Since the dawning of the nuclear age, there has been a growing anxiety about whether human civilization was sustainable within a state-centric framework of world order, with or without hegemonic geopolitics. Such a restrictive outlook embodies biopolitics on a global scale, associating human anxieties as a species with bare survival. My own preoccupation has been to explore and depict a survival plus imaginary of the human quest, supplementing this survivalist orientation by coequal concerns with the attainment of human dignity for all persons with a spiritual grounding for the meaning of life (see Falk 1975; 1995; 2004, esp. Chs. 1-7). For the sake of focus, I label this imaginary as ‘humane global governance,’ choosing words that call our attention to both normative (law, morality, justice, spirituality) and practical (administration, implementation of norms, institutionalized collaboration) dimensions of desirable types of world order.

---

The conception of what is desirable is historicized in relation to the circumstances of the early 21st century. A distinction is also drawn between the normative and practical deficiencies of world order as an operative framing for global activities and of world order as a system. This latter category of deficiency casts the darkest shadow across the human future as it presupposes that unless the structure of the world is rapidly transformed, the biopolitical future of the human species is severely at risk. These systemic threats include nuclear weaponry, climate change, and economic chaos.

This chapter examines some aspects of this overall effort to diagnose the character of world order challenges, as well as to assess the various responses that seem likely and promising. It includes some reflections on the trajectory of my own work over the course now of more than five decades.

*Establishing Global Governance: Getting Beyond Illusion*

There is little doubt that as the 21st century begins to unfold there is a widespread sense that human wellbeing is multiply jeopardized, and that a positive human future will depend upon unprecedented political coordination and cooperation on behalf of global common interests. What follows from this consensus with respect to the institutional arrangements of world politics remains uncertain and highly contested. At one extreme is the historical insistence that the emergence of a world state has become the indispensable foundation to achieve the necessary level of coordination, in effect, a sequel to long experience with state-centric Westphalian forms of political order. Further, that trends toward global governance over the course of the last several decades makes the
emergence of a world state, or at least a world government, all but inevitable within a relatively short period, say twenty years or less. 2

Even if it is conceded that such an emergence is likely at some future time, there is a wide disparity of views as to the time frame, and actuating conditions. There are some advocates of world government who think it will come into being as a result of education, an overall rational adjustment to the impinging realities without any accompanying trauma, and in view of trends toward institutionalizing the integrative pressures of globalization. Many informed observers are skeptical of such a soft landing, and believe that such a world polity will only become a reality, if ever, in a post-catastrophe setting where the old order has been reduced to shambles (see Deudney 2007, 264).

Beyond speculation about emergence, a further issue raised concerns whether this prospect of a world state should be greeted with enthusiasm or not. Some advocates believe that only some form of world government could overcome the most serious biopolitical challenges confronting humanity, mobilizing resources and energies for a coordinated and compassionate response to global warming, and reducing dramatically the likelihood of apocalyptic warfare. Others believe that any foreseeable transition to world government would almost certainly freeze or deepen the inequities of present world order, and would necessarily rely on repressive means of governance to sustain stability and maintain control. Such a world government would be properly understood as a type of global empire, undoubtedly administered by the leadership of a currently

---

2 See Wendt, Chapter 2, this volume, for an argument that the world state is inevitable. Wendt posits a longer timeline, of 100-200 years. See also Rodrik, this volume.
hegemonic state actor. Arguably, the American response to the 9/11 attacks during the early years of the Bush presidency were seeking such a world order solution.\(^3\)

Not everyone believes that the only meaningful focus for systemic global reform entails centralization of political authority in sort of arrangement that is capable of effective regulation on a global scale. There are also supporters of various models of radical decentralization of power and authority. Such viewpoints emphasize beneficial effects of the anarchic energy that is being currently released by way of the fragmentation of existing states, that is, carrying the logic of self-determination to levels of social order present within states, thereby giving approval to forms of order that are reflective of the existence of a sense of community however it is spatially specified. This anticentralization bias also expresses itself by effective localized and populist resistance to the geopolitics of empire as the defining structural force of this contemporary period. This vision of an increasingly anarchic political future also generates debate about the benefits and drawbacks of political decentralization at this stage of history (see Kohr 1978).

An intermediate posture between a unified world polity and accelerating political fragmentation involves the rise of regional forms of order as a partial and ambiguous sequel to both the Westphalian framework of sovereign states and the various efforts to achieve empire and hegemony (Paupp 2009; see also Falk 2004, 45-65). This kind of political regionalism should be distinguished from renewed interest in a multipolar world order in which China, India, Russia, and Brazil join with the United States and the European Union in reinventing the balance of power for the 21\(^{st}\) century (Kagan 2008).

Amid such contradictory images of the future of world order it is more difficult than in

\(^3\) Best depicted in the canonical “National Security Strategy of the United States of America”(2002).
earlier periods of the modern period to set policy priorities or even to debate alternative approaches to world order.4

Against such a background it seems useful to offer some interpretation of the global setting as a dynamic, evolving reality that is generating challenges not easily met within a still predominantly politically fragmented world of sovereign territorial states. To impart some clarity on the political imagination I have differentiated horizons of feasibility, horizons of necessity, and horizons of desire or aspiration (Falk 2009, 14-18).

The realist sensibility arising from a Westphalian world of sovereign states emphasizes the feasible, giving its main attention to the management of power as the foundation of security, conceiving of force as a still viable policy option that remains available for the pursuit of vital national interests, and treating normative concerns associated with constructing a more just and sustainable world order as falling outside the realm of politics as the art of the possible. In my view, ever since the advent of nuclear weaponry ‘realism’ as a practical ideology guiding diplomacy has been an anachronistic ideology that assumes intolerable risks, exaggerates the contributions of military capabilities to security (and insecurity), and deflects attention from grasping the new agenda of challenges, opportunities, and limits.5

Realism while being anachronistic is nevertheless robust and resilient with respect to governmental discourse and outlook, easily absorbing critiques without feeling great pressure to alter the structural nature of world order, or to modify its exaggerated reliance

---

4 Hedley Bull (1995) co-founder (along with Martin Wight) of the English School of International Relations is clearest in his view that world order is benefited by a pluralist view of order, and harmed by applications of a more solidarist conception, which he attributes to Grotius and his latter day heirs (See also Bull 1968; Wheeler 2000, 21-52; Aron 1966).

5 For excellent theoretical approach to security in its global setting see Booth 2007. For realist stress on the relevance of insecurity as foundational for security and instability, see Mearsheimer 2001; see also Mearsheimer 2006; Jervis 1976. On realist attempts to constrain the militarist sides of American foreign policy see Walt 2005; Gelb 2009.
on military approaches to problem-solving. To some extent, Europe since 1945 has moved impressively, if ambiguously, toward a somewhat demilitarized conception of its security, establishing a culture of peace to govern *internal* European relations. The ambiguity arises because its security against *external* threats to European security has been based on a comprehensive alliance with the United States, which has included a militarized, neo-imperial, and interventionary approach to global security. In my judgment, what is ‘feasible’ is insufficient to meet the world order challenges of the present period, even if realism takes some account of the new and changing global setting. Arguably, also, if feasibility was to be fully realistic in a fragile and complex world setting, it would be more disposed to accept as generally beneficial the constraints of international law in the context of foreign policy even for a hegemon, and to acknowledge the limits on military power as demonstrated by the collapse of colonialism and failure of military intervention in the post-colonial world.

At present, even the least militarist of realists are unwilling to recommend adherence to the norms of international law in relation to war/peace issues (see Walt 2005; Gelb 2009). When even the most liberal statespersons discuss foreign policy options, international law is rarely mentioned unless it can be invoked as supportive of a controversial geopolitical undertaking or to castigate an adversary. President Barrack Obama’s consideration of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan rested on the distinction between ‘wars of choice’ and ‘wars of necessity’ without ever bothering to justify the controversial engagement in Afghanistan by invoking international law or the United Nations.
What reformist pressure exists at inter-governmental levels is largely of a populist character that tends to surface in the aftermath of catastrophic breakdowns of global stability (see Ikenberry 2001). It exerts only temporary pressure and is inconsequential or trivial so far as overcoming the main anachronistic features of Westphalian structure and operational behavior. The litmus test of failure is associated with absence of a relevant political will to implement the prohibition of aggressive use of force that had been decreed by international law for the past 80 years. Without the pressure of a catastrophic breakdown that is harmful to dominant political actors the ideology of realism is likely to continue to shape prevailing ideas about what it is feasible to do. Given the risks associated with war, climate change, and an impending energy squeeze, such a horizon of feasibility has become dangerously dysfunctional from the perspective of intermediate-term human wellbeing and even species survival.

This conditioning circumstance invites pessimism, or a widespread conspiracy of psychological denial, the stubborn refusal of realism to see reality in relations to problems and a changing historical context, that is, according to the necessities posed,

---

6 The most dramatic power-war challenges to a pure Westphalian structure were undoubtedly the two experiments with global political institutions: League of Nations and United Nations. Careful examination shows the degree of deference to both sovereign prerogatives and geopolitical status evident in the practice of these organizations, but even in their constitutional arrangements (voting rules; veto power).

7 The ‘Pact of Paris’ (General Treaty Providing for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy) in 1928 made it unlawful to initiate any non-defensive war. This legal commitment was embodied in the UN Charter, Article 2(4), allowing for self-defense as narrowly defined in Article 51 to be the only exception. The prohibition of aggressive war was criminalized by the Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crimes Trials against surviving German and Japanese political and military leaders, but has been effectively constrained ever since by limits set by geopolitics despite the establishment of the International Criminal Court in 2002. Yet the non-discriminatory application of international criminal law to the leaders of dominant states seems as unlikely as ever by inter-governmental action. Only elements in global civil society seek to override geopolitics in relation to this norm prohibiting recourse to aggressive war. For serious illustration of a civil society initiative to implement the prohibition, see Sökhman ed. 2008.

8 I have tried to argue this case from a world order perspective in Falk (forthcoming 2010).
rather than through the familiar optic of feasibility. Since the problematic character of the contemporary global circumstance cannot be completely ignored, especially by the liberal wing of the realist consensus, secondary concerns emphasize the goal of stabilizing an increasingly anachronistic world order. These would include enhanced cooperation among states via the disaggregation of the territorial state, the containment of the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, the promotion of human rights, attention to the curtailment of greenhouse gas emissions by market measures. These are plausible initiatives, compatible with horizons of feasibility, and do not demand structural modifications in world order.

A critique of this enclosure of the political imagination can be offered from the perspective of horizons of necessity, which is conceiving of global policy from the perspective of what must be done at the earliest possible time to increase the prospects of human and humane survival and civilizational sustainability. It is from this standpoint that some argue that the political fragmentation of authority embedded in Westphalian, or even neo-Westphalian, systems needs to be overcome by establishing a form of world government with the capacity to regulate effectively the war system, and to impose a rule of law that constrains and sanctions the strong as well as the weak. Such a world government also presupposes the establishment of a global democracy with a mandate and capacity to lengthen cycles of political accountability now operative at the level of the sovereign state.

---

9. The ‘responsible’ domain of political discourse in liberal democracies is so delineated; elected leaders are expected to refrain from acknowledging imperial structures or considerations. Their mere mention is likely to brand the messenger as a radical voice to be excluded from policymaking venues. Elite gatekeeping ensures silence about structural impediments within governmental circles. There is a need not to know, and if known, certainly not to say in public space.

10. A notable attempt along these lines is that of Slaughter (2004).
As matters now stand, political leaders in the dominant countries depend for their legitimacy and support upon fulfilling short-term expectations that are not compatible with responding to the longer periods of adjustment required to meet 21st century agenda of global challenges. In essence, the horizon of necessity calls for a shift in the balance of influence between the *parts* and the *whole*, as well as between *short-term* political accountability and *intermediate* term (10-50 years) timelines. A defining feature of Westphalian world order is the sub-systemic dominance of the parts and of the present, complemented by the weakness of the whole or center and the failure to plan for the future. The lengthening of the time dimension for policymaking is less familiar but beginning to be understood within governmental and NGO circles, as suggested by the growing recognition of the needs and even the rights of future generations and by proposals for diminishing the likelihood of harmful climate change. But the prospects of this recent rhetoric of concern being translated into effective policy remains highly unlikely.

Additional to feasibility and necessity, there exist various horizons of desire, which incorporate some of the concerns about sustainability and survival, but also add a crucial emphasis on justice, human dignity, and even individual and collective happiness. A concern with justice is a matter of fairness that is particularly sensitive to severe deprivation of rights: poverty, oppression, gross inequalities. It is also offers a means of liberating the political and moral imagination to envisage a future for humanity that is dedicated to the fulfillment the potentials of all persons for a life of dignity (see Sen 2009; see also Rawls 1999; Pogge 2008; Sandel 2009). Positing happiness as a collective goal of humanity is an acknowledgement that there is more to a good life than being
treated fairly; conditions of beauty and cultural vitality are also public goods that seem eminently worthy of safeguarding and ensuring widespread availability in affordable forms. There is no doubt that many persons who are responsive to horizons of desire, favor the establishment as quickly as possible of world government usually in a federal or confederal form that relies on strict constitutionalism (checks and balances; separation of powers; substantive constraints) to limit the power of the leaders, and hopefully to contain risks of tyrannical abuses.

My own approach to the horizon of desire is much more conditioned by a bottom-up approach that stresses building normative democracy within states and other political communities on a municipal scale, while seeking to find nonviolent pathways to global democracy and global security. In essence, the advocacy of world government is almost certain to produce dystopic results until these preconditions of democratization and nonviolence are met. The European Union, to the extent that it has established a culture of peace within Europe and built a rights-based social contract for welfare and participation may be regarded to have partially satisfied the preconditions for the establishment of regional government. Such a development in Europe remains a project in the domain of desire, because popular support for such a dramatic centralization of authority within Europe does not exist at either grassroots or elite levels at this time.

It may be helpful to understand activities associated with the horizon of desire as thought experiments that reject the understanding of politics as the art of the possible, that is, as conditioned by horizons of feasibility. Given the way international relations is

---

11 I have stressed the importance of substantive democracy, and a bottom up approach to globalization animated by the wellbeing of peoples rather than top down prevailing approach shaped by the efficiency of capital and the interests of governmental elites (see Falk 1999; see also Archibugi 2008).
mainly understood by government officials and academic establishments, this deference to feasibility is expressed by an unconditional reliance on the realist paradigm of understanding and policymaking. This means that if guided by a practical problem-solving perspective, only a politics of impossibility has any hope at all of meeting the challenges embedded in the current global setting. As such, what is posited is a glaring disconnect between the domain of feasibility, realism, possibility and the domain of global problem formation, humane values, and the quest for global justice. Of course, the idea of ‘impossibility’ is to some extent polemical, confined to what it is possible to expect from governments and the existing political structures. What makes the impossible possible under certain conditions is the agency of civil society and populist politics, which is unacknowledged or ignored by governmental establishments and their more trusted academic interpreters.

It should be pointed out that the impossible happens rather frequently. Recent instances include decolonization, the American civil rights movement, the liberation of Eastern Europe, the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, and the election of an African American as president of the United States. All of these outcomes were impossible in the sense that few, if any, ‘responsible’ persons envisioned such results as feasible, and scoffed at proponents. Of course, after the fact, these responsible observers had many explanations to account for the outcomes previously neglected or dismissed as impossible.

*The Long Normative March*
My own intellectual/political journey was originally nurtured by an Enlightenment confidence that material and moral progress would inevitably follow from the modernist reliance on science, technology, and the guiding role of instrumental reason. To a degree this confidence was shattered by the cumulative impact of the destructiveness of World War II, and particularly the ominous implications for the future of warfare associated with the development of the atomic bomb. This concern was heightened by the growing awareness that the possessors of this technology were more committed to ensuring their geopolitical primacy than in making the world safer by renouncing this weaponry and working to achieve reliably verified disarmament.

The cold war atmosphere made it appear almost self-evident that the then-current world order was based on the sanctity of those competing sovereign states that possessed nuclear weaponry, and as such, was not likely to prove durable. This seemed especially true given the intense ideological rivalries and antagonistic nationalist perceptions of security, which emerged after World War II. Such a perspective was admittedly apocalyptic in tone, exhibiting anxieties about survival, both in the elemental physical sense but also with respect to the civilizational sense of modern urban life styles. So far, despite several close calls, these fears have not been realized, although the underlying set of circumstances persists even in the absence of serious strategic conflict among states.

Coupled with this earlier mood of anxiety was the conviction that even if the worst catastrophes were averted, the continuous preparation for a war fought with weapons of mass destruction would have a negative effect on the quality of collective life, would burden the efforts of poorer countries to develop, and would short circuit any
fundamental effort to live well together on the planet. In essence, so long as the wellbeing, and even the survival of the part, that is, the state, continue to be put ahead of the wellbeing of the whole, the world or life on the planet, it seems obvious that what global bonds of solidarity do exist are exceedingly weak. Not surprisingly these bonds have proved to be far too weak to overcome world poverty or gross disparities of wealth and resources. We continue to live in a world of statist narcissism, where in the extreme case, leaders of the nuclear-weapons states retain the capabilities and have declared a willingness to use their massive destructive power for the sake of national security.

It is against this background that my own journey has led from a stress on intellectual advocacy to a greater reliance on activist engagement, although the two kinds of nonviolent persuasive effort are not mutually exclusive. The advocacy was directed at persuading those who would pay attention that a transformative approach to global politics was needed to achieve safety, security, development, and justice for political actors and the peoples of the world in the nuclear and post-colonial age, and to make that approach compatible with a minimum set of widely shared values held in common by representatives of different civilizations and ideologies. The intention is to foster global scale collaboration where necessary, while encouraging regional, national, and local

---

12 Famously described by Thompson (1982, 41-79) in his essay on the detrimental effects on any society that rests its security on preparing to exterminate another society. On living well together, a phrase explored in illuminating ways by Jacques Derrida, see the edited collection of essays in Weber and Carlson, eds. (Forthcoming 2010).
13 For a somewhat feeble attempt to make the role of nuclear weaponry less omnicidal see Lieber and Press (2009).
14 The World Order Models Project with which I was associated for many years worked collaboratively within an agreed framework of four values: peace, economic wellbeing, social justice, ecological stability, and positive identity. No effort was made to establish measurable guidelines for these values, as their vagueness was a further deliberate attempt to safeguard space for civilizational and ideological diversity. For range of views reflected in the WOMP literature see Mendlovitz ed. (1975). For other attempts at depicting a minimum universalism as the basis for a just world order see Rawls (1999) and Sen (2009), as well as the writings associated with the World Parliament of Religions, especially of Hans Kün (1998). See also David Ray Griffin’s chapter, this volume.
diversities to the extent possible. These explorations in thought, premised on transnational interaction with likeminded scholars joined by their opposition to imperial, exploitative, and violent features of existing world order, had no impact on general public opinion and only a marginal influence on the outlook of academic specialists working within the domains of international relations and international law. In these fundamental respects, such scholarly efforts, while making a certain contribution within the domain of visionary thinking, lacked any agency with respect to promoting the desired transformations of world politics.

On this basis, the engagement as a citizen was more satisfying and seemed more productive of results. For at least a decade I was involved in the anti-war movement formed in reaction to the American intervention in Vietnam. Not only did this involvement have a nurturing effect by establishing communities of dedicated activists spread around the United States, and in Western Europe, but it provided an opportunity to experience injustice and one-sided violence from the perspective of the victim, which was especially a result of two visits to North Vietnam during the war. The issue of one-sided violence remains largely unexamined in the literature on either contemporary warfare or even international law, yet should be treated as a crucial component of any effort to frame international humanitarian law. American and Israeli operational tactics

---

15 Neither visit was authorized by the U.S. Government. They took place in 1968 and 1972, the first at the invitation of the Hanoi government to view the damage being done by the American air campaign, and the second to assist in escorting three American pilots who had been captured in North Vietnam back to the United States. Revealingly, I was invited prior to the 1968 visit to meet with two prominent Department of Defense officials, Leslie Gelb and Morton Halperin, to discuss the trip, and my willingness to deliver a letter jointly sent by the Secretaries of Defense and State at the time. I would have been entrusted with this mission on one condition, that I pledged not to engage in any further public criticism of the American war effort in Vietnam. Naturally, without hesitation, I refused, and still remain in the dark as to the contents of such a letter.
are illustrative of such one-sided warfare, in which the technologically dominant side chooses the degree of destruction to be inflicted with only slight concerns about retaliation. For this reason, such military violence resembles torture more than it does warfare between sovereign states of equivalent technological capacity.

Of course, the colonial conquests in Asia, Africa, and Americas were antecedents to modern forms of one-sided warfare, climaxing to date with the atomic attacks on the undefended cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Aside from these learning aspects of activism, the outcome of the Vietnam peace movement seemed to be a vindication of the popular struggle, and suggested that popular democracy was not futile in a modern state. Of course, subsequent militarizing developments, especially in the aftermath of 9/11, cancelled many of these hopeful understandings of the prospect for a more peaceful and just world order that followed from the Vietnam experience.

What did remain, however, was the sense that only a movement of peoples, informed by intellectual analysis, could have any prospect at all of challenging the established structures of statist and market power. As the cold war came to an end, the realities of these structural impediments to global reform became more evident as the dynamics of neoliberal globalization captured the public imagination in the 1990s. It was only the anti-globalization movement that seemed to grasp the true magnitude of the ethical and ecological challenges being posed by the championship of global economic growth based on making capital as efficient and profitable as possible (see Broad ed., 2002; Hardt and Negri 2005). In many ways the formation of global policy was shaped increasingly by a dialectical connection between the globalization-from-above operatives who gathered each year at Davos under the auspices of World Economic Forum, and
their populist counterparts who came together annually at the World Social Forum, most consistently meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil. It would be naïve to suggest that the populist and NGO ‘spirit of Seattle’ is now or in the foreseeable future in a position to challenge the agenda priorities and policy responses of geopolitical, statist, and corporate/financial forces.\textsuperscript{16} Their current role is to provide an awakening presence in crucial global policy forming venues, such as climate change and world trade meetings, which alerts an apathetic media and global public to the growing dangers and injustices being perpetrated by statist/market collaboration.

In view of this analysis, it is difficult to suppose that the Westphalian approaches to global problem-solving can rectify the existing deficiencies associated with the operations of the world economy or in relation to the menace of nuclear weaponry and climate change. This skepticism is reinforced by the ideological hegemony of neoliberal perspectives, which insist on relying on market solution to difficulties generated by an insufficiently regulated market. Furthermore, it would be premature to base our hopes on civil society activism given its lack of strength. Against this background it seems sensible to rethink the role of citizenship in the context of participatory democracy under these 21\textsuperscript{st} century circumstances. An obvious temptation is to recommend the adoption of the outlook of ‘a world citizen,’ thereby acknowledging the global scope of the policy problematique.

It is, of course, beneficial to weaken the nationalist bonds that view political reality through such a self-serving optic, but unless the affirmation of world

\textsuperscript{16} This skepticism does not even attempt to take account of the unconscious drivers of state policy or of the often sinister effects of what Peter Dale Scott (2007) has usefully depicted as ‘deep politics.’ I leave aside, despite their undoubtedly complex relevance, also the special problematics associated with the American global domination project that has ebbed and flowed ever since the end of World War II, followed by the collapse of the European overseas empires.
citizenship is organically linked to a transformative political project it falls into the Enlightenment trap of disembodied instrumental reason. For this reason I have favored an orientation toward citizenship that is animated by time as well as space, regarding the role of citizen to work toward a sustainable and just future, a work in progress specified as ‘humane global governance.’ I call this kind of citizen ‘a citizen pilgrim,’ conceiving of pilgrimage as a journey to a desired recreation of global governance that may or may not be attainable within the course of a lifetime (2009, 2002-07). Of course, there is no defining telos for the citizen pilgrim, as each horizon of aspiration reached will generate a new horizon. This commitment to recreation of governance implies an understanding of the ‘the political’ in the sense deployed by Sheldon Wolin as “the commitment to finding the common good”(2008, 66). As with the citizen pilgrim this conception of citizenship is normative and future-oriented.

To give a sense of direction, it is appropriate to identify tangible steps that could be taken by the citizen pilgrim to ensure that the recommended identity does not become a new age refuge for apolitical striving. Among the steps that seem valuable symbolically and substantively, the following can be mentioned for purposes of illustration: (1) the enactment of ‘a Tobin tax’ to fund at least partially the UN System and a global environmental fund to help economically disadvantaged and vulnerable countries meet the threats posed by global warming; (2) the establishment of a global parliament that

17 Wolin’s book is relevant also because of its powerful argument that even citizenship in its traditional sense has been emptied of influence within supposed democratic states. In other words, there is a crisis of democracy as it was expected to operate in a Westphalian world of delimited territorial sovereign states. Wolin writes of ‘consumer sovereignty’ and ‘stakeholder democracy’ that “gives a sense of participation without demands or responsibilities.” He asks provocatively, “What is the temptation of a democracy without citizens?”(65).

18 For the original proposal see Tobin (1978); see sophisticated support for proposal throughout the volume of essays edited by Deepak Nayyar (2002), especially, Amit Bhaduri’s chapter, “Nationalism and Economic Policy in an Era of Globalization,” 19-48, in particular 45-46.
is either attached to the UN or operates as an independent institution in the manner of the World Trade Organization;¹⁹ (3) the conversion of ‘Advisory Opinions’ of the International Court of Justice into binding decisions that impose legal obligations on all sovereign states.²⁰

A Concluding Observation

The argument of this chapter has been that an appropriate horizon for global governance cannot be achieved by relying on Westphalian strategies of adaptation, whether horizontally agreed upon by sovereign states or vertically conceived and imposed by hegemonic actors, possibly the G-2 (United States and China). Such means are beholden to nationalist and market priorities that seem incompatible with eliminating world poverty and nuclear weaponry, as well as adapting sufficiently rapidly to climate change and other environmental threats to avoid severe irreversible harm of massive proportions. The rhetoric of necessary reform will be invoked, but the constraints on behavior will be insufficient, and even these are unlikely to be upheld in practice or implemented. In effect, relying on the inter-governmental framework to fashion a sustainable global governance imaginary for the 21st century is a dead-end invitation to cynicism and nihilism.

²⁰ For instance, it would enhance the status of the rule of law applicable to states. As matters now stand states regard themselves as free to regard authoritative views as to legal duties. In one recent case, Israel felt no pressure to comply with a 14-1 advisory opinion of the World Court (2004) with respect to the unlawfulness of its construction of a wall on occupied Palestinian territory. Similar remarks apply to a decision on the legality of nuclear weapons (1996).
The activities and demands of transnational civil society networks are diverse, and variously contextualized, but share a sense of the political as preoccupied with achieving the common good. It is this normative orientation that is an essential component of a global governance imaginary that deserves the support of the peoples of the world. Such activist striving at present is not formidable enough to claim agency except to the extent of pushing the Westphalian actors to move slightly less slowly, but still not nearly fast enough, or attuned enough to the normative demands of global justice. This understanding leads to the encouragement of a more engaged citizenry in democratic societies that has historical confidence built on the record of past achievements of social change in struggles against slavery, racism, gender discrimination, colonialisms. These transformative developments in each instance involved challenges from below that combined moral passion and a willingness to make personal sacrifices by entering actively in the struggle against the established order. This orientation toward feelings, thought, and action is given political shape by positing the ideal of the ‘citizen pilgrim.’

We cannot know whether this visionary perspective will ever achieve the status of a viable political project. What we do know with reasonable assurance is that without such a political upheaval from below there will be insufficient movement in the direction of either planetary sustainability or global justice. We also know that what seems implausible from the outlook of now has often happened in history, for better and worse. Anticipating the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of China, the transformation of apartheid South Africa, and the 9/11 attacks only attained plausibility in retrospect. We also know that the unanticipated favorable outcomes did take place because of sacrifice and struggle, making it worthwhile to invest hopes and energies in a desired future, even if
we cannot be assured in advance that goals will be achieved. What can be affirmed, without equivocation, is the importance of a humane global imaginary responsive to ethical and ecological imperatives as understood in the year 2010.
Works Cited


