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"BEYOND GLOBALISM AND GLOBALISATION "

Perhaps it is too much to expect to foresee what will be the situation in the world beyond globalisation, considering that we are only just into globalisation and we are not only unable to fully comprehend it but quite obviously we are making a mess of it.

2. Only a few years back we were all opening our arms to welcome globalisation. We had become a global village. Modern technology had enabled instant communication, instant sound and sights across the vastness of continents. We could actually commute almost halfway across the world to breakfast and to meet and still be back home for dinner with our families.

3. No country could isolate or insulate itself. Privacy, even of individuals was becoming more and more difficult. Prying eyes looked down on us from outer space or sometimes from much lower down. A global village is really smaller than an ordinary village in terms of visibility for it is quite roofless.

4. There is no doubt about the benefits of unlimited communication. We can be lost in the ocean or the desert and yet be able to talk to people and indicate our position through the magic of cellular telephony. We can see things even as they happen on the other side of the world.

5. We know a lot more about our environment and the danger it is faced with. And we know how we can preserve it. We know of the species which are about to be extinct and our need to save them. The regions which we once considered as hostile to Men, which we avoided or we tried to eliminate before, we now wish to preserve and we can pour in billions for the preservation of these places.

6. Technology advanced, is advancing and will advance ever more rapidly. There is nothing that technology cannot do. If an animal, a fish or a plant is not big enough, we can double their sizes and their food contents. The Genetically Modified Salmon is three times bigger, the vegetable more green and nutritious and cattle yield the exact combination of fat and protein and carbohydrate to suit our taste-buds, and perhaps our health.

7. We humans can do anything. We merely have to decide what we want and somewhere in the world there will be scientists who will produce it for us. We don't have to give birth to babies anymore, we can clone them. Why should anyone give birth naturally and painfully or even by Caesarean Section? Why not produce perfect replicas of ourselves with all the characteristics we like best?

8. We can reach the moon and the stars. So far we have found them uninhabited, but should there be any creature out there with the audacity to challenge us, we will blast them into nothingness with our ray guns. What a glorious future for the arms makers. We will all have to buy laser guns to blast the Martians and the Venusians into empty space. We will fight terrestrial wars too, for we cannot give up our addiction to it. We are busy inventing and producing ever newer weapons which we must try out in real life. How else can we know whether they work or not.

9. Well this could be the post-globalisation scenario. But I hope and pray that this will not be. And this will not be only if we take a grip of ourselves and we refuse to become the captives of mad scientists and their fantastic technologies. Simply because we can do something, simply because we can now play God, does not mean we should play God. We can, if we want to, destroy humanity completely. Between Russia and the U.S. there are enough nuclear warheads to pulverise the whole planet. But we won't do it because we know that truly will be the end of history.

10. Similarly we will not clone ourselves. We will not do it because we cannot interfere too much with God's work, which others prefer to call nature. Look at what happened when they imported rabbits into Australia and then they brought European dogs to kill the rabbits.

11. We are more concerned now about preserving the trees and the forests, and the animals. But we go too far sometimes. We deny the poor in the world living space for themselves because we want their countries to become Carbon Sinks. Yet the protected animals are allowed to destroy the forests and even kill and eat humans. The man being eaten by the tiger must appreciate that he is helping to preserve an endangered species.

12. We are more civilized now but the lunatic fringe keeps pushing us to go too far. We are going too far with our globalisation also. We want globalisation to be totally unregulated, to be left to the markets to govern it. But the market is about making profits, maximising profits. In the process it is likely to leave a trail of disasters and

tragedies. But never mind, the important thing is that globalisation must be accompanied by market deregulation. As long as the global marketplace is deregulated what happens to people does not matter. The system has become more important than the people it is supposed to serve.

13. Remember Socialism and Communism? They were all responses and reactions to the inequities and the oppressions in human societies. The great thinkers of the time believed that if men were made absolutely equal, then they would enjoy a life free of oppression, free of envy, free of conflicts and of war. They believed that all that man wanted was to be equal and free. They invented the slogan "Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite" and they made a religion of it.

14. But egalitarianism led instead to oppressive dictatorships; the massacres of millions in order to achieve equality, freedom and the brotherhood of men. For many who did not take kindly to the ideology there was no liberte and no fraternite. There was only oppression and death.

15. In the end these great dreams, these ideologies were recognised for what they were, the cause of further sufferings and the deaths of millions. And they were discarded.

16. Democracy too will go this way, not because it is a bad system but because it keeps on being interpreted and embellished. At first democracy was only about majority rule. Then minority rights was added, then individual rights. These rights were constantly being broadened so that in the end they became more important than majority rights. The Government may be elected by the majority but minorities may bring it down by street violence helped by the media and even foreign interests. The rule of law is advocated but this simply means that those opposed to the Government may break the law but the Government may not enforce the law against them.

17. Then along came the Non-Governmental Organisation to claim the right to frustrate popularly elected Governments. They may be made up of only one person but they get wide publicity and support; they may use illegal means. They can become extremely powerful and frequently Governments of the majority have to bow to them.

18. Democracy is now no longer about the rule of the majority. Indeed in many cases the elections to gain majority support is an exercise in futility. For promptly the popularly elected Government is hamstrung and rendered impotent. The wishes of the majority, the largely silent majority is ignored while the Governments struggle to placate the activist minority.

19. Now the minority has become more violent and lawfully elected Governments have been toppled by the illegal activities of the few, the street mobs. In the meantime the country becomes unstable, unable to develop and for many developing countries, their freedom is lost. The people suffer, as law and order breaks down, ethnic and religious clashes escalate, and thousands are killed. Mob rule has become more democratic than majority rule.

20. Democracy has been abused until everything can be done in the name of democracy. The promised better life has not materialised. Instead people are suffering more than ever, more even than when they had authoritarian rule, because of democracy. The time will surely come when democracy will go the way of Socialism and Communism. It is not because democracy is bad. It is still the best system of governance. But democracy has been so abused that it is no longer able to benefit either the majority or the minority.

21. Today democracy still reigns supreme. To criticise it is to be heretical and to expose oneself to vilification. But eventually the damage will be so evident and so great that democracy will become a bad word just as proletarian dictatorship is a bad word, and it will be rejected.

22. But this need not happen. Democracy can be saved if it is not regarded as perfect, if its weaknesses and defects are recognised and remedies made and excesses curbed.

23. And now we have globalisation, a great idea whose time has come. But already it has started on the wrong foot. Currency manipulations across borders and the economic and financial catastrophes such as those in Orange County, in Brazil, in Mexico, in Russia and of course in East Asia which followed this particular manifestation of globalisation do not augur well for the future of globalisation. The victims are told it is free trade and therefore it must be good.

24. But must we have horrendous disasters as a price for globalisation? Cannot there be globalisation without the pain, unbearable pain? The answer is of course there can be. Globalisation need not be accompanied by total deregulation. The two are not the same. Some regulations can make globalisation not only less destructive but also beneficial all round.

25. The assumption that markets will regulate themselves is contrary to logic or human nature. The market is about making profits, maximum profits. It is not a social organisation intended to cure social ills. It is not even about fairness and justice and good governance.

26. The market especially the free market operates by defeating competition. To do this well the players must be strong and ruthless. And so we see the mergers of the giants and the mergers of the merged giants. The idea is to be so big and therefore so strong that competition would be one sided. The smaller groups will either lose and be destroyed, resulting in terrible social and economic damage or they can submit to being taken over. Eventually there can be only one player in one industry. Then competition would cease and the winner will become an arrogant and domineering entity, optimising profits at the expense of quality, efficiency and social considerations.

27. The world will be badly served by the monopolistic giants, which may gang up in order to be even more powerful. Governments will not be able to control them because Governments will depend entirely on them. In fact they will determine who will govern countries. Their control will now become absolute. Big Brother, big capital will rule the world and the poor and the weak will just have to submit.

28. Oligopolies and monopolies need not be an essential feature of globalisation. There could be statutory limits to mergers and the size of corporations. In any business a sufficiently large number of players must be ensured. Competition must be governed by a set of rules to ensure not just a level playing field but the contestants are fairly evenly matched. There must be banks and businesses which are national and those which are international. The weak must be protected according to a set of internationally agreed rules.

29. An international currency should be created which belongs to no one country. Rates of exchange should be based on this one currency which can be used for payment of all international trade. Earnings in this currency must be immediately deposited with a nation's central bank, and local currency issued for local transactions. The reserves must be held in this international currency only and not a basket of currencies.

30. Currencies must never be traded as commodities. Should there be a need to devalue against the international currency, a panel of central banks and the International Bank should determine the proper exchange rate. No country should dominate international finance and commerce.

31. If we are prepared to be pragmatic and fair, if we are ready to curb the excesses of democracy and globalisation and to determine the right levels that will be suitable and acceptable in any particular country, if we are prepared to give up the idea of being dominant because we are the richest

and the most powerful then we can look with hope beyond globalisation.

32. Globalisation today ignores the very poor. In a globalised world wealth distribution should be equally global. But it is not.

33. The world of today is extremely rich. A combination of technologies and natural resources have made unlimited wealth creation possible. There is more than enough wealth to wipe out global poverty completely.

34. The financial system of a globalised world is now confined to a free flow of capital. Those who profit from such flows must be prepared to pay a global levy. The levy should be based on the GDP of nations.

35. Voluntary aid to the poor is now anathema to the rich. The levy should be for statutory aid. It should be for the building of needed infrastructures such as roads, canals, railroads, ports, airports, power, water to stimulate growth.

36. The levy should be administered by an International agency including the construction of the infrastructure by international constructors. Sub- contracts and supplies should come from the locals. The benefits would obviously be evenly distributed. The infrastructure built will enable products to be exported and imported at lower cost. World trade will certainly grow and poverty eradicated.

37. Altogether the levy would be a win-win formula. No one will lose. The whole world will be enriched. The poor countries will be less poor and will truly become a part of the globalised world. Globalisation would then be meaningful as it involves the whole globe, the whole world.

38. The rich will not take kindly to this idea of course. But if they expect that the poor should always accept ideas which benefit the rich, then the rich should also be prepared to accept ideas which benefit the poor, especially when the rich will benefit as well.

39. Even as in a country the poor have a right to some of the wealth of the country, a globalised world must accord the poor similar rights. If the poor cannot expect this then why should they accept globalisation?

40. So what is there beyond globalism and globalisation? There could be total oppression of the weak by the strong as capitalism run riot. Or there could be a world democracy where

the resources of the world are combined with human ingenuity
to create the greatest human civilisation ever.