

He Yafei

GLOBAL CHOICE

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Preface One

by Li Zhao-xing, Former Foreign Minister of China

After reading the manuscript from mid-night to wee-hours, it occurred to me that man, country and the world are all parts of history and tangible. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, whenever they interact, are all connected, nothing really is accidental.

Mr. He Yafei, author of the book was born in the year 1955 of Bandung Conference (hence his name Yafei, meaning Asia and Africa in Chinese) and had served as a diplomat for many years in Africa and at the Department of African Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. He therefore has a deep appreciation of the glory of hard-won African Independence.

About 20 years ago, he served as counselor for Security Council Affairs in China's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and knew the UN Charter by heart. And around 1999, he was posted in Washington as Minister-Counselor and later Minister (DCM) of the Chinese Embassy. In that capacity, he assisted me, the Ambassador, in China's stern presentations to the US side on the issue of Taiwan as well as after US bombing of Chinese Embassy in Former Yugoslavia. Afterwards he continued his service in diplomacy as Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China and then China's Ambassador to the UN system in Geneva with his endless love for peace and justice both bilaterally and multilaterally.

To my happy surprise, after assuming the position of Deputy Minister for Overseas Chinese Affairs under the State Council, he again devoted himself to the pressing issues such as finance, economics, food, water, energy, environment,

climate change and immigration, exploring possibilities of improving global governance without “world police”, “world government” and “G2”.

The author firmly believes in Communism. Karl Marx said in “1844 Manuscript of Political Economy” that the essence of communism should include “the real solution to the contradiction between men and between man and nature...” (from Volume I of Anthologies of Marx and Engels). Marx also pointed out in his “Critique of the Gotha Programme” that Communism is multi-staged whose advanced stage is a long-term objective (from Volume III of Anthologies of Marx and Engels).

Sure-footed, the author proffered global governance objectives taking into account of both historical progress and current heavy burdens, i. e. changes brought about by globalization, information revolution and an ever more multi-polar world which he believes is governed by an imperfect international political, economic, financial and media order. He advocates a forward-looking and positive approach in global governance with history as our guide. He hopes for a better world order based on the principles of national sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs and win-win cooperation which will surely provide a better place for ordinary folks and global eco-system. I understand that what is said by General-Secretary Xi Jinping of the Communist Party of China about the Party's goal being rooted in people's aspiration for a better life is certainly true both at home and abroad.

The book's ideas and materials are quite extensive. In essence it urges countries to love peace, uphold justice and do good things. The author uses his own experiences and takes China, the biggest developing country that goes for peaceful and sustainable development, as an example, to illustrate his main simple point. If all countries, especially big ones, could follow China's example, the developing world will enjoy higher per capita income, peoples all over the world will be happier and more united, the earth a fitter place to live.

International organizations, government institutions should emulate man in pursuing better governance all the time just as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a

fellow townsman of Karl Marx, said in his play "Faust". More appropriately as Zhang Side, Lei Feng, Jiao Yulu and Kong Fansen, all heroes under Chairman Mao had done, these institutions both national and international, should try their very best to reach these goals one step at a time.

By reading this book, one will be in a better position to practice five principles of peaceful co-existence and more determined in their pursuit of China Dream. Should the book lead to some debate, it is even better in so far as it will increase the interests in further study of the issues raised in the book.

Preface Two

by Professor Yuan Ming, Vice President of the
Institute of International Studies of Peking University

It gives me a great deal of food for thoughts after reading “China’s Historical Choice”. A century ago, WWI broke out and the main battle field and center of conflict was in Europe. The War spread to over 30 countries in Asia and Africa and inflicted sufferings to more than one billion people. The Chinese people at that time were in a deep pit of internal rife and external aggression and were in no position to even think of “global governance”. One hundred years have passed and the world has undergone fundamental changes of which the most important being the rise of China that became the center of attention of the world and most shining moment in human development.

However, the world now is certainly far from tranquil with structural problems in global political and economic affairs and those deep-rooted issues of culture, society, nationality and religion in international relations have come to surface. Many time-honored issues that have produced derivatives of new variation have come back to haunt us. As mankind is assaulted by both new and old problems in this age of internet, what should we do to survive and make the world a better place? Global governance is essentially an issue of order. What should we, as Chinese, do to contribute to global governance with our wisdom, experiences, tolerance and courage?

The author Mr. He Yafei has been my friend for many years who has a very good command of foreign affairs and wide perspectives on global issues. In his office that I frequented there was an English-Chinese Dictionary with dog-eared pages. On many an international forum, I witnessed him speaking in accurate and beautiful English expressing to audience the messages from China. In 2010, Yafei was appointed to be Chinese Ambassador to the UN Organizations in Geneva. Before the assumption of the office, I bid him farewell by quoting an ancient Chinese poem for his encouragement, "Journey ends when the river is no more and sit to see clouds surface on the horizon". Because Europe is no simple continent, what we are seeing today in global governance theory and practices are mostly from its long history. In academic circle, we often use "knowledgeable of both east and west" to describe a scholar's wide range of knowledge. Indeed there are many diplomats with long years of experiences who have realized "reading ten thousand books and traveling ten thousand miles". Their experiences and wisdom have gone way ahead of "knowledgeable of both east and west".

At present, many people of wisdom in China are pondering the big issue of world order. This book by Yafei comes at an opportune moment and rides the tide of history. The author has had personal experiences of G20 at its inception and been at many important multilateral and bilateral international negotiations. In his long years of diplomacy he has gotten to know many heavy weights in international strategic studies and done in-depth studies of quite a few international political and economic issues. Now He writes out the stories and adds analysis in the big historical framework of "global governance" to my great admiration.

Global governance is a huge issue. "China's Historical Choice" is a Chinese voice after rational consideration. I expect Yafei not only to present the book to Chinese readers, but also introduce it to wider readership in the world with his good command of English. The world needs China's voice. It is for China and for mankind as well.

Preface Three

by Kevin Rudd, Former Prime Minister of Australia

He Yafei speaks with great authority on the deficiency of the multilateralism. I worked with him when he was a G20 Shepherd. His insight on the future of the system is of importance to all of us.

As He Yafei said: “mankind has been witnessing the most fundamental changes in global structure and international relations demonstrated in world multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversification, societal informationization and deepening industrialization and urbanization”. There is now a global demand to deal with global problems through more effective forms of global governance, and it is indeed “China’s historical choice and the choice of China by history”.

Preface Four

by Klaus Schwab, Founder and
Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum

To develop a peaceful and cooperative global system, we must first accept that we are living in a multipolar world with diverse political systems and cultural origins. Whatever the nature of the system, we know that political, economic and social developments are interconnected. This means that the big challenges of humankind, such as pollution, food security, job creation and so many others, call for collaborative efforts by political leaders along with business and other leaders of society at large. To define issues and solve problems, we must integrate the most relevant decision-makers and the best minds from all parts of society. This basic concept—the “multistakeholder” concept that I developed in 1971—is useful not only at the national level, but at the global level in particular.

Today we have a globalized, interconnected and fast-moving world. At the same time, we have an international governance system that still mirrors the old world and reflects outdated power structures that are struggling to cope with the realities of the 21st century. The gap between the sophisticated nature of today's challenges and the capabilities of an antiquated system has also led to a situation where the majority of time is being spent on crisis management rather than on shaping the future in a sustained, strategic and holistic manner. This is even more necessary in a world where we face profound geopolitical and geoeconomic transformations and which demands that we master the consequences of disrup-

tive technologies, adapt economies to undergoing fundamental changes, meet the needs of greater environmental responsibilities, and respond to the trend of ageing populations.

We have to reform and renew our official global system, including its traditional organizations, such as the UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO, among others. But we must also recognize that in today's "networked" world, flexible mechanisms can support and complement the governance system to define complex issues, search for solutions and work together to address specific needs.

To manage such multistakeholder communities—incorporating the public and private sectors—requires curating organizations which, by themselves, act as independent and impartial catalysts and integrators of such purpose-oriented networks.

The World Economic Forum, based on its 45-year experience of pioneering multistakeholder cooperation, has been officially recognized as an International Institution to serve as a platform for global initiatives which are not necessarily embedded within the official framework.

The Forum differs from many global NGOs in that it serves as an independent and impartial platform, committed to its mission of "improving the state of the world". By being equally well-rooted in the public system as it is in the global business community, the Forum has a track record of generating ideas and proposals in the global public interest.

The future of international cooperation will see an increase in the number of conferences and the scope of digital engagement. Face-to-face interaction is necessary to develop a consensus or to agree or disagree, and in the latter case, at least to define the common interest. Digital cooperation ensures sustainability and permanent interaction. The Forum has been a leader in the adaptation of new technologies for global interaction. It puts its expertise and capabilities at the service of all global actors and thus contributes to more effective international communication.

In China's Historical Choice, He Yafei rightly states that China should take

an active and constructive role in fostering global cooperation. It should do so aware of the fact that greater political and economic power today entails greater co-ownership in managing the global commons. China has demonstrated its responsibility to take on its fair share in global governance by being an active participant in international bodies such as the G20, by insisting on reform proposals for existing institutions like the IMF, and by initiating new mechanisms such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In a world that is changing so rapidly and in which formal structures are outpaced by the opportunities and threats of the latest developments, China has a great potential to shape global, regional and industry agendas by being an engaged partner of global, flexible and influential multistakeholder networks.

Preface Five

by Pascal Lamy, Former Director-general of the WTO

In today's tribe of internationalists, my good friend He Yafei is no ordinary pundit. Having spent part of his career in the engine room of various multilateral diplomatic postings, he knows how the system works. Having also served as a deck officer, assessing the force and the direction of the economic and political winds and currents of globalisation, he knows how the system should work. This is a rare combination of qualities.

Hence the value, importance, and novelty of his plea for his country, China, to devise its own global governance strategy. "Global governance is the path China has to traverse to become a truly global power", as he puts it. His diagnostic, i. e. that global governance is too weak to properly address the new cooperation challenges stemming from globalisation, is not necessarily new. But he argues it convincingly, and highlights many of the shortcomings and pitfalls of the present international institutional hardware.

But hardware problems are not the greatest of the challenges to be faced, even if adjusting the existing bodies to the significant and ongoing global rebalancing—as epitomized by the rise of China—is slow and painful. The real problems lies elsewhere because, as He Yafei puts it rightly, "global governance is mutual governance". In this sense, improving global governance is mostly a software, and not a hardware issue. It has to do with values.

As we all know, the present software of the international system is of Western origin. Western ideology. Western philosophy. Is this sufficient reason to re-

ject it out of hand? Certainly not. But nor can it be taken for granted—not least because American and European ethics differ in more than just nuances. Hence the necessity to submit a new, modern international cooperation software to the scrutiny of different wisdom, belonging to different cultures and traditions.

This is where He Yafei breaks new ground in sketching how China's values, such as harmony, can help to build new concepts underpinning an improved global governance for the future. Let's hope that this attempt will attract the attention it deserves, and trigger new conversations between established and new powers. Preserving world peace in the next decades will necessitate some sort of re-embedding of geoeconomics and geopolitics, to use Polanyi's words. He Yafei opens such a possibility. Credit to him.

Author's Foreword

1. “Beijing Consensus” vs “Washington Consensus”

National Governance is a concept familiar to most people. The modernization of China's national governance capability and system is explicitly mentioned as part of comprehensive reform measures in the official document of the 3rd Plenum of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Good governance is needed at national level. It is without any doubt required at global level too for the simple reason that there isn't even remotely possible to have a “world government”.

Global governance is about how to govern and set rules for the world we live in. It includes international organizations of all kinds, both bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements, universally accepted international laws and norms of international practices all of which constitute the global governance system. Nation states are part of this system and more or less accept or respect it.

Global governance came into being quite early as man began to form societies, but its maturity came much later in modern times as globalization spread all over the world.

China as an open and large economy as well as a global power is a major participant and player in this system. As China moves to the world center, we must pay much more attention to global governance and its related issues.

I have some personal experiences to share with readers that will illustrate the importance of global governance for China and at the same time offer a window

for readers to peer into the deep recess of global governance.

One story unfolded in November 2009. Beijing was already in early winter while Singapore where APEC leaders had their annual informal meeting was still hot and humid. In the Ritz Carlton Hotel where Chinese Delegation stayed, a heated negotiation was continuing very late one evening in one of the conference rooms, Mr. Jeff Bader, the Chief US negotiator, a petite figure with a sharp mind and perfect Chinese, uncommon in the American Administration, rubbed his bleary-eyes and said to me (I was leading the Chinese team), "Yafei, it seems another long night is ahead for us." The focus of the negotiation was the draft of a joint communiqué between China and the United States in the up-coming visit to China by President Obama.

The negotiation had gone on for some time from Beijing to Washington and then Singapore, later on would move to Shanghai and Beijing as President Obama's first visit to China would start next day in Shanghai. The joint communiqué would be the fifth bilateral document between China and the US to charter a new road-map for future bilateral relations. We had just settled on the wording for bilateral cooperation in Asia-Pacific and immediately got stuck in how to define that relationship.

A simple definition, yet it had puzzled diplomats and politicians of both countries ever since the two countries established diplomatic relations in early 1979. Friends or enemies? Partners or competitors? Definitions vary with different periods in Sino-US relations.

For several decades, the US has defined this relationship as "neither friend nor foe", a funny nomenclature for such an important relationship. It seemed to be a smart description to American politicians who believe that it gave them the necessary "strategic ambiguity". This ambiguity might come in handy as two countries have so much common interests both bilaterally and multilaterally even if their strategic orientations are different and there are many differences on quite a few issues. Recently the US is inclined to ditch such ambiguity by taking sides in the maritime disputes between China and some of her neighbors like Japan, Vi-

etnam and the Philippines. As is known, policy goes with definition and certainly there has been no lack of policy changes on the part of the US.

Now back to the joint communiqué. There was no way one could avoid any definition in the communiqué. The key was what it was, partners or competitors? If it was the former, how to describe it? Believe it or not, how to define the relationship is by no means of little consequence because it involve the fundamental issue of assessing the strategic intention of each other which will impact policy options each so chooses.

No matter what is the assessment, there has been one constant in the relationship borne out by thirty-odd years of formal diplomatic relations, namely China and the US enjoy extensive common interests both bilaterally and in tackling global challenges. The cooperation has bonded two countries in common interests and brought about huge dividends to both peoples and the world as a whole.

After repeated consultations, we finally came to agree the draft communiqué. On November 17th of 2009, China and the US issued the joint communiqué on the occasion of President Obama's first visit to China. It stressed that "China and the United States have an increasingly broad base of cooperation and share increasingly important common responsibilities on many major issues concerning global stability and prosperity", "The two sides reiterated that they are committed to building a positive, cooperative and comprehensive China-US relationship for the 21st century, and will take concrete actions to steadily build a partnership to address common challenges." The language maybe a bit long-winded, what is expressed is clear, indicating that China and the US are partners whose cooperation is mainly on global governance, namely coping with global challenges.

Ever since 1990s, mankind has been witnessing the most fundamental changes in global governance structure and international relations demonstrated in multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversification, information revolution, deepening industrialization and urbanization. Mankind has engaged in exploring "new frontiers" such as outer space and deep seabed. These changes