Multilateralism Under Challenge?

Power, International Order, and Structural Change

Edited by
Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur *and* John Tirman

Multilateralism under challenge? Power, international order, and structural change

Edited by Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman

United Nations University Press

TOKYO · NEW YORK · PARIS

Contents

1

Introduction

Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman

The values and institutions of multilateralism are not ahistorical phenomena. They are created and maintained in the context of specific demands and challenges, and through specific forms of leadership, norms, and international power configurations. All of these factors evolve and change; there is little reason to believe that multilateral values or institutions could or should remain static in form and nature. The relationship between the distribution of power, the nature of challenges and problems, and the international institutions that emerge to deal with collective challenges is constantly in flux. Like any social construction, multilateralism is destined to evolve as a function of changing environmental dynamics and demands. It is this evolution that we examine in this volume.

The challenge to multilateralism

In November 2003 United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed that "The past year has shaken the foundations of collective security and undermined confidence in the possibility of collective responses to our common problems and challenges. It has also brought to the fore deep divergences of opinion on the range and nature of the challenges we face, and are likely to face in the future."[1] The evidence of problems across a range of international norms and institutions is certainly ample. The United States and its allies undertook a war against Iraq in 2003 without the explicit authority of the UN Security Council, which came

1

on the heels of similarly unauthorized NATO military action in Kosovo in 1999. Some observers have interpreted this, and other developments, as a shift amongst some major powers towards an ad hoc "coalition" model of military action. Some states openly question whether the established rules governing the use of military force (only in self-defence, collective self-defence, or under the authority of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter) remain valid in all circumstances, suggesting that preventive force outside the UN framework may be necessary in response to latent or non-imminent threats. In particular, it is questionable whether existing international organizations have the confidence of major powers for dealing with new security scenarios, such as the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorist groups. And if the major powers are not going to be restrained by existing norms, laws and institutions in their use of force overseas, then the other states in turn will lose confidence in norms, laws and institutions as instruments for protecting their security.

The lack of support extends to other policy areas. The United States, China, Russia and many other countries do not support the International Criminal Court and thus render its jurisdiction very limited. According to a 2004 high-level panel report endorsed by the UN Secretary-General, the main global multilateral regime responsible for promoting and protecting human rights "suffers from a legitimacy deficit that casts doubts on the overall reputation of the United Nations."[2] The Kyoto protocol to regulate climate change is jeopardized by key abstentions. A range of multilateral arms control treaties and conventions are being eroded, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Others, such as the International Convention to Ban Anti-Personnel Landmines, are not supported by key states. In their decision-making procedures and their representation, many international organizations do not meet contemporary standards and expectations of legitimacy based upon accountability and democracy. In addition, the future of multilateralism has become embroiled in a transatlantic split and competing visions of world order.

Notably, many of the challenges confronting multilateral institutions have been associated with US military and economic preeminence in a unipolar world, and an attendant pattern of US unilateralism. Are the values and institutions of multilateralism under challenge, or even in crisis?

This volume explores the effectiveness of, and prospects for, contemporary forms of multilateralism in a range of issue areas. There are a number of elements to this. Firstly, the relationship between the distribution of power at the international level – in all its dimensions, hard and soft – and the nature of multilateralism is fundamental. In this respect,

several of the volume's contributors question whether institutionalized multilateralism, as currently conceived, can offer a viable basis for international order at the beginning of the twenty-first century in a global power configuration of unipolarity. Multilateral institutions are inherently vulnerable to hegemonic/unilateralist power, demonstrated vividly during the UN Security Council's failure to constrain the US misadventure in Iraq. Many analysts have associated the malaise of multilateralism with American pre-eminence and unilateralism, although this equation is not accepted uncritically in this volume.

Secondly, at the same time, the volume's authors suggest that the difficulties and the legitimacy problems confronting multilateralism do not all stem from the distribution of power in international relations, or from the policies of any particular state or group of states. A number of challenges result from structural and normative changes since multilateral institutions took shape after the Second World War. The challenge to multilateralism is in part the challenge to the state. Security challenges, for example, are no longer mainly those of inter-state war; trade and economic relations are increasingly non-state and present mounting regulatory challenges; civil society and other networks and communities are significant generators and enforcers of global norms, and in many cases are directly challenging and even outperforming multilateral institutions on normative grounds. Moreover, multilateralism is premised upon functioning and autonomous sovereign states, which is in some instances a fiction. Sovereignty as an exclusive norm of domestic jurisdiction is in turn being challenged by universal norms relating to human rights and governance.

Thirdly, in their decision-making procedures and their representation, many international organizations do not meet contemporary standards and expectations of legitimacy based upon accountability and democracy. International organizations emerged from the need to regulate and give predictability to a narrow range of inter-state relations. As a result, international organizations have traditionally been immune from requirements of governance that would generally be applied in the domestic context, such as transparency and public accountability. This is no longer the case, and it presents serious problems of legitimacy.

Other challenges to multilateralism stem from more obvious problems of multilateral performance. There have been a number of security failures in particular: the United Nations was created primarily as a collective security organization, and yet hundreds of conflicts have beset the world since 1945, and even with significant multilateral attention to weapons of mass destruction, the use and proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons remain highly threatening. In the perception

of important policy makers the prospect of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorist organizations has brought this threat to new heights, which traditional multilateral arrangements have difficulty addressing. Existing multilateral arrangements are unable to guide states to a workable framework of how to deal with egregious and widespread abuses of human rights and civil war. Persistent crises such as HIV/AIDS, failing states, terrorism and environmental degradation, amongst others, pose deep and vexing problems that multilateral mechanisms struggle to address. The state-centric nature of multilateralism and the manner in which states make and implement decisions are arguably inadequate to deal with many of these challenges. Finally, there are policy (and knowledge) failures, such as the World Bank's imposition of structural adjustment policies which have been associated with negative social consequences.

Leading states may be less willing to bear the costs and obligations (and restrictions) of maintaining certain multilateral institutions in the face of declining effectiveness, especially in the area of international security. Smaller states feel alienated by the elitist and power political forms of multilateralism, even though they rely by necessity upon their participation in international organizations. Citizens and non-state actors are frustrated by what they see as a lack of accountability and transparency in multilateralism. As a result, confidence in many of the institutions and values of multilateralism is waning in the early twenty-first century. When the effectiveness of multilateral institutions as well as their constitutive principles fail to meet performance expectations and contemporary norms, legitimacy is, in turn, in doubt. Multilateralism thus appears to be under challenge from two fronts: institutions, forged in the post-1945 environment or during the Cold War, may be exhausted normatively, and their inter-state structure is inadequate for contemporary challenges. This characterizes contemporary multilateralism in a number of issue areas.

Multilateralism: Do the forms and norms remain viable?

This volume begins with the proposition that the post-Second World War systems of multilateralism, in a number of important issue areas, have become out of step with contemporary challenges and demands. It considers which challenges and changes can be absorbed within the existing mechanisms and systems of multilateralism and which cannot. On the basis of this, the volume seeks to highlight what issues might have to be confronted in order to re-envision multilateral arrangements in a number of policy areas.

As a starting point, this volume takes existing definitions and ideas of multilateralism as a form of common action amongst states in international relations. In a fundamental sense, multilateral arrangements are therefore institutions, defined by Keohane as: ''persistent sets of rules that constrain activity, shape expectations, and prescribe roles''.[3] The principal actors (and unit of analysis) are states. Ruggie provides a more elaborate definition:

multilateralism depicts a generic institutional form in international relations ... [It is] an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence.[4]

He notes two corollaries: the principles of multilateralism ''logically entail an indivisibility among the members of a collectivity with respect to the range of behavior in question'', and, second, the expectation of ''diffuse reciprocity''. This applies when ''the arrangement is expected to yield a rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time''. As a result, he says, multilateralism is ''a highly demanding institutional form''.[5]

This demanding institutional form – the state-centric model of multilateralism – can be, and is, contested within this volume, especially with respect to the role of non-state actors such as civil society organizations and multinational corporations, and with respect to the importance of norms and values that constitute international society and community.

The first part of the volume revisits a number of perennial themes which are fundamental to the study of multilateralism: power, legitimacy, order, community, and decision-making processes. These chapters approach these themes in light of recent challenges to various multilateral institutions and norms. The United Nations is the global symbol and embodiment of multilateralism, and all of its promise and limitations. Shashi Tharoor's chapter, ''Saving humanity from hell'', gives a realistic defence of the organization in the context of the many challenges it faces. Tharoor acknowledges that the Iraq war – without clear Security Council authorization – has led some to evoke a parallel to the League of Nations, but argues that the comparisons are grossly overstated. His main argument is that we live neither in a purely Hobbesian world of anarchy and unconstrained power politics, nor a Kantian world of peace and harmony. But one thing is for sure: the United Nations was not created by naive Kantians; it was established as a progressive response to a Hobbesian world. The United Nations, at its best, is a mirror of the world: it

reflects our divisions and disagreements as well as our hopes and convictions. Tharoor observes that the United Nations is both a stage and an actor. It is a stage on which the Member States play their parts, declaiming their differences and their convergences, and it is an actor executing the policies made on that stage. The UN's record of success and failure is better than many national institutions; yet somehow, it is only the United Nations that is apparently expected to succeed all the time.

As Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's great second Secretary-General, put it, the United Nations was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell. During the Cold War, the United Nations played the indispensable role of preventing regional crises and conflicts from igniting a superpower conflagration. Its peacekeeping operations make the difference between life and death for many around the world. And despite the fact that the war against Iraq was pursued without clear UN authorization, the UN was firmly involved in Iraq after the war. Moreover, the innumerable ''problems without passports'' – problems that cross all frontiers uninvited such as weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, the environment, contagious disease, human rights – make the organization as indispensable as ever.

Emanuel Adler's chapter, ''Communitarian multilateralism'', problematizes what he describes as ''classic forms of universal intergovernmental multilateralism''. He suggests that these have been under challenge not only by global hegemonic pressures, but also by underlying structural forces that include the weakening of sovereignty, the growing global role of non-state actors and policy networks, and the transferring of liberal practices and institutions from national to international and transnational spheres. In an attempt to cope with these challenges, multilateralism has been transforming itself and taking new forms.

Adler forwards two propositions: that institutions evolve together with collective epistemic understandings, and that constructivist International Relations theory helps us to understand new, viable forms of multilateralism. On the basis of this, he presents a novel conceptual model, namely, ''communitarian multilateralism'', which he suggests is thriving. This relies on communitarian practices of collective-identity formation that depend not only on material power, but also on collective epistemic understandings. It involves institutionalized efforts to socially construct multilateral communities of practice amongst like-minded actors which engage in the same practice – for example, security communities. Adler cautions, however, that communitarian multilateralism is unlikely to contribute to global governance because its practices are inherently exclusive.

Robert O. Keohane's chapter, ''The contingent legitimacy of multilateralism'', questions the presumption which underscores multilateral action –

that agreement by states, according to institutionalized rules, guarantees legitimacy. That presumption, he argues, is a construction of the twentieth century which is becoming increasingly problematic because it is at odds with normative democratic theory. His chapter divides the sources of organizational legitimacy into ''output'' and ''input'' legitimacy. Outputs refer to the achievement of the substantive purposes of the organization, such as security or welfare. Inputs refer to the processes by which decisions are reached – whether they have certain attributes regarded as important. Keohane argues that by the standards of both input and output legitimacy, the values and institutions of multilateralism are deficient because they do not reflect democratic values and their performance is questionable. During the twentieth century these deficiencies were not debilitating, since multilateral regimes constituted a supplement to traditional interstate relations, not a substitute for them. However, the reach of international organizations has become so penetrating that this deficiency is now glaring.

From this basis, Keohane contends that an institution has a valid claim to make legitimate policy on a global basis only if it meets three standards: of inclusiveness, decisiveness and epistemic reliability. All valid interests must be represented effectively; the multilateral organization must be able to take effective action, even against the opposition of its strongest member state; and the decision-making process must be sufficiently transparent that it is open to criticism from outsiders as well as insiders. According to these criteria, he claims that the United Nations does not reach satisfactory standards of legitimacy, and that contemporary multilateral institutions such as the UN are contingently legitimate, relative to the currently available alternatives, which are quite unattractive. But their advocates, and their leaders, should begin to reconstruct their legitimacy on a twenty-first century basis – with more emphasis on democratic principles and less on sovereignty.

Coral Bell's chapter, ''Power and world order'', also rests upon a disharmony at the heart of international relations. She considers how consensus can be built and maintained between the contemporary great powers and revisionist actors which do not see their interests met in the existing world establishment. She asks: What degree of cooperation can be devised to manage the transnational groups or forces which threaten the established order? Can contemporary international institutions be modified to serve those objectives more adequately? The archetypical challenge, Bell suggests, is that of the jihadist networks. What is necessary is a conflict-limiting concert of powers under US leadership, to avoid a complex and dangerous multipolar balance of power that current forms of multilateralism will be incapable of forestalling.

Amitav Acharya's contribution, ''Multilateralism, sovereignty and nor-

mative change in world politics'', gives great significance to multilateralism in international relations and international order. His chapter examines the role of multilateralism in fostering and managing normative change in world politics, with specific regard to the fundamental norms of state sovereignty. He argues that post-war multilateralism helped to define, extend, embed and legitimize a set of sovereignty norms, including territorial integrity, equality of states and nonintervention. Indeed, the post-war international order would not have been so tightly and universally built upon the norms of sovereignty without multilateralism. Moreover, as the normative order evolves, multilateralism is essential to prevent instability and conflict. Acharya thus argues that multilateralism plays a key role in promoting and facilitating normative change. However, multilateral institutions are under increasing pressure to move beyond some of these very same principles, especially nonintervention, as a part of a transformative process in world politics. Multilateralism is particularly important today because of increased global and regional economic interdependence, the emergence of new transnational challenges, major systemic changes affecting the global distribution of power, domestic change and democratization, and the expansion of global civil society. Acharya concludes that multilateral institutions, whatever their weaknesses, can make fundamental transformations legitimate and peaceful.

Perhaps the most significant factor which conditions the nature and potential of multilateralism in international relations is that of power, in all its forms. Stefano Guzzini's chapter considers the claim, popular after the Cold War, that the decline of multilateralism is a logical outcome of the present distribution of international power, and specifically US power. Guzzini provides a critique of the idea that the distribution of international power (generally now conceived of as unipolar) determines the nature of US foreign policy (unilateralism) and that American unilateralism is inherently antithetical to international multilateralism. Relative superiority in power and hegemony do not necessarily determine policy towards multilateral institutions. Indeed, whilst today many observers suggest that pre-eminent US power is enabling – or perhaps motivating – the country to ignore or undermine institutions, in the past theorists of international relations argued on the contrary that *declining* power resulted in declining support for multilateral institutions and regimes. Guzzini considers the idea that the distribution of power – and ideas of unipolarity – at the turn of the century is somehow unique, and argues that this is analytically problematic. Indeed, we have no objective measure of power. Moreover, the distribution of power resources does not determinate outcomes, and so unprecedented preponderance is not a direct cause of unilateralism. Thus, Guzzini concludes, it is the neoconservative policy of

US unilateralism – bringing with it a certain understanding of power and unipolarity – which explains the policy of the US towards multilateral institutions. It is not a systemic inevitability.

Friedrich Kratochwil, in "The genealogy of multilateralism: reflections on an organizational form and its crisis", considers the definition and scope of multilateralism, and seeks to develop criteria of assessment that might distinguish a "challenge" to multilateralism from a "crisis". The distinction between these two is difficult to establish. Nevertheless, Kratochwil suggests that there is a crisis, and it is not limited to the tendencies of the United States or other powers to fall back on unilateral measures or the challenge posed by "coalitions of the willing" which might circumvent established multilateral arrangements. He argues that the crisis has deeper roots, as the concept of sovereignty has been challenged by non-state actors, such as terrorists, warlords, or even the more constructive elements of "civil society".

In contrast, Edward Newman's chapter, "Multilateral crises in historical perspective", argues that analysts have been too quick to conclude that specific international organizations or multilateralism more generally are in crisis or fundamentally flawed. The current sense of "crisis", at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is shared by analysts of different ideological and theoretical predispositions, and seems to be a "truly" historical turning point. But how do we know? Newman's chapter considers whether such a judgement can be based upon a rigorous methodology, and argues that a more systematic approach to the idea of a "crisis of multilateralism" is necessary in order to put the current challenges facing multilateralism in their proper context. He does this by considering the historical perspective and recalling the sources and manifestations of earlier "crises", and then attempts to construct a framework that may assist in distinguishing a multilateral crisis from "politics as usual".

A second set of chapters explores specific issue areas: weapons of mass destruction, international humanitarianism, human rights, the natural environment, international peace and security, terrorism, civil wars, and the use of force for human protection. These chapters analyse the nature and extent to which the limitations of multilateralism are demonstrated in each issue area. They consider the ways in which these limitations are related to changes in structural factors – such as state sovereignty, the impact and significance of non-state actors, international norms, the distribution of power at the international level, and the nature of security challenges. These chapters also attempt to consider, in each issue area, how the values and institutions of multilateralism might be reformed in order to better meet contemporary realities and needs.

K. J. Holsti surveys a broad range of conflict and security challenges in "Something old, something new: theoretical perspectives on contempo-

rary international peace and security''. His analysis combines the ''classical'' inter-state security problems that emerge from a system of sovereign states in a condition of anarchy, with newer threats emerging from the weakness and breakdown of states and the rise of private armed groups and quasi-religious movements. Holsti argues that the occasional defection of the United States from the majority does not mean that multilateral diplomacy has come to an end. The concern is not so much a United States that acts unilaterally as opposed to multilaterally, but one that takes actions inconsistent with many of the objectives sought by the rest of the international community, one that proclaims rights and actions for itself while denying them to others, one that actually exacerbates the problems it is trying to remedy, and one that manufactures threats.

According to many observers, one of the most critical deficiencies of multilateralism relates to weapons of mass destruction, and the acrimony at the review conference for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2005 was symptomatic of this. Trevor Findlay's chapter addresses the strains under which multilateral approaches to weapons of mass destruction are currently operating. He argues that the pivotal player in this field is the United States, and the neoconservative agenda has been particularly unilateralist and obstructionist in respect of multilateral activity pertaining to WMD. However, he suggests that it would be wrong to assume that the Bush administration is solely responsible for the malaise that currently faces much multilateral endeavour in the WMD realm, and it is therefore necessary to understand the deeper roots of the problem, both the long-term structural and the short-term circumstantial. In addition to the emergence of a unipolar world and the shock-waves of the September 11th attacks, there is evidence of a general problem in multilateral negotiations on WMD issues that has been building for some years, although compounded by recent events. This is due to both structural flaws and a growing dysfunctionality in the multilateral negotiating machinery. However, Findlay does argue that, despite the deficiencies, there have been successes in multilateral monitoring, verification and implementation bodies.

A further issue which has brought the principles and performance of multilateralism into question in recent years is humanitarian assistance, and this is addressed by David P. Forsythe in his chapter ''International humanitarianism in the contemporary world: forms and issues''. He approaches this challenge within the conceptual dichotomy of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Forsythe argues that, within this framework, an emerging trend is to redefine state sovereignty not as an elite privilege and a barrier against foreign scrutiny, but as the responsibility to protect human dignity. His central question is whether humanitarianism in the world today, which is inherently multilateral because of the size of the

problems and the vast array of actors involved, can be made effective, particularly with attention to the needs of victims. Focusing on the UN system and Red Cross network, Forsythe concludes that the ICRC represents the international standard for independent, neutral and impartial humanitarianism. UN relief agencies like the UNHCR and UNICEF, as well as the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, may aspire to those same core values that the ICRC represents, but since they are part of an intergovernmental system they are not able to match the ICRC standards. Ultimately, states control the UNHCR and UNICEF, or any other UN agency. States always have national interests, however subjectively and even erroneously constructed, and they cannot help but project those interests into their foreign policies at the United Nations. Thus, the inherent structure of the international system precludes a truly cosmopolitan approach to humanitarianism, and rigorously impartial and consistent humanitarian relief through the United Nations is rare.

One issue area in which there has been broad criticism of multilateral institutions in recent years is human rights. Richard J. Goldstone and Erin P. Kelly explore the crisis of legitimacy which characterizes human rights multilateralism in ''Progress and problems in the multilateral human rights regime''. They consider if the human rights regime is fundamentally at odds with the principle of sovereignty and statehood, upon which the multilateral system is built. In so doing, they describe the historical and doctrinal foundations of human rights law, and then consider a series of institutional challenges to the regime. The human rights regime has achieved success in establishing the legal foundation for human rights and creating certain enforcement mechanisms. Nevertheless, they argue that the most threatening challenges to the long-term viability of the human rights regime relate to massive human rights violations committed in failed states and in the context of civil armed conflict.

The record of multilateral institutions in addressing environmental challenges is explored by Joyeeta Gupta. She argues that environmental multilateralism is under challenge in eight ways: the non-participation of hegemons and particularly the United States in key environmental regimes; the nature of public goods and free riding; a lack of good governance at the national level; the weakening role of the state; the rising role of non-state actors; the general capacity problems of developing countries; the rise of hybrid relationships; and the rise of bilateralism.

Gwyn Prins, in his chapter ''AIDS, power, culture and multilateralism'', similarly argues that multilateral approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS are fundamentally limited. He considers if ''new threats'', such as HIV/AIDS, by their nature bring into question the viability of multilateralism, and argues that the evidence points in rather unexpected directions. Indeed, he suggests that we are not witnessing traditional state-

centric multilateralism being undermined by a unilateralist hegemon; rather we see multilateral opportunities being eroded in spitefulness to the USA by countries which claim to promote multilateralism. Moreover, the USA, via its science and pharmaceutical establishments, its statistical arm (the US Bureau of Census) and its specific funding initiative (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), is the prime positive actor. Prins also argues that the pandemic has been allowed to become worse than it might have been by the unwillingness of the state-centric international community to challenge the dangerous exercise of sovereign power – including the self-restraint that ''political correctness'' imposes on criticism of postcolonial, especially African, rulers and states. Specific obstacles to multilateral progress are, according to Prins, intellectual property rights and market-driven constraints.

Terrorism, too, is an issue area with which existing multilateral institutions have been brought into question. Edward C. Luck's chapter, ''The uninvited challenge: Terrorism targets the United Nations'', suggests that the UN's response to terrorism has been tentative and even ambivalent, but also in some respects positive. He considers various explanations for this related to geopolitics, US leadership, ambivalence about American power, and constraints imposed by the UN Charter and international law.

To many states, including US allies, the way the Bush administration has framed ''the war on terrorism'' reflects an over-emphasis on the coercive and military dimensions of what should be a more subtle and multi-faceted campaign. At the same time, the US has envisioned only a limited place for the UN in the global struggle against terrorism. In that regard, its view of what the UN can and should contribute is similar to that of other capitals, few of which would want the UN to attempt to play the lead role. Given its chequered history, the UN has come a long way toward embracing the struggle against terrorism. More could be done to integrate and streamline its efforts, but the results would not be measured in great leaps forward. There are real institutional and political limits to what the UN can or should do in this area, regardless of American attitudes and policies. The challenge for the UN is to do the best it can within its circumscribed sphere of action, one that is bound to be more normative than operational.

John Tirman's chapter, ''Civil wars, globalization, and the 'Washington Consensus''', adopts a critical approach with reference to the possible links between international organizations and armed conflict. He considers the relationship between civil wars and economic and political globalization, in light of the evidence that many contemporary civil wars are rooted in social and economic factors. He argues that both economic and political globalization are promoted and enabled by multilateral

institutions. Therefore, incidences of instability and organized violence linked to social and economic factors in market-based countries raise troubling questions for multilateralism. The rules of international organizations are shaped by powerful states in their own interest, and imposed on weak states that may have different needs and interests, often with negative results for many of these smaller actors. In the push for open markets and bureaucratic accountability, multilateral institutions such the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have insisted on certain economic and political reforms in developing countries, reforms that may in fact have induced instabilities that are conducive to civil war. If this is borne out, it would be doubly problematic for multilateralism.

The record of multilateralism in giving protection to civilians in extreme danger and preventing or responding to widespread human rights abuse is not impressive. Thomas G. Weiss's chapter, "Using military force for human protection: What next?", considers the potential and constraints of multilateralism concerning humanitarian intervention. His analysis is not at all hopeful: state sovereignty, the pre-eminence of power politics, and the reality of US power all prevent progress on this issue, and multilateral institutions are simply unable to provide human protection in many critical situations. Weiss argues that the "humanitarian intervention fashion" of the 1990s now seems like ancient history, even with the endorsement of the "Responsibility to Protect" in the Secretary-General's 2005 report "In Larger Freedom" and the 2005 United Nations Summit Outcome report.[6] The idea that human beings matter more than sovereignty seemed, albeit briefly, to figure in international relations until the wars on terrorism and Iraq. These current obsessions, both in the United Nations and in the United States, suggest that the political will for humanitarian intervention has evaporated. According to Weiss, the US is the preponderant power, and its inclination to commit significant political and military resources for human protection has faded, while other states complain but do little.

The next two chapters consider how other issues – in particular international social movements and economic justice – raise a significant challenge to the way in which contemporary multilateralism is constituted. Many analysts have observed that multilateral intergovernmental institutions have failed to be accountable and transparent – democratic values that are now integral to good governance in the domestic context – and that this is a part of their weakness. Jackie Smith's chapter, "Social movements and multilateralism", considers this democratic deficit alongside the rise of non-governmental associations. She investigates the rise of a "regressive" and unilateralist model of globalization following the 11 September attacks on the US, and connected to this, the ambivalence of contemporary social movements to multilateral institutions, and anti-

democratic responses by governments and UN agencies to these developments. She suggests that efforts to strengthen multilateral institutions are inseparable from attempts to democratize the global system. Social movements were central to the democratization of emerging nation states, and they have played key roles in promoting multilateralism as well.

However, Smith observes that three contemporary trends threaten the mutually supportive relations between social movements and international organizations. First, although global civil society is much stronger than it was in the past, more recent ''generations'' of activists are less likely to support multilateral institutions. Second, the US-led ''war on terror'' and unilateralism encourages militant fundamentalism while undermining advocates of more democratic global governance. Third, an anti-democratic backlash, characterized by more militant policing of protests and by restrictions on civil society participation in multilateral institutions, threatens to further polarize both national and international societies. To ensure the survival of both democracy and multilateralism, Smith argues that we must find ways to reverse policies that contribute to the exclusion of less powerful groups from economic and political life.

Sirkku K. Hellsten's chapter deals with ''Multilateralism and economic justice''. She discusses if and how economic justice can be realized today when a large part of trade and economic relations are handled by private non-state agencies rather than by governments which have traditionally been the formal parties to the multilateral agreements. Secondly, her chapter analyses how civil society organizations and other networks now enforce ethical dimensions of international cooperation by challenging multilateral institutions on normative grounds. Her main argument is that, while the traditional forms of multilateral state collaboration have lost much of their credibility due to the global democratic deficit and due to the weakening of the role of national governments in world politics, multilateralism can still offer a firm basis for international cooperation. However, this requires that the existing multilateral institutions negotiate common values and open a dialogue on both political as well as the social dimensions and goals of globalization and international cooperation in which civil society and developing countries have a chance to get their voice heard and their concerns taken into account. If multilateral cooperation wants to regain its credibility, it has to bring questions of ethics and justice back to the agenda of international negotiations.

In the related area of trade, Beth A. Simmons argues in her chapter that multilateralism has been crucial to an increased international flow of goods and services over the past century. It has also been central to the incorporation of developing countries and non-market ''transition'' countries into the global trading system, and in managing the changing structural economic balance of power – in particular, the rise of Asia's major

economies. In contrast to many of the other contributors to this volume, Simmons demonstrates how multilateralism can work effectively in changing circumstances. In fact, she concludes that the GATT/WTO regime could hardly be more robust, yet flexible, as a mode of rule development. Moreover, the system has also coincided with the most remarkable improvements in human material well-being ever documented.

The "crisis" of multilateralism is seen more clearly at the global level, and not necessarily in the regional context, where cooperation in many areas is deepening and thriving. To explore these different experiences, chapters on Europe, Latin America and East Asia consider regional perspectives and processes: whether and how they differ from global norms and institutions. These three contributions ask, for example, if it is possible to think of regions as a counter-weight to global hegemonic forces.

Europe is important in all of these respects, and A.J.R. Groom explores this in his chapter on "Multilateralism as a way of life in Europe". He claims that, despite the constitutional crisis and the budget problems in the first half of 2005, the idea of "multilateralism under challenge" is rather alien to Europe. Multilateralism is seen as a way of life because it is the means by which Europeans have tried, with a considerable degree of success, to reconcile togetherness and diversity. Moreover, Groom argues that multilateralism is so much a part of the way of thinking that there is no strong conception of a unipolar international system. In addition, the notion of multilateralism as being state-centric does not fit with the experience of many Europeans. This is because Europe is now encompassed by systems of multilateral and multilevel governance in which the role of civil society is an integral part. Groom demonstrates this with reference to four processes: the EU is building towards the joint management of pooled sovereignty; it is building down towards the regions which are displaying a greater degree of autonomy and innovation; it is strongly involved in civil society by building transnational ties, such as in higher education; and finally it is building beyond, not only at the governmental level but also at the level of civil society. Whilst the EU has its internal difficulties and there are tensions between the European project and the US vision of global order, this should not detract from the inherently multilateral nature of European politics.

Jorge Heine, is his chapter "Between a rock and a hard place: Latin America and multilateralism after 9/11", similarly demonstrates how multilateralism is fundamentally important in that region of the world. As mostly small or middle-sized powers in a region traditionally at the margins of the main conflicts in world politics, Latin America has historically placed a premium on a regulated international order, one that will protect the interests of smaller nations, rather than leaving them at the mercy of great powers. The region is the source of innovation in international law,

and has shown commitment to the lawful resolution of disputes. Partly as a result of that, Latin America is the region with the lowest number of interstate conflicts and the lowest defence expenditures. Countries in the region have drawn strength from numbers and from their participation in international organizations. Yet the close relationship of many Latin American countries with – and dependence upon – the US has put regional multilateral instincts under some strain in recent years.

Quansheng Zhao's contribution, "From economic to security multilateralism: Great powers and international order in the Asia Pacific", focuses on a region which is characterized by having relatively little institutionalized multilateralism. Nevertheless, Zhao suggests that there is a general trend from bilateral to multilateral cooperation. This development first took place in the economic sphere, and only recently has begun to move toward the security dimension. Zhao's central argument is that, with the shift of power distribution and the new dynamics in the region, increasing attention has been paid to institutional change and multilateral frameworks as a new means for international order. Whilst there are major obstacles to overcome, economic integration may further reduce mistrust in the region and lay a solid foundation for security cooperation.

Overall, the contributors consider the fundamental issues which must be raised in order to understand how multilateralism can better respond to contemporary needs. Is the multilateral "moment", as expressed in the period after the Second World War and affirmed occasionally since, essentially over, or changed in some fundamental way? An overarching conclusion that is supported by most of these chapters is that the fundamental *principle* of multilateralism, with all its limitations, is not in crisis. Indeed, this principle is validated and vindicated by the demands of the contemporary world. However, the values and institutions of multilateralism *as currently constituted* are arguably under serious challenge. The challenge concerns both "input" and "output" legitimacy: how decisions are made and how interests are represented in multilateral organizations, and how well multilateral organizations perform according to their specific missions. The challenge to multilateralism, as nearly all contributors note, is rooted in the challenge to the state and state sovereignty in a world that frequently transcends (or ignores) borders in practice and in principle.

Notes

1. United Nations Press Release, "Secretary-General names high-level panel to study global security and reform of the international system", New York, UN Office of Public Affairs, 4 November 2003.

2. ''A more secure world: our shared responsibility'', Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, A/59/565, 2 December 2004, p. 14.

3. Robert O. Keohane (1994) ''International institutions: two approaches'', in Friedrich Kratochwil and Edward D. Mansfield, *International Organization: A Reader*, New York: Harper Collins, pp. 48–49.

4. John Gerard Ruggie (1993) ''Multilateralism: The anatomy of an institution'', in John Gerard Ruggie (ed.) *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 11.

5. John Gerard Ruggie (1993) ''Multilateralism: The anatomy of an institution'', in John Gerard Ruggie (ed.) *Multilateralism Matters*, pp. 10–12.

6. United Nations Secretary-General (2005) *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, New York, 21 March 2005; 2005 World Summit Outcome (Draft resolution referred to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session), 20 September 2005.

Multilateralism Under Challenge? Power, International Order, and Structural Change

Edited by Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman

Contributors:

Amitav Acharya
Emanuel Adler
Coral Bell
Trevor Findlay
David P. Forsythe
Richard Goldstone
A.J.R.Groom
Joyeeta Gupta
Stefano Guzzini
Jorge Heine
Sirkku K. Hellsten
Kal J. Holsti
Erin P. Kelly
Robert O. Keohane
Friedrich Kratochwil
Edward C. Luck
Edward Newman
Gwyn Prins
Beth Simmons
Jackie Smith
Ramesh Thakur
Shashi Tharoor
John Tirman
Thomas G. Weiss
Quansheng Zhao

The principles, values and manifestations of multilateralism, including the United Nations, are under sustained scrutiny and assault. Their performance and effectiveness are questioned, as are their decision-making procedures and their representation according to 21st Century standards of accountability and democracy. All this has a corrosive effect on their legitimacy.

Multilateralism under Challenge? explores the performance and future of multilateral approaches and institutions with reference to major global challenges such as international security, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, economic justice, human rights and humanitarian assistance.

"For a concept and an institution that is under 'challenge' - if not duress - multilateralism is an essential component of international life, as the contributions to this volume clearly demonstrate. We need to make multilateralism more effective and more accountable, to be sure. This book advances constructive ideas on how to do just that."

- John G. Ruggie, Harvard University, USA

"An essential reference on the current state of the debate on multilateralism and institutional reform. As a desktop reference it could prove invaluable. I know of no other book that attempts to assess what has happened to multilateralism in all aspects of contemporary international relations. It is this comprehensive approach - in which the security, environmental, humanitarian and economic aspects of international order are seen as bound together by a common approach, albeit one that is now under challenge - that will establish the comparative advantage of this book."

- James Mayall, Former Director, Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge, UK

Edward Newman is the Director of Studies on Conflict and Security in the Peace and Governance Programme of the United Nations University,Tokyo, Japan. **Ramesh Thakur** is the Senior-Vice Rector of the United Nations University, Japan and a UN Assistant-Secretary-General. **John Tirman** is the Executive Director of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA.

Book information:

ISBN 92-808-1129-0; 572pp; US$49.00

Order from:

United Nations University Press

53-70, Jingumae 5-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925, Japan
Tel +81-3-3499-2811; Fax +81-3-3406-7345
E-mail: sales@hq.unu.edu; http://www.unu.edu