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News, Information and Views

From time to time we publish articles that are relevant to current affairs. The following by Sir Ronald Sanders may be of some interest to you.

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WHAT WORLD IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY?

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In the evolving international order today, we are witnessing an attempt to usurp world governance by a handful of governments. These governments are seeking to impose their will on the world through alliances with vested interests (such as multinational oil companies, and large financial institutions) and enforcing it through what they call “pre-emptive attacks” on states who resist their dictation.

In this new evolving world order, the United Nations – the only universal world body – is sidelined. Policy and

rules are made in organisations controlled by the powerful few. These organisations include the IMF, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Amazingly, in the age of “globalisation” the one thing that the powerful governments of the world do not want globalised is governance.

The cover for their system of “governance” is called “The war on terrorism”. In its name, the right to self-determination of the people of Chechnya is trampled by Russia, the Israelis brutalise the Palestinians, Iraq is open to invasion and Iran and North Korea wait their turn.

Robert Cooper, an official of the European Union, actually argues that “when dealing with more old

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fashioned kinds of states outside the post-modern continent of Europe, we (the rich and powerful states) need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attacks, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the 19th century world of every state for itself”.

At a less dramatic level, Argentina and Brazil are held hostage by the IMF and World Bank, and small states, such as Antigua and Barbuda, are terrorised by the OECD and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) over their financial services which threaten the supremacy of the rich nations. They either comply with the demands of the handful of dictator states or they face sanctions.

Cooper also seriously puts forward the proposition that small states, such as Antigua and Barbuda, should engage in “a voluntary movement of self-imposition” in which they “open themselves up to the interference of international organisations and foreign states” if they wish to participate in, and benefit from, the international community. A kind of voluntary colonialism, if you like.

The point is that, through one mechanism or another, the world is being governed by rules and policies

made and enforced by a few. And, the theology of such a world has well placed advocates like Cooper.

It is a world in which more than half the population is forced to exist on less than US\$2 a day. It is a world in which 10 per cent of the population enjoy 80% of its resources. It is a world in which the terms of trade are dictated by the powerful to the detriment of the weak. It is a world that perpetuates and widens the gap between the few who are rich and prosperous and the many who are poor and helpless.

Only the naïve would believe that such a world will survive in peace and prosperity.

Throughout the world, people are angry and embittered that they have no say in the way in which their lives are affected. Little wonder, therefore, that there are cells of people across the globe willing to give up their lives to hit back at what they see as injustice.

It should be obvious to any student of history that as “governance” increasingly becomes the domain of a few powerful governments, the disenchanted and disaffected will undermine, subvert and disrupt this new system.

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Slaves rebelled against slavery. Colonies rose up against colonialism. The exploited resisted exploitation. People everywhere wanted their own voice and they fought for that voice to be heard and respected.

The United Nations was created with the promise that those voices would be heard and would participate in a chorus of consensus. It held out the hope that, through reasoned debate and discussion, the world would advance within a framework of agreed rules equally applicable and equally enforced.

Both the promise and the hope have now been dashed.

The rule of law is being discarded, and in its place the law of the bully—even the lawless—is being perpetrated. In turn, this process is promoting resistance and rebellion. The sum total will surely be a world that is so divided that it sinks first into chaos and then into catastrophe.

Some say it is a clash of civilizations. And they crudely translate that clash as Islam against the West. Those who do so miss the point that the exploited and oppressed are not only Muslims. The Muslim dimension is created by the propaganda effort of

the powerful who demonise those that they seek to subjugate.

It is happenstance that, on this occasion, the object of their subjugation is mostly Muslims. But, before the Muslims it was Jews in Hitler's Germany, Africans in the slave trade, indigenous Indians in the quest to seize the Americas, and labour indentured from India and transplanted in servitude to the rich.

None of this is to say that there are not unacceptable dictatorships and the vilest abuse of human rights in States around the world, among them the despicable Saddam Hussein of Iraq and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il. But, is it not strange that alliances were once formed and maintained between some of these same dictators and the powerful who now seek to crush them? Is it not odd that the blemishes in these dictators were not recognised and proclaimed when they served the purposes of the powerful?

These dictators and the abuse of their own people should be dealt with firmly. A strengthened and reformed United Nations was the place to start with sanctions and isolation. It should be a United Nations whose security Council is more representative of the world than it is;

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a Security Council that adheres to international law democratically made and democratically enforced through an appropriate well-resourced United Nations body.

Then, the International Criminal Court would have been the place to bring the offenders to justice. But, the currency of the Court has been devalued and its standing seriously compromised. By withdrawing from the Treaty establishing the Court and refusing to subject its citizens to its jurisdiction, the government of the United States shattered any prospect of a Court to which all in the world could readily subscribe.

Instead, we are faced with a world in which the police, the Judge and the executioner are embodied in the powerful alone. They alone make the laws, decide on the guilty, determine the penalty, and carry out the sentence.

It is a world of the "wild west". In such a world, there will be much rebellion and little peace. Discord not accord will be the order of the day, and human progress will be its casualty. Those who prosper will do so only for a time and only at a high price. They will lock themselves into fortresses from which they will prohibit all entry and deny themselves exit.

There are already signs, of this. The United States has introduced stringent rules for entering that country and states in Europe have turned their ports of entry into revolving doors for deporting people. In addition, US citizens are now fearful of travel and are remaining at home, adversely affecting tourism

In the meantime, those outside will have nothing to lose in their attempts to bring the fortresses down.

Is that the world of the 21st Century, or will rationality return to the councils of the powerful?

There are many enlightened and progressive people in the governments and societies of the rich states and the poorer ones. We must hope that, at a point in the not too distant future, their voices will again be heard, and their good sense will prevail. ☐

The views expressed in this article are those of the writer. Debate on the content of the article is encouraged.

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