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Major Issues in Contemporary Politics during the 21st Century

Dr. Faruqui Mohammed Quayyum M. Younus

Introduction:

The creation of new frameworks for global governance will be a defining challenge for the twenty-first century world, and the attitude of the United States will be among the most important factors in determining the shape and stability of the world order that results from these efforts. The need for a reformed, robust system of multilateral cooperation has never been more obvious. Today's global agenda is dominated by a host of issues - from terrorism to climate change to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - that no single country, no matter how powerful, can address on its own. Tomorrow's challenges and policy agendas will only be more transnational in scope. At the same time, existing multilateral institutions are increasingly divorced from global realities, hindering their capacity to deliver global public goods and mitigate global "bad." Since the end of the Cold War, world politics have been transformed in fundamental ways. On the other hand, it would be unfortunate in the extreme if the kinds of theoretical debates presented in the main body of the book were to be understood as having no impact on the way the world is; we are entitled to ask of any social science that it illuminates the real-world subject matter it purports to theorize, and International Relations is no exception to this rule. In recent years, International Relations theory - in both its conventional, 'positivist' guise as well as in explicitly post-positivist work - has become increasingly abstract, but the intention is, or at least should be, to be 'action-guiding' rather than simply 'world-revealing', to use Stephen White's distinction (White 1991) Various formulas and slogans of the early 1990s were rehearsed and discussed - 'back

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to the future' (Mearsheimer 1990), the 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1989), the 'democratic peace thesis' and President George H. W. Bush's announcement of a 'New World Order' (but, interestingly and strangely, not the 'clash of civilizations' announced by Samuel Huntington in 1993). These positions are still set out in later editions of the book, but with much less prominence. The second 'final chapter' was on the genuinely new agendas of the period.

new not in the sense that the problems they addressed had only just arrived, but new in the sense that they were just in the process of being addressed by International Relations theorists – new notions of security, international environmental politics, gender, refugees and migration, and more generally the turn towards emancipation in IR theory. Most of these issues have been 'mainstreamed' in later editions of *Understanding International Relations*, more or less as predicted.

Objectives:

- To ask of any social science that it illuminates the real-world subject.
- To assume that the major powers would bandwagon with the USA.
- To solve problem peacefully, rather than attempt to balance American power.
- To consider the case for a global investment agreement.
- To illuminate the concept e.g. "transformation" and "leadership".
- To bring about a fundamental change, change not only of the external world, but also of internal processes.

Returning of multipolarity:-

In the immediate post-Cold-War world it really did appear that a kind of convergence of domestic political and economic systems was taking place, at least among the major powers. The successor states of the old Soviet Union were all, in formal terms, democratic; a wave of democracy struck in Latin America and Africa; and while China remained a single-party autocracy, the expectation was that, as its economy grew, the pressure to liberalize its political system would grow as well. As we have seen in earlier chapters, there is much debate as to whether 'regime type' determines foreign policy, and 'democratic peace' theory is hotly contested, but still it was not an unreasonable assumption that a world composed of democracies would find it easier to solve problem

peacefully. Hard-line neo realists assume that capabilities are all that matters, and predicted that a new balance of power would emerge (Waltz 1993), but the majority of scholars believed that intentions matter as well as capabilities, and on that basis it seemed reasonable to assume that the major powers would bandwagon with the USA, rather than Attempt to balance American power, since the latter was not being used in ways that threatened their core interests.¹⁾

International Investment:

The economic gains from cross-border investment are as great as those from cross-border trade, and corporate investment in multi-country supply chains is a large driver of growing trade flows. Moreover, the rapidly growing sovereign wealth funds of several East Asian countries and energy-exporting states are complicating the picture. The huge capital surpluses now in the hands of foreign governments may trigger a political backlash in the countries where these funds are invested). Yet international investment is not subject to any multilateral regime comparable to the World Trade Organization. Instead, a crazy-quilt of bilateral investment treaties, together with an OECD-effort led by the OECD, attempt to set global norms for investment rules. In the 1990s an effort to upgrade this framework with a Multilateral Agreement on Investment was defeated by civil society critics. The program will support work by CFR fellows to consider the case for a global investment agreement, as well as to examine the need for rules to govern sovereign wealth funds and the recipients of their capital.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Average annual inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa doubled in the 1980s compared with the 1970s. It also increased significantly in the 1990s and in the period 2000–2003. Comparisons with global flows and those of other regions may be more useful, however. In the mid 1970s, Africa's share of global FDI was about 6 percent, a level that fell to the current 2–3 percent. Among developing countries, Africa's share of FDI in 1976 was about 28 percent; it is now less than 9 percent. Also in comparison with all other developing regions, Africa has remained aid dependent, with FDI lagging behind official development assistance (ODA).²⁾ Between 1970 and 2003, FDI accounted for just one fifth of all capital flows to Africa. It is well known that FDI is one of the most dynamic international resource flows to developing countries.

FDI is particularly important because it is a package of tangible and intangible assets and because firms deploying them are important players in the global economy. There is considerable evidence that FDI can affect growth and development by complementing domestic investment and by facilitating trade and transfer of knowledge and technology.^{xvi} The importance of FDI is envisioned in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as it is perceived to be a key resource for the translation NEPAD's vision of growth and development into reality. This is because Africa, like many other developing regions of the world, needs a substantial inflow of external resources in order to fill the saving and foreign exchange gaps and leapfrogs itself to sustainable growth levels in order to eliminate its current pervasive poverty.³⁾

Transformative Leadership:

What is meant by "transformative leadership?" How can transformative leaders be identified? Two terms are critical to illuminate the concept e.g. "transformation" and "leadership". Transformation implies a fundamental change. The Webster's dictionary defines transformation as changing the "form", "condition", "character", or "function".⁴⁾ Leadership is defined in different ways but the elements commonly emphasized are to "guide", "direct" and "influence". Leadership, thus, connotes not simply having power or authority but having a vision and a sense of purpose. Who, then, are the transformative leaders? A transformative leader, simply defined, is a person who can guide, direct, and influence others to bring about a fundamental change, change not only of the external world, but also of internal processes. Transformative leaders can be found at different levels (e.g. community, national, global), and in various sectors (e.g. society, economy, politics). This paper primarily focuses on women leaders— actual and potential— capable of ushering in fundamental changes.

What kinds of fundamental changes are envisaged in leadership? Grounded on the visions and practices of women's movements and organizations, we present below some of the qualities of transformative leadership.

TABLE 1: Qualities of Transformative Leadership

A. Vision And Commitment.	B. Institutional Behavior.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality • Equity • Empowerment • Human rights • Peace • Sustainability • Shared power, responsibility, • well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory • Egalitarian • Responsive • Transparent • Accountable • Non-corrupt • Consensus-oriented • Empowering

Up to now leadership paradigm has been generally based on “male” models, as men tend to dominate decision-making positions all over the world.⁵⁾ The attributes, often associated with such models, are “power”, “domination”, “competition”, “being on top” and so on. An alternative model, based on the writings of feminists and the practices of women’s organizations have highlighted different set of attributes such as the capacity to “empower” and “service” others, “co-operation”, “consultation”, “sharing”, “consensus-building”, and so on. Increasingly we have come to realize that the model of leadership, envisioned by the feminists and women’s organizations, is more suitable to bring about a transformation in politics and governance.

▪ **Support Policies and Budget for the Social Sector:**

In the era of globalization, the intense competition for market is putting pressure on national governments to cut down on social sector (e.g. education, health, safety net) budget. But from the perspective of strengthening human development and the care economy it is important to protect strong social sector enabled with human capabilities to compete in the global market on better terms. When social sector budget is cut, the poor and women are disproportionately hit as they are more dependent on public sector schools and health care facilities. The rich can afford to buy services from private sector educational and health care institutions. As people’s representatives, the members of parliament have a special responsibility to look after the interests of the average citizens. Again, women members of parliament can distinguish themselves as the “voice” of the vast majority of poor women if they support appropriate policies and greater budgetary allocation for the social sectors.

▪ **Initiate Debate On Campaign Finance Reform:**

From the perspective of transformation, campaign finance reform is very important. Increasingly, election campaigns look like big time carnivals or spectacle sports that require huge sums of money. The need for funds has propelled the politicians to turn to black money or private sector business to finance election campaigns. In many countries businessmen are turning themselves overnight into politicians simply because they can donate to party funds or can afford to underwrite the campaign expenses on their own.⁶⁾ These businessmen turned politicians are often interested in joining politics to make more money through their access to state power and are not motivated by a sense of public service. Women, who generally do not have huge personal assets, are at a disadvantage in electoral politics. Similarly many male political leaders, who may otherwise be suitable candidates for public service, are at a disadvantage as they do not command private funds. Campaign finance reforms that will limit election expenditure and solicitation of private funds, and provide for public funding for campaigns is essential to limit the influence of big money and clean up politics. However, very few politicians want to take the risk and suggest campaign finance reforms.

▪ **Issues for the 21st Century:**

Results of the UNEP 2011 Foresight Process on Emerging Environmental Issues as developing countries stand on the brink of large-scale degradation of their inland waters, they have the option of shortcutting this degradation by taking advantage of forward looking water technologies and management techniques that were not available to countries in Europe and North America at the time they began contaminating their waterways. Oceans provide many earth system functions including the regulation of climate and the hydrological cycle, as well as provide habitat for a rich diversity of organisms, and food, materials and energy for human use. But the oceanic environment is faced with increasing threats to its long-term integrity, including: acidification, overfishing, land and marine-based pollution, widespread habitat destruction, and the proliferation of invasive species. There is a growing presumption that the current approach to managing oceans will be unable to prevent a collapse of some oceanic systems. This is because, among other reasons, responsible bodies are dispersed across UN agencies. Reforms are needed and new forms of governance should be considered and evaluated, including the option of establishing a new coordinating body for integrated ocean governance.⁷⁾

- **Champion Issues Critical To Transformation:**

Often women parliamentarians remain inactive in legislative and policy-making fronts. Their participation in parliamentary debates is infrequent and rarely draws media attention. They generally speak when women's issues or other social issues come up but only a few women parliamentarians demonstrate initiative in championing issues. Yet by taking up a few critical issues that capture the nation's imagination consistently they can make a mark and turn their issues into nationally important causes. For example, women parliamentarians can pick up social justice and good governance issues on a non-partisan basis. They can formulate policies for poverty reduction, e.g. land reform measures. They can design mechanisms for greater accountability e.g. they can organize parliamentary hearings on specific human rights violations or environmental disasters.

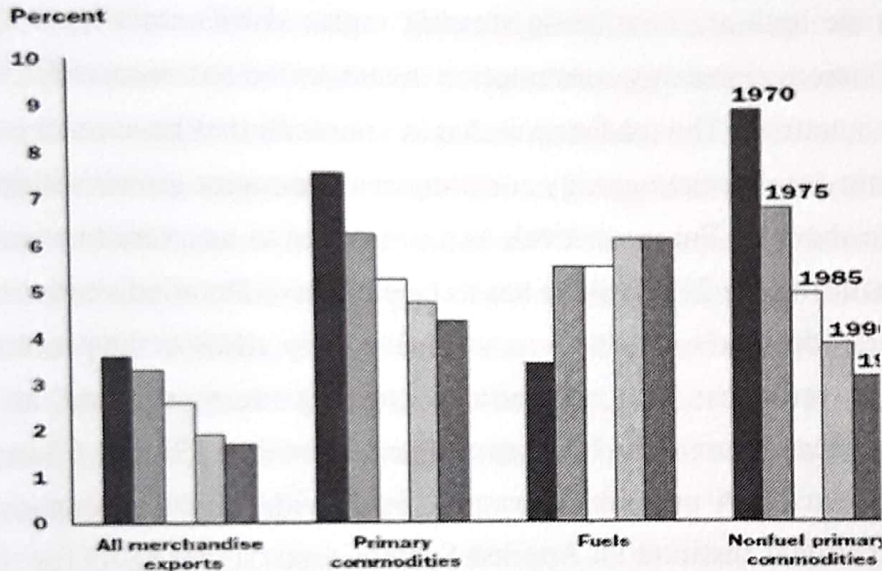
- **Climate Change Issues:**

New Challenges for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Managing the Unintended Consequences. When scaled up, mitigation and adaptation measures may have unintended consequences. For example, large scale wind farms may disrupt the migratory behaviour of birds; new massive sea walls will protect the populations but may also eliminate valuable natural wetlands; and large scale geo engineering schemes could have many unintended impacts. These potential negative side effects should be assessed, and then minimized or avoided in order to maintain support for climate policies. A spate of new scientific studies have compared climate modeling results with observational evidence and confirmed the hypothesis that climate change could alter the frequency, strength and distribution of extreme events. For example, studies have linked global warming with increased risk of flooding in England and Wales; with increased summer rainfall variability in Southeast United States; and with the intensification of heavy precipitation events over much of the land area of the Northern Hemisphere. These new findings underscore the need to adapt to a changing frequency of extreme events, and suggest that 'medium term' early warning systems might be possible.⁸⁾

- **Africa's Growth Crisis: A Retrospective:**

At the start of the 19th century, Africa's income level stood at roughly one-third of Europe's. There then followed a long period of falling behind as industrialization,

technology, and trade accelerated in the world's major centers (Maddison, cited in Bloom and Sachs 1998). African growth may have approximated that in Europe in the first half of the 20th century, and many countries performed well until the oil shock in 1973. But thereafter, Africa again fell behind, with most countries experiencing a steep economic decline that ended only with the recovery of the late 1990s.



The erosion of Africa's world trade share in current prices between 1970 and 1993 represents a staggering annual income loss of \$68 billion—or 21 percent of regional GDP. Part of this loss reflected the erosion of the trade share for traditional products, as well as policies that discouraged private investment and diversification into products for which world demand was growing more rapidly. Only in fuels did Africa emerge as a substantial new presence in world markets. Relative to GDP, exports changed only modestly (in current prices), benefiting from hikes in world oil prices.

▪ **Expectations and Outcomes:**

Africa's decline was not expected. During the decade that followed the independence of most African countries, Gunnar Myrdal wrote the three celebrated volumes of *Asian Drama*. This major work saw Asia, with its vast population and limited land resources, as doomed to stagnation. Meanwhile, Africa was poised to grow steadily along a path of relative prosperity. Indeed, in the 1960s many African countries were richer than their Asian counterparts, and their strong natural resource bases augured well for future trade, growth, and development.⁹⁾

- **The need for more energy:**

- **Energy demand and pressure on supply**

The world consumption of energy has increased roughly by a factor 10 in the last one hundred years and continues to increase at a rate of about 2% per year. The most prominent primary energy source at the beginning of the 20th century was coal, followed by oil; in Western Europe both are now being steadily replaced by natural gas. Not surprisingly, the major increase in energy consumption in that period has occurred in the industrialized Western countries. The tendency is that in countries that have reached a certain state of economic development energy consumption per capita grows within a relatively short period to about the European level. As a consequence, an overall increase in energy consumption during the 21st century has to be expected. Detailed studies on scenarios of future energy demand exist, but – as scenarios -they all have the problem of great uncertainties. Nevertheless, they all predict a growing energy demand, as is well documented in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on emission scenarios. A prominent example is provided by the scenarios developed by the International Institute on Applied System Analysis (IIASA) for the whole of the 21st century ¹¹⁾. Three types of scenario can be distinguished:

- a) Those assuming a high, sustained growth all through the century;
- b) Those with a more moderate growth rate and
- c) So-called normative scenarios which assume a world-wide collaboration on environmental problems.

In all three cases, the world energy demand increases drastically (a) factor of 5 in scenario a, 4 in scenario (b) and 2.5 in scenario (c) The increase in electricity demand is even more pronounced and also enhanced to some extent by the world-wide trend of growing urbanization¹²⁾.

- **Global Development Policy.**

Contemporary policy discourse concerning global development has been dominated by two extreme camps: advocates of enormous expenditures of foreign aid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, on the one hand, and skeptics of development assistance, on the other, who contend that it is wasteful, redundant (given private sources of investment) and often counterproductive (since it breeds dependency). Often missing

from this dialogue of the deaf is a careful appraisal of what targeted foreign aid can (and cannot) accomplish, as well as a recognition that aid is but one component—and rarely the most important—in development outcomes.

▪ **Preventing and Responding to Violent Conflict:**

Preventing State Failure and Internal Conflict. In an age of transnational threats, states that cannot control their borders and territory and that collapse into violence pose a danger not simply to their own populations but indeed to the entire world. Unfortunately, the international community continues to struggle in its efforts to prevent states from sliding into failure and internal violence.¹³⁾ To date, no major international actor—whether the United States, other major governments, or international institutions like the United Nations, World Bank, and African Union - has made prevention a strategic priority. Notwithstanding the UN's rhetorical commitment to conflict prevention, its actual policy remains modest, ad hoc and reactive, limited in most cases to occasional "good offices" efforts by the Secretary-General.

The G8, likewise, has devoted little attention to reducing critical sources of insecurity and instability in the developing world, including cutting the illicit revenue streams that fuel corruption and violence in weak states and conflict zones, curbing illegal trade in weapons, shutting down offshore financial havens for the ill-gotten gains, and insisting on transparent management of natural resource revenues. The program will collaborate with CFR's Center for Preventive Action (CPA) to assess what institutional reforms can be made to improve the capacity of the UN, G8, World Bank, AU and other international frameworks and partnerships to address the underlying sources of instability and mitigate and manage conflict in the world's most vulnerable states through a mixture of diplomatic, economic, political, and military means.

Conclusion:

Among the biggest disappointments of the UN High-Level Summit of September 2005 was the failure of UN member states to cut the Gordian knot with respect to UN Security Council Membership, particularly the extension of permanent (or semi-permanent) membership to accommodate the shifting balance of world power since

1945. The obsolescence of current mechanisms of global governance is increasingly apparent in the management of the world economy, not least during the annual summits of the G-8. It simply makes no sense to exclude from this ostensible global directorate the world's largest emerging economies, including China, India, and Brazil, as well as multiple other middle powers.

One of the hallmarks of the past two decades has been the formation, deepening, and enlargement of formal regional organizations in many corners of the globe. The mandates, competencies, capacities, and effectiveness of these heterogeneous bodies vary enormously. The United States has a critical interest - and a central role to play - in ensuring that these bodies play their full and appropriate role in managing global insecurity and in providing public goods for their respective regions.

As we explore the most appropriate international frameworks to address today's global agenda, the program will seek to break new ground on three big picture issues: the changing nature of sovereignty in an age of globalization; the challenges of accommodating non-state actors in global decision-making; and the preconditions for democratic accountability in multilateral institutions. The program is envisioned as a multi-year effort, rather than a one to two-year project geared toward a specific event or electoral cycle. This relative permanence will hopefully permit CFR to become a center of excellence in thinking about global governance, and a repository of useful knowledge and lessons learned available to other scholars and institutions

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