One is the need to repurpose global governance with respect to the global commons. Regarding the repurposing of global governance to meet the new challenges, nations are divided and cannot agree on common approaches, and within nations there is no consensus or leadership on critical global issues. The number of countries now involved in negotiations exceeds 200, and these issues have become very complex. Interconnectedness has grown, as much as the effect of media and pressures on politicians.

What is the tragedy of the global commons? It is something we had in the past – the overexploitation of common resources, and no single person or government has the responsibility or motivation to limit the number or extent of grazing livestock, so these resources will eventually collapse. For example, the Internet is a shared resource, and cyber-criminality is a common threat that requires intervention at both global and national level. One cannot fight cyber-criminals with justice systems that are constrained by national jurisdictions.

Secondly, cyber-attacks could trigger massive outages in a hyper-connected world. I will give the example of WannaCry ransomware, which was a cyberattack targeting machines running Microsoft Windows. We all know that it affected companies and individuals in more than 150 countries, including governments and large industrial organisations. Let us look closely at the vectors. The first attack was on the British NHS, then on Spain's largest telecommunications company, Telefonica, it went on to the French car manufacturer Renault, the Russian cell phone operator Megafon, the US-based Fedex, and then to the Ukrainian state power company, the airport, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the Ukrainian central bank, the aircraft manufacturer Antoinette and then on to Maersk, one of the largest shipping companies in the world, and TNT, one of the largest packet forwarders in the world. The attack also extended to Russia's biggest oil producer, Rosnet, and Saint-Gobain, one of the largest industrial companies in France.

Is there a narrative behind this? It is a signal, and the messaging is quite clear; in a hyper-connected world, there is the potential ability to attack or disrupt an industry, a government or critical infrastructure anywhere in the world. This



is the red flag, and what we saw was only a signal that it could be done, which means we can expect something a little worse in the coming months.

The second is digital wildfires in a connected world. When radio became widespread in 1938, thousands of Americans were confused by the adaptation of a HG Wells book, *The War of the Worlds*, and jammed news stations and telephone lines in the panicked belief that the US was being invaded by Martians. It is difficult to imagine that a radio broadcast could cause a comparable misunderstanding today, in part because broadcasters have learned to be more cautious and responsible, the media has become more regulated, and listeners have learned to be more savvy and sceptical.

However, the Internet remains uncharted territory that is fast evolving. Social media allows information to be transmitted around the world at breakneck speed. While the benefits of all this are obvious and documented, our hyper-connected world could also witness the rapid spread of fake news or fake narratives either intentionally or unintentionally, resulting in misleading or provocative positions with serious consequences. The chances of this happening today are exponentially higher than when the radio was introduced as a disruptive technology. Radio is communication of one to many, while the Internet is that of many to many.

Finally, there is digital democracy. Elections are the cornerstone of democracy and are made vulnerable by both IT and cyberattacks, as we saw in Russia, India, Europe and many other parts of the world. Advances in IT are also transforming democratic systems. Power has become decentralised, fostering new types of communities and different roles for government. The increased involvement of people in political debates is evident on a greater scale on social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook. The Internet allows for greater freedom, allowing citizens to challenge and criticise the fundamental tenets of democracy.

Let me conclude. Global leadership and governance in a hyper-connected world has become distributed and collaborative. We are all part of a much broader problem-solving network, with many high-performing individuals and organisations, public and private, working on different parts of different problems or on the same parts of the same problem. I reiterate that global governance is not about leaders charting their own course anymore. It is about helping networks solve problems with the best and most current thinking available. Collaboration is the new competition, and the more valuable our contributions are, the greater our influence will be in a hyper-connected world.

Virginie ROBERT

I was glad you had a positive note in your conclusion, because I was completely freaking out. This roundtable is really going downhill, with every presenter saying something worse than the last.