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GLOBALISM & NATIONALISM — THE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN OF SURVIVAL

Abstract: Globalism vs. nationalism is quickly evolving into one of the most pressing political challenges, especially in the Western world. Leaders everywhere need to find new ways of balancing out the dangers of internal discontent with the positive consequences of a greater involvement in global processes for security, stabilization and the prevention of conflicts. Constructive dialogue, with a thesis, antithesis and synthesis of new values, can help to turn this global challenge into a global opportunity.

Biopolicy and biodiplomacy view globalism and nationalism as the two sides of the same coin. Since all people belong to the body of humanity, differentiation in culture, color, tradition, or religion, is seen as an enrichment rather than a reason for division. The human body originates from one cell with the same genetic material. The original cell then divides, and, through gene expression, the cell differentiation process is achieved. Therefore, a human body forms with all its different parts being interdependent. Every part is necessary and no part can function independently because unity and interconnectedness are the essence of a harmonious and healthy body.

In the same manner, nationalism can provide a solid basis for building cohesive communities that maintain their distinct identity and contribute to the plurality and diversity of a global citizenry. Globalism can expose us more frequently and in more variations to the differences, but also to the great similarities, that surround us. We need to draw inspiration from both our differences and similarities and build a new paradigm, a new vision, that will lead to harmony and peace.

Key words: *biopolicy, biodiplomacy, identity*

ANSWERING TO THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISM VS. NATIONALISM — THE BIOPOLICY PERSPECTIVE

The rapid progress of technology has brought about an era of massive change. Distances have shortened and the science of communication has advanced to new levels. We now have the power to decipher the book of knowledge at unprecedented speeds.

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IT has made communication across the globe easier, quicker and more reliable, providing a *different perspective of time and space*. The Internet drives social and cultural globalization, making the *flow of ideas and information* increasingly accessible.

Propelled by this unprecedented technological surge, globalization is perceived as a cultural melting pot, resulting in a loss of identity at the national and individual level, and in unforeseen threats, many times driven by outside forces. The division between globalists and nationalists is quickly evolving into one of the most important political disagreements within many nations and communities. The two sides believe they have insurmountable differences that can only be solved by long and difficult processes, as demonstrated by the brush between globalists and nationalists which is becoming increasingly common within and across many nations, particularly in the Western world. But this divide may be bridged if both sides can appreciate the value of differentiation and interdependence.

Globalization is a phenomenon with ancient roots and has been proceeding for many centuries through cross-border trade, investment, and cultural exchange. As with all human endeavors, it is strongly affected by the values and motivation of the people involved in the process. In theory, globalism should benefit all people because it promotes unity and cohesion. However, the emergence of new risks and security challenges that cannot be addressed through conventional defense mechanisms makes the attainment of such unity and cohesion increasingly difficult. A complete disengagement from the process of globalization would jeopardize security and stability across the globe. Therefore, the dilemma for the majority of decision-makers today is how to continue benefiting from globalization while minimizing its risks.

The emerging challenge for leaders everywhere is to balance out the dangers of internal discontent with the positive consequences of a greater involvement in global processes for security, stabilization and the prevention of conflicts. Through constructive dialogue, with a thesis, antithesis and synthesis of new priorities, they need to search for a new vision.

LEADERSHIP WITH A VISION

The world increasingly shares problems and dilemmas that do not obey nation-state borders, most notably pollution, climate change, poverty, and disease. The crisis in values experienced across the globe has resulted in tumultuous waves which have created massive imbalances. Global warming is leading to huge and unprecedented risks for humanity. Chemical warfare is creating new weapons that can cause mass destruction at great distances and in completely unpredictable ways with very little expenditure of effort. Unemployment and migration, both internal and external, are posing extensive threats to security and social cohesion that are only now beginning to unfold.

In the light of these pressing challenges, strong anchors like faith, language, culture, and tradition, have to be reassessed and re-examined. They constitute the beauty and richness of humanity and need to be protected and maintained. The

appreciation of cultural and natural diversity can lead to a deeper understanding of how interdependent we are with each other and, therefore, to mutual respect. We can draw inspiration from this interdependence and apply human potential and creativity to avoid the traps of extremism and fanaticism, which have become a universal threat of sweeping proportions.

BIODIPLOMACY — VALUING DIVERSITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

The precious gift of *bios* — life — has the potential to help us exit the crisis in values that is placing the future of humanity in jeopardy. We exist as a small speck in the universe. Instead of considering every neighbour as a threat and breeding discontent in order to annihilate each other, we need to acknowledge the value of diversity, recognizing the unique attributes of all cultures. When genuine acknowledgement, appreciation of, and interest in diversity is experienced, respectful relationships develop.

The common threat of climate change can provide the opportunity for joint action, allowing biodiplomacy — international cooperation in environmental protection — to flourish. Biodiplomacy mobilizes all nations to commit themselves to mitigating climate change and, through media and education channels, seeks to involve every individual on the planet in the fulfilment of this global campaign. Biodiplomacy promotes interdependence and collaboration and focuses on the value of differentiation. Differences in religion, culture, language and biodiversity are the wealth of humanity. Just as all the parts of the human body need to function together in harmonious coordination to maintain a healthy individual, modern society desperately needs a common vision to secure a harmonious and peaceful future.

Since all people belong to the body of humanity, differentiation in culture, color, tradition, or religion, should be seen as an enrichment rather than a reason for division. The human body originates from one cell with the same genetic material. The original cell then divides, and, through gene expression, the cell differentiation process is achieved. Therefore, a human body forms with all its different parts being interdependent. Every part is necessary and no part can function independently because unity and interconnectedness are the essence of a harmonious and healthy body.

Similarly, all human beings belong to the same genus and to the same species. We all have the same genetic material which, through differentiation and growth, has developed into the body of humanity, where all humans are interdependent. These common roots constitute not only the body of humanity, but also the body of bios, for we are interconnected with all forms of life. The abundance of species, from microorganisms, to plants, to animals, to humans, reveals this interdependence and the wealth we possess as a result of the awe-inspiring process of differentiation. Bios rights and human rights blend and can coexist in the revelation of the beauty and harmony of the essential building blocks of life. The appreciation of this revelation conveys a strong sense of joy and responsibility to cherish the gift we have been blessed with.

ENHANCING CULTURAL INCLUSIVENESS

Economic and social changes brought about by globalization are forcing us to revolutionize our approach to education. Education can serve as a beacon of hope by uplifting values and providing the needed guidelines on how to cope with the challenges of the future. It is not an easy task to formulate these challenges, since individual characteristics and differences need to be maintained and national and global priorities reassessed with deep respect for the richness provided by millennia of evolution.

But the greatest loss is the loss of time. When we view globalism and nationalism as diverging pathways, we waste precious time and lose sight of the proper priorities. By leaning towards one or the other direction, we acquire a limited viewpoint that is prone to exploitation. Education and the media are the tools necessary to engage society in knowledge-sharing, encouraging respectful discourse that leads to mutual understanding and builds the skills needed to participate in a global citizenry.

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM BIOS

In trying to strike a balance between globalism and nationalism, humanity can draw inspiration from bios. Over-consumerism and the survival of the fittest need be put aside as we discover the beauty and harmony of every aspect of the expression of life on our planet. Creativity in the sciences is leading to ostensible leaps of progress but the time is ripe to involve every citizen of the planet in the building of a brighter future.

The arts have to be involved also. Not only by drawing inspiration from the cosmos, but also from the *microcosmos*, the world of the unseen, the world of cells and molecules. The miracle of life provides the need for a newfound respect for the precious gift we possess. We need to be impressed by the ethereal beating of the butterfly's wings, but also by the trillions of chemical reactions that make this movement possible. Respect and awe can provide the strength to build new forms of expression in the arts that can serve as a unifying force not only among humans, but among all forms of life.

BALANCING NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Globalism and nationalism have both positive and negative aspects and it is the balance between them that best upholds prospects for peace and stability. Globalism does not diminish the importance of nationalism. Nationalizing and globalizing forces can be complementary rather than contradictory, with both actors accepting and even promoting their differing objectives.

Terrorism, which thrives on isolation and insecurity, is an international game to provide excuses for the control of every aspect of human existence. National leadership therefore matters greatly in providing the right conditions and stimuli for the appreciation of diversity. By forging a sense of solidarity, nationalism

can motivate a sense of interdependence and belonging across the entire international community. Moreover, global cultural wealth comes from national contributions. Each national culture contributes uniquely to the diversity of human cultures, and it is essential for cultural communities to be revitalized. This is a “genuine” profit for humanity.

The acute problems of lack of employment and lack of resources can only be addressed through a global plan of action. Greed and short sighted policies have resulted in excessive exploitation of the Earth’s resources. Since enormous wealth has accumulated in the hands of a few, often exceeding the combined worth of many nations, it becomes evident that we have to convince the top 1% of the world’s economic leaders that saving biodiversity, restoring the oceans’ CO₂ absorbing capacity, and protecting ecosystem services are urgent priorities that can stimulate growth and lead to millions of jobs globally. Multibillionaires could see this as a unique opportunity to take on a role of global responsibility by spearheading efforts that contribute to the common good.

Photosynthesis is also a global issue. If humanity is to avoid a future in which deadly heat waves, floods, and droughts become normal, we must lower the levels of carbon dioxide CO₂ in the atmosphere, and one of the most promising means of extracting atmospheric CO₂ is also one of the most common processes on Earth: photosynthesis. As the repercussions of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans reach far beyond national borders, wider stakeholder engagement must be encouraged in order to shift policies in ways that deliver cost-effective responses to climate change and increase political will for broader actions.

A MILLENNIUM PARADIGM

Leaders need to coordinate their efforts to implement policies that ensure the continuity of life with the participation of every individual on our planet. The number one priority is to overcome the crisis in leadership and to understand how small our globe is. A campaign with a millennium vision to save life is dependent on cooperation and can result in greater accountability and responsiveness of leaders to their people.

Nationalism can provide a solid basis for building cohesive communities that maintain their distinct identity and contribute to the plurality and diversity of a global citizenry. Globalism can expose us more frequently and in more variations to the differences, but also to the great similarities, that surround us. We need to draw inspiration from both our differences and similarities and build a new paradigm, a new vision, that will lead to harmony and peace.

Harmony

*With wings of the soul
 I touch the golden waves of infinity
 around, heavenly beauty like light
 sparkles rays with colours of flowers
 whispers the soil, awakens the earth
 not like a mother, just like a daughter
 of the cycle of wear
 and the infinite of the eternal
 the melody of the universe
 is surrounded by the rhythm of harmony*

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 Oscillations, A Collection of Poems, 1983*

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