Chapter 4
Problems and challenges

In earlier chapters I have concentrated on providing the reader with a guide to the main actors in international relations, their roles, and their relative influence. It is now time to switch our attention to some of the key problems and challenges which confront the whole international community or large parts of it. I should add that I am excluding national disasters which do not result from human actions, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the devastating tsunami of December 2004 which killed an estimated 150,000 people. It is true that in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami very large numbers of deaths could have been avoided if there had been a sophisticated tsunami warning system of the kind that covers the Pacific. It is also true that much could have been done to improve the speed and coordination of international humanitarian assistance in such natural disasters. However, all the problems and challenges I shall be briefly surveying result, whether by accident or design, from human activity, and because of this it is at least theoretically possible that by changing some aspects of human behaviour we might succeed in considerably reducing or at least in mitigating the problem.

I have chosen to focus on global issues not because I can offer any easy solutions but because even a brief overview reveals the huge complexity of the challenges and the difficulties facing

policy makers in their efforts to tackle them. Moreover, we should remember that our political leaders face some or all of these problems simultaneously. Given that resources are finite, how do we decide which problems require the highest priority? Perhaps without fully realizing it, our political leaders are often forced back into operating a kind of triage policy based purely on the basis of expedience. Should decisions about priorities be made on the basis of certain moral principles? If so, who is to make the ultimate decision? Which moral principles are to be employed, and on whose authority? And to whom, if anybody, are the decision makers to be held accountable? It would be foolish to underestimate the difficulties that arise for all those involved in the real world pressures of policy making, decision making, and crisis management.

In view of the intractability of the problems I am about to consider, it ill becomes academic specialists to sidestep the tough normative and policy issues involved. I have been greatly encouraged to find that the university students I have been privileged to teach find the normative and policy issues the most intellectually demanding and absorbing aspects of our subject. The reader should not be surprised to find that there will be a brief review of the search for solutions in the discussion of each of the major challenges to the international community.

The threat to environmental security from global warming

When the sun's heat reaches Earth a mixture of gases surrounding our planet acts as a filter. This layer of gases acts rather like glass in a greenhouse, with the result that it prevents too much heat getting through and too much heat escaping. Scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – another IGO – have concluded that an increase in these 'greenhouse gases' is leading to too much heat being trapped near the earth's surface. They have termed this phenomenon 'global warming'.

The vast majority of scientists engaged in the study of the world's climate agree with the IPCC's conclusion that global warming is happening, that the most important of the gases which are intensifying the 'greenhouse effect' is carbon dioxide (CO_2), and that the major cause of global warming is the enormous increase in carbon emissions which have resulted from human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels by heavy industry, emissions from aircraft and motor vehicles, power stations, and domestic heating systems.

The countries responsible for most of these carbon emissions in the past were those which experienced the industrial revolution in the late 18th and 19th centuries and which have been contributing massively to the build-up of greenhouse gases ever since. However, today we are witnessing the very rapid industrialization of developing countries. For example, China, which has a population of over one and a quarter billion, relies on coal for 75 per cent of its energy resources. India, also with a population of over one billion, is going down a similar route of rapid industrial expansion, inevitably involving the burning of huge amounts of fossil fuels. Yet, how can the developed countries expect countries such as China and India to put a brake on the economic growth they so badly need to support their huge and rapidly growing populations?

It is even harder for the older industrial countries of the West to ask countries such as China and India to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions when the richest and biggest economy in the world, the US, is responsible for around 50 per cent of the world's carbon emissions and when the Bush administration has rejected the commitments made in the Kyoto Protocol (1997), when political leaders agreed to cut average CO_2 emissions by 5.2 per cent of 1990 levels by 2010. European countries agreed to reduce their emissions by 8 per cent, while President Clinton agreed that the US would cut emissions by 7 per cent. President Clinton was clearly convinced that greenhouse gases were responsible for

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global warming. President Bush and his advisers, at least in their first administration, were not convinced that the climate scientists were right about global warming. There was a belief among some right-wing Republicans that the Kyoto proposals to cut carbon emissions were the result of a conspiracy by environmentalists to damage the US economy. There have been serious allegations by the US climate scientists that the government edited, delayed, and in some cases suppressed reports that would have alerted the American people to the reality of global warming, but did not suit the Bush administration's political and electoral agenda.

The attempt to deny that global warming was taking place was curiously out of step with the more conventional US respect for science and technology. There has been an enormous investment into research into climate change, especially in US institutes and universities. The climate scientists have access to satellites which bring them an impressive amount of data that was never previously available, for example, on the changes in the upper atmosphere. They also have the benefits of sophisticated computer modelling. Yet some of the hostile and dismissive comments from powerful individuals in the US political and business elites seemed to imply that the climate scientists were relying on using astrology or pieces of seaweed to try to predict climate change. One is forced to conclude that the real reasons for attempts to discredit global warming research have had more to do with the fears of the energy industry, especially the oil majors, that their commercial interests would be harmed if the US government decided to back the implementation of tough controls on CO_2 emissions.

It is a matter of record that scientists had the data to prove that global warming was a reality over a decade ago. The IPCC had discovered in the mid-1990s temperatures rising faster than at any period in the previous 10,000 years, and they found that the Arctic temperatures were rising three to five times more rapidly

than in any other part of the world. Scientists have predicted that within 50 years the Arctic ice cap will disappear entirely in the summer. And in the Antarctic scientists have found that the Larsen B ice shelf is melting and being broken up. This is a significant piece of evidence about global warming and its effects. The scientists tell us that since the Second World War temperatures in the Antarctic have risen by 2.5 per cent. Glaciers in the world's major mountain ranges are shrinking. According to the IPCC sea-levels have risen by 15 cm in the last century. They warn that there could be an additional increase of 18 cm by 2030, which could threaten millions living in low-lying coastal areas such as Tokyo, London, and New York, as well as people living in places like Bangladesh, the Maldives, and the South Pacific Islands which are only just above sea-level.

The search for solutions

The first really significant effort to mobilize international cooperation to help to combat human-induced global warming was an agreement at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992) held at Rio de Janeiro. The result, however, was very modest: 160 countries signed up to an agreement on promoting energy efficiency. The Kyoto conference (1997) was far more ambitious because it tried to get agreement on targets for reductions in greenhouse gases. Unfortunately the US pulled out altogether and many countries have failed to enforce the agreement through their national laws. It is now in any case all very academic because even if all countries, including the US, put the Kyoto Protocol into effect this would only make a minute difference to the quantity of CO_2 emissions. However, the Kyoto Protocol did contain one very imaginative feature. It enabled richer countries to buy the CO_2 allowances of other countries by means of a system of tradable permits. This could make it possible for those with very high levels of emissions to escape the need to make any cuts in gas emissions.

When one considers the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change for the whole planet it is very disappointing that there has been very little progress towards creating an international regime to regulate carbon emissions. The lack of leadership displayed by the world's only superpower has been disastrous: one can only hope that the swing back to greater use of multilateralism in US foreign policy means that the US government will try to give a real push to get an environmental security regime up and running. After the terrible damage from Hurricane Katrina to New Orleans and surrounding areas the White House must realize the dangers of neglecting the climate issue.

However, even if progress on an effective international regime is temporarily blocked, there are other measures that can be taken by national governments:

Governments could act to regulate deforestation, and to plant more trees. (Trees are an important means of absorbing CO_2.)

Richer countries could finance the acquisition of adequate expertise, technology, and training by developing countries.

We can save scarce energy resources by introducing greater efficiency in our homes, workplaces, and vehicles.

Local authorities, home owners, and businesses could make a big contribution collectively by switching from fossil fuels to renewables and should be given incentives to do so, such as receiving payment for the initial costs of the renewable technology and its installation.

Civil aviation is the fastest-growing and most polluting method of transport. Air travel is expected to grow by 50 per cent in the next ten years. Measures are needed to reduce the number of flights and to improve the fuel efficiency of aircraft engines. Central regulation to streamline the numbers/ destinations of airline flights would have the side benefit of reducing the strain on the airport and air traffic control facilities.

The above suggestions may seem rather obvious common sense, but although they lack the diplomatic glamour of an international agreement, *in combination* they could make a big impact in increasing environmental security.

Nuclear weapons

Any good introduction to international relations written in the second half of the 20th century would place the challenge of nuclear weapons, their proliferation, and the dangers involved in their possible use at the very top of the list of problems facing the international community. Today, in this age of environmental disasters, concerns about the effects of global warming, and international terrorism, it may seem to some readers unnecessarily gloomy to include them as a continuing problem for the international community. However, from the outset I have emphasized that I wished to provide an introduction to the *real* world of international relations, not the world as we might prefer it to be.

The harsh reality is that, despite the ending of the cold war and the efforts to develop an effective Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, of which more later, we live in a world where nuclear weapon states still possess between them thousands of nuclear warheads. Moreover, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, there are at least 40 additional states with civilian nuclear weapons development programmes ready in a matter of months. Among the states which have managed to develop a nuclear weapons development programme is North Korea, named as one of the 'Axis of Evil' states by President George W. Bush. Moreover, despite the denials by the Iranian government, it is widely believed that the Tehran regime is going to follow up its success in uranium enrichment by developing nuclear weapons.

Why do nuclear weapons cause such concern? They are not simply bigger equivalents of conventional bombs. It is true that the way

14. Hiroshima after the Allies dropped an atomic bomb on the city (6 August 1945). Three days later an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Both cities were almost entirely destroyed and over 200,000 inhabitants were killed.

that nuclear weapons are described (that is, in the 'kiloton' or megaton range) is a measurement of the amount of TNT which would be required by a conventional weapon to approximate to the explosive force of a nuclear weapon, but this does not remotely capture the truly horrific nature of the effects of nuclear weapons. The evidence we have on the impact of nuclear bombs dropped on cities comes from the atom bomb attacks on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945 respectively. It is important to note that these atomic bombs were very small compared to modern nuclear weapons in the megaton range. Bruce Roth in his powerful work *No Time to Kill* draws attention to the vivid observation by Carl Sagan: 'Modern thermonuclear warheads use something like the Hiroshima bomb as a trigger – the "match" to light the fusion action.'

Yet the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had effects which brought to reality the ghastly visions of hell which had been portrayed by the painter Hieronymus Bosch. The blasts killed an estimated 200,000 people. The Hiroshima bomb killed 50 per cent of the population in an area of three square miles around the epicentre of the bombing. The suffering of those who survived the first few hours or days of the attack was truly appalling.

Many survivors were found with pieces of skin hanging from them, so that their bones could be seen underneath. Many died from the terrible burns caused by the fireball. The heat from the fireball was so intense that people in the immediate vicinity of the epicentre were literally vaporized. Those who survived the initial blast but suffered from exposure to intense radiation experienced painful slow death. Bruce Roth describes the effects calmly and factually in *No Time to Kill*:

> Depending on the amount of radiation exposure, unlucky survivors of the initial blast develop mouth ulcers and purple spots on their skin from blood leaking out of their cells … They suffer nausea, diarrhoea, anaemia and internal bleeding as well as bleeding from the gums and from bodily orifices. Their hair falls out in clumps. Loss of white blood cells and antibodies lower their resistance to infection.

And, describing the fate of longer-term survivors, Roth observes:

> Anyone still alive either dies painfully over the next few weeks or prematurely from genetic damage leading to cancer and leukaemia. Many endure the remainder of their life with grotesque deformities.

Most historians of the Second World War agree that the decision to drop the atom bomb on Hiroshima was motivated by the desire of the US government to force Japan to surrender immediately, so that US troops would not have to face an opposed invasion on

Japan. It is also clear that the US government wanted to achieve this before the Soviet Union joined the war against Japan; there was a determination not to allow the Soviets to establish a sphere of influence over all or part of Japan. It does seem very clear from historical record that the Japanese government's decision to surrender unconditionally was heavily influenced by the atom bomb attacks. The decision to use the new weapon against Nagasaki has caused major controversy among ethicists as well as strategists. It could be argued that the bombing of Hiroshima was a 'test' for the use of the new weapon and that it demonstrated to the Japanese government the awesome power of these devices. Why, then, was there any need to use an atom bomb to attack Nagasaki only three days later?

The possible effects of an attack using a strategic nuclear warhead in the two megaton range can scarcely be imagined. Two megatons is roughly equivalent to the explosive force of the *total* number of bombs exploded in the Second World War, that is two million tons of TNT. But in addition to the effect of the initial blast and the shock wave caused there are also the impacts of the fireball (estimated temperature equivalent to that of the sun's surface), a huge electromagnetic pulse (EMP) big enough to disable all the micro circuits used in electronic equipment of all kinds, radioactive fallout, and climatic disruption.

The results of a single nuclear explosion in the one megaton range would include radioactive fallout being blown into the atmosphere. We can only try to imagine the effects of a number of nuclear weapons in the megaton range if they had been used in a major nuclear war between the superpowers in the 1970s or 1980s. A number of nuclear physicists developed a highly credible hypothesis or scenario of the likely effects on the planet's climate. They called it a 'nuclear winter', in which the dust and smoke blown into the atmosphere by the series of nuclear explosions would blot out the sun's rays, causing a dramatic reduction of temperature on the earth's surface.

Climate change of this catastrophic nature would undoubtedly affect whole populations and their food supply. Quite apart from the soil that would be virtually permanently poisoned by radioisotopes such as Uranium-235 with huge half-lives (the time it takes for half of the atoms to decay into other elements), there would be huge destruction of plants and animals. The survivors of the nuclear weapon attacks would not have sufficient supplies of food and drinking water. In brief, the decision by a government to launch into a major nuclear war would be equivalent to civilization as we know it committing suicide. With modern nuclear weapons, some of which are in the *200 megaton* range, a nuclear war has become the means by which political leaders with their fingers on the button could (probably unwittingly) be starting the slide to the annihilation of humanity.

It should be obvious from the above that the whole international community has a collective interest in more effective policies and measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote eventual general and complete nuclear disarmament.

There are two major types of proliferation: *vertical,* in which nuclear weapon states enhance their own and possibly their allies' nuclear armouries by developing even more powerful and accurate nuclear weapons and delivery systems through research and development, and *horizontal*, in which more and more states acquire nuclear weapons. Despite the well-intentioned efforts of those who designed the existing Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and those who are now charged with the responsibility of making it work, both kinds of proliferation are continuing.

The search for solutions

Once the nuclear weapon had been invented it was inevitable that the Soviet Union and other states would acquire their own. It is simply unrealistic to assume that the whole international

community of states can immediately agree to general and complete nuclear disarmament, however powerful the anti-nuclear weapons protests by public campaigns for nuclear disarmament and the urgings of UN officials and religious leaders. Governments of the nuclear weapon states clearly do not trust each other sufficiently to take such a radical step. Their leaders believe (in my view with a powerful strategic logic to support their position) that possession of a viable nuclear deterrent, that is a nuclear weapon which would survive a first strike by an aggressor, is vital for their national security. Governments of nuclear weapon states would also argue that, given the absence of a world sovereign body capable of enforcing international agreement, there is always the danger that one or more states would fail to honour a nuclear disarmament treaty and this carries the risk that the 'rogue' state or states would then be able to blackmail non-nuclear weapon states by threatening them with nuclear attack.

Recognition of the essential intractability of this central problem of modern international relations, and the belief that deterrence can be harnessed as a positive contribution to international security and diplomacy underpin the arms control approach, both to nuclear weapons proliferation and the dangers posed by the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and new types of conventional weapons. The basic philosophy of the arms control approach is that, while general disarmament is not a feasible policy objective in our current international system, it is still possible to obtain workable agreements on *limiting* or *restraining* both vertical and horizontal weapons proliferation, and other military capabilities. This is obviously a very different approach from that pursued by the supporters of comprehensive disarmament. What unites both arms controllers and disarmers, however, is the conviction that an uncontrolled arms race in this age of weapons of mass destruction would lead to disaster for the whole community.

One of the proudest achievements of the arms control approach during the cold war was the drafting and ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, opened for signature in July 1968 and brought into force in March 1970.

The key objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty were:

to stop the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons;

to limit or restrain the process of vertical proliferation by urging signatory states to negotiate on effective measures to end the nuclear arms race at an early date, and on nuclear disarmament; and

to establish an international regime which permits the safe transfer of civil nuclear power technology, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) policing a safeguards system in which the IAEA would have full and open access to the civilian nuclear programmes of all non-nuclear weapon states, including the right to periodically inspect their civil nuclear plants and facilities.

One of the major criticisms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is that it gives a privileged status to those powers which are already in possession of nuclear weapons. Although the 1995 review conference agreed to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely, the fact is that the weaknesses of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime have become more glaringly apparent in recent years. Undoubtedly the most serious of flaws in the Non-Proliferation Treaty is its failure to ensure that the US and other nuclear weapons states live up to their commitments to seek to end the nuclear arms race. The US as the only remaining superpower should be seen to be taking the lead in this aspect of the Treaty. In reality it has gone into reverse. It has embarked on a costly programme to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons with additional capabilities.

The Bush administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in December 2001, thus opening the way to an arms race in outer space, now well under way. It is also known that the US has been developing underground nuclear testing sites in Nevada, in clear violation of its commitments under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and has been maintaining tactical nuclear weapons at bases in Europe in clear violation of a pledge made at the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

The US is not the only nuclear weapons state which is violating its Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments. Russia is already embarked on a programme of rearmament and a major extension of its anti-ballistic defences. It seems hardly necessary to point out that when the major nuclear weapons states are flagrantly defying the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty it undermines efforts to persuade other states to ratify that Treaty and to dissuade some states from going ahead with secret nuclear weapon development.

In view of these serious flaws in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, what is to be done? Complete nuclear disarmament is not a practicable proposition in the current state of international relations. At the extreme, an uncontrolled nuclear arms race would be extremely dangerous, greatly increasing the danger of a nuclear war, either by accident or design. We need to remember that the end of the cold war did not remove the danger of a nuclear war. There is a real possibility that a conventional war between two nuclear weapons states could escalate to a nuclear war. It is also possible that in a war in which another weapon of mass destruction has been used a nuclear strike could be launched by one of the belligerents.

Another plausible scenario would be a massive terrorist attack, possibly involving WMD, leading to the targeted state responding with a nuclear attack on a state believed to sponsor the terrorists. In the extraordinarily difficult search for solutions it would be

absurd to claim that there are any easy routes to tackling the problem of nuclear weapons proliferation and the dangers of nuclear war.

However, I suggest that it would be irresponsible to discard or neglect the arms control route to reducing the dangers. This was the clear conclusion of the experts of the independent Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC), chaired by Dr Hans Blix, which published its report in the summer of 2006.

There is no space here to summarise all the Commission's recommendations. However, it is very clear that the main

WMDC recommendations

All parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty need to revert to the fundamental and balanced non-proliferation and disarmament commitments that were made under the treaty and confirmed in 1995 when the treaty was extended indefinitely.

All parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty should implement the decision on principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament, the decision on strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, and the resolution on the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, all adopted in 1995. They should also promote the implementation of the 'thirteen practical steps' for nuclear disarmament that were adopted in 2000.

To enhance the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, all Non-Proliferation Treaty non-nuclear-weapon states parties should accept comprehensive safeguards as strengthened by the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol.

conclusion of this team of the top arms control experts in the world is that the international community simply cannot afford to allow the achievements of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty regimes to sink under the sand of political neglect and hypocrisy. They call urgently upon all parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to rededicate themselves to the principles and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the pledges they made in the original agreement and in successive review conferences. The three major initial recommendations of the Commission's report, regarding nuclear weapon proliferation, clearly underline the importance of the maintenance and strengthening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, and of adapting arms control diplomacy to the challenges currently intensifying in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Chemical and biological weapons

Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW) weapons are far more accessible and low-cost than nuclear weapons and yet also have the capacity to kill thousands of people. Biological weapons consist of bacteria, viruses, and rickettsiae and include inhaled anthrax, coetaneous anthrax, the Plague, Ebola, Lassa fever, and botulism. Anthrax was sent through the US Postal Service in the United States in October 2001. It killed five people and severely poisoned 22. By far the most lethal of all the toxins that could be used is botulinum toxin. Scientists claim that a single gram of this toxin, especially when used in enclosed areas or to contaminate food and water supply, could, if evenly dispersed and inhaled, kill up to a million people.

There are three major types of chemical weapons: poison gases, incapacitants, and anti-plant agents. It is well known that Saddam Hussein used a gas against the Kurds in Halabja, Iraq on 16 March 1988. Five thousand people were killed, most of whom were women and children. Mustard gas was used by both sides in the First World War. It is believed that Saddam Hussein's forces

used mustard gas, VX nerve gas, and cyanide during the Iraq–Iran War in the 1980s.

The search for solutions

The techniques of arms control have been deployed to develop the most comprehensive and intrusive international chemical weapons agreement ever signed, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993. The CWC prohibits not just the first use of chemical weapons but *all* use of chemical weapons. It also bans the production, development, stockpiling, and transfer of chemical weapons, and enables the newly established Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to monitor chemical plants and industrial sites around the world. The CWC inspection regime began work in 1996.

Unfortunately the Biological Weapons Convention (1972) does not contain the verification procedures that are so vital if it is to be truly effective. However, there have been considerable international efforts to apply some of the lessons that can be drawn from the CWC to the biological and toxin weapons areas, and there is now a need to mobilize universal support for and adherence to the new Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

I conclude by suggesting that, as in the nuclear weapons field, a real strengthening of arms control regimes is the sensible way to reduce the danger of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds. Once again, the reader is recommended to consult the expert report of the Independent Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction. There is no space here to describe its ambitious set of recommendations. However, the major recommendations regarding both biological and toxin weapons and chemical weapons are quoted in the box over leaf.

It will require statesmanship and diplomacy of great skill to rejuvenate the arms control approach that was so cavalierly and

Expert recommendations on BCW weapons

Recommendation 31

All states not yet party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention should adhere to the Convention. The states parties to the Convention should launch a campaign to achieve universal adherence by the time of the Seventh Review Conference to be held in 2011.

Recommendation 32

To achieve universal adoption of national legislation and regulations to implement the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention completely and effectively, the states parties should offer technical assistance and promote best practice models of such legislation. As a part of the confidence-building process and to promote transparency and harmonization, all states should make annual biological-weapon-related national declarations and make them public.

Recommendation 33

States parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention should enhance the investigatory powers to the UN Secretary-General, ensuring that the Secretary-General's office can rely upon a regularly updated roster of experts and advice from the World Health Organisation and a specialist unit, modelled on the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Committee, to assist in investigating unusual outbreaks of disease and allegations of the use of biological weapons.

Recommendation 34

States must prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons or fissile material. To achieve this, they must

> maintain fully effective accounting and control of all stocks of fissile and radioactive materials and other radiological sources on their territories. They should ensure that there is personal legal responsibility for any acts of nuclear terrorism or activity in support of such terrorism. They must expand their cooperation through *inter alia* the sharing of information, including intelligence on illicit nuclear commerce. They should also promote universal adherence to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

foolishly cast aside by the US and UK governments in the lead up to the Iraq War in 2002–3. It is worth bearing in mind that if Dr Hans Blix had been given time to complete the rigorous weapons inspection he was leading in Iraq, the prolonged war in Iraq which has cost so many thousands of lives could have been avoided.

15. The bombing of Baghdad in March 2003 during Operation Shock and Awe.

Effective arms control and crisis management (which is actually a key part of arms control) are *not* appeasement: they are a way, probably the only practicable way, of preventing, dampening down and managing conflict in a dangerous world of many states still armed with weapons of mass destruction.

Preventing genocide and other violations of human rights

The term genocide originated in the 20th century. Although the phenomenon occurred in previous centuries, the last century could truly be called the Age of Genocide and 'ethnic cleansing',

16. Victims of the Holocaust, the mass murder of Jews in continental Europe by the Nazis between 1940 and 1945. Six million died, the worst ever act of genocide.

which could more accurately be termed violence of a genocidal nature.

The UN Genocide Convention approved by the General Assembly in December 1948 defines genocide in Article 2 as an act of 'destroying, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group', including killing, seriously injuring, or causing mental harm to members of such groups, inflicting upon such groups adverse living conditions so that the physical destruction of the group is threatened, deliberate attempts to prevent members of the group from having children, and forcibly transferring children from one group to another. Under the Convention conspiracy to commit genocide, incitement to commit genocide, and complicity in genocide are also punishable.

It is clear that the Convention was passed in response to the Holocaust, the attempt by the Nazi regime in Germany to exterminate the Jews in which six million Jews were taken to death camps and murdered. The Nuremberg trials were a catalyst for this ambitious effort to extend the international criminal law in a brave attempt to enable it to deal with the most horrendous mass violations of human rights, crimes against humanity.

The tragic reality is that the noble intentions of those who drafted the Convention have not been translated into effective action. The genocide committed by the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, estimated to have cost around two million lives, could not be prevented or terminated by the international community. The same is true of the genocide of Rwanda. Intervention by the UN and NATO to stop genocidal violence in Bosnia and Kosovo was very belated, though ultimately highly effective, but it is clear that the UN acting alone would not have had the resources to implement the will of the Security Council.

At the time of writing (summer 2006) the weaknesses of the UN and other IGOs in dealing with the crisis in Sudan's Darfur region

were once again being tragically demonstrated. Representatives of various governments who have visited the huge refugee camps in South and West Darfur and spoken to some of those who have been forced to flee from their homes and briefed themselves on the crises have described the violence committed against the African rural population by the Janjawid Arab militia, backed by the Sudanese government, as genocidal in character.

Over a quarter of a million people were forced out their homes. Many have been subjected to rape, murder, and looting by the Janjawid and it is estimated that well over 100,000 people have died in the attacks on civilians.

The crisis began in February 2003, when the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army started a rebellion against the Khartoum authorities in order to obtain political recognition and a larger share of Sudan's resources. The government's response was to arm and unleash the Janjawid Arab militia, though government officials have repeatedly denied all responsibility for Janjawid attacks. Three years later the UN had still been unable to take effective action other than to send humanitarian aid to the hard-pressed refugees. The major obstacle to getting Security Council agreement on sanctions against Sudan has been China, which as a permanent member can veto any such proposal. It is important to note that China has extensive commercial interests in Sudan and has repeatedly opposed UN intervention, even when the humanitarian case is overwhelming. Even the delivery of humanitarian aid has repeatedly been jeopardized by attacks on aid agency staff and by the looting of World Food Programme (WFP) trucks.

I have used the case of Darfur to underline the weakness of the international mechanisms for intervention to prevent or at least to stop the most serious mass violations of the basic human right, the right to life. However, let us not forget that there are many other cases where thousands are suffering from these

problems. One only has to recall the sufferings of the civilian population in East Timor, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo – all current or recent examples where conflict has take a huge toll on human rights – to see the extent of the challenge.

The search for solutions

Although it is hard to find examples of significant improvement in the effective prevention of genocidal violence and major war crimes, there has been some modest progress towards finding international judicial measures and mechanisms to bring war criminals to justice. For example, The Hague Tribunal to deal with war crimes suspects from the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and the parallel Tribunal set up to deal with war crimes suspects from Rwanda have been very rigorous in their conduct of trials. The Hague Tribunal to deal with the former Yugoslavia was set up in 1993 and was in the process of conducting the trial of Slobodan Milosevic before his death from natural causes. This was the most important of all The Hague war crimes tribunal cases so far because this was the first time a former head of state had been put on trial to face charges of this kind.

It is hardly surprising that in the last century, characterized by the most terrible wars and mass violation of human rights in history, the international community struggled to find ways of bringing those guilty of war crimes to justice before their own courts. In many cases this proves impossible because the accused person/persons flee abroad. In other cases, for example in Serbia, the persons wanted for war crimes are sheltered by sympathizers who refuse to divulge their whereabouts. And in cases where, for example, a former dictator is put on trial before a court in his own state, it is by no means certain that the judicial system will be capable of dealing with the formidable complexities involved. The International War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremburg, which tried the main leadership of the Nazi regime, proved a highly effective

17. Guantanamo Bay is a US base in Cuba used as a prison for men suspected of involvement with Al Qaeda. The prisoners have been prevented from resort to US Federal courts and have no opportunity to prove their innocence.

way of bringing major war criminals to justice. Not surprisingly this judicial device has been found invaluable in dealing with mass violations of human rights in more recent conflicts.

Many people assumed that the most appropriate way of bring the former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, to justice was to let the Iraqi legal system deal with the case. The fact that Iraqi courts and judges had no previous experience or expertise in handling such cases was overlooked. A better solution might have been to set up a special international tribunal comprising judges with special qualifications and experience in handling international human rights law. An even better alternative might have been to hand over responsibility for the trial to the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC).

I have already noted that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) provided a highly effective mechanism for bringing war criminals from Serbia, Croatia, and

Bosnia to justice. It is a matter of record that under the tough and determined leadership of the UN war crimes prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, the tribunal achieved an impressive series of successful prosecutions. The success of ICTY was of course assisted by the strong backing of the US government.

A far more ambitious project, the International Criminal Court, is now at work. The Court proposal was the product of an international conference in Rome in 1988. By April 2002 the ICC project had obtained the necessary 60 ratifications from member states of the UN. The Court had a global remit to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity, including crimes by a state against its own people.

This is a major innovation in international cooperation on human rights. It has been supported by almost all the major democracies except the US. This seems curiously out of keeping with Washington's enthusiastic support for the International Criminal Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia. The explanation given by the US ambassador for war crimes was that the US was concerned that the Court would have the power to try Americans, and that opponents of the US might order the arrest of US servicemen or political leaders, even perhaps the President himself. The absence of the world's only superpower is a significant weakness. Another weakness stems from the limited jurisdiction of the ICC. It can only try war crimes if they are committed by personnel of one of the ratifying parties to the court treaty, or in the territory of one of the state parties. There are now 97 state parties to the ICC treaty and there are an additional 42 who have signed but not yet ratified, including four permanent members of the Security Council. With such a lack of support from the major powers the ICC starts with a great handicap. Yet again I note the difficulty of getting concerted action by the international state system on even the most fundamental human rights problems. Human rights NGOs are lobbying hard to gain support for the ICC from the key democracies but as yet they

have been unable to mobilize significant support from the general public or from the policy makers in the defaulting countries.

I, and I suspect many others, share the human rights organizations' sense of frustration and disappointment. In commenting on his own government's failure to ratify the ICC, Benjamin Ferencz, one of the prosecution team at Nuremberg and author of *An International Criminal Court: A Step Toward World Peace* observed:

> The United States has been misled by the right wing, the reactionary conservatives who are isolationist in sentiment, who are distorting the truth, and confusing the public … At Nuremberg we were really the leader and we said the law we laid down would be the law we would follow tomorrow. Those ideals have been forgotten.

The North/South divide

One of the most intractable problems in international relations is the polarization between the Advanced Industrial Countries (AICs) of the Global North and the poverty-stricken Global South Less Developed Countries (LDCs). The typical *developed* state of the Global North is one where there is self-sustained economic growth in all industrial sectors – primary, secondary, and tertiary.

LDCs are, in contrast, characterized by low GDP, low *per capita* GDP, low *per capita* growth and low life expectancy combined with high population growth rates. A third group, the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) of which key examples are South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, have sometimes been termed the 'Tiger' economies because of their swift industrial expansions and their success in achieving export-led economic growth. There are clearly some special factors which explain the rise of the NICs in Asia. They have managed to exploit the advantages of having lower labour costs than the AICs and they

combine this with a highly competitive liberal economic system. (In contrast they tend to have authoritarian political systems but this does not appear to impede their economic development.) NICs have also been able to gain great advantage from their enthusiastic readiness to accept foreign investment and from the natural business skills that appear to be available within their populations. The success of the 'Tiger' economies is borne out by the economic statistics for 2006 which show, for example, Hong Kong with a higher *per capita* GDP than Germany, Canada, Belgium, and France; and Singapore with a higher *per capita* GDP than Australia and Italy. Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan are in the top 20 per cent of countries with the highest purchasing power. Even more striking is the fact Hong Kong and Singapore come first and second respectively in the economic freedom index calculated on the basis of ten indicators of how government intervention can restrict the economic relations between individuals. Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and Taiwan were all in the top 10 per cent of countries with the highest economic growth, 1991–2001.

In stark contrast, the poorest of the Least Developed Countries appear to be caught in a permanent state of immiseration. No less than 16 of the 20 countries with the lowest GDP per head are in Africa. Many LDCs have negative annual growth rates of *per capita* income. Demographers estimate that the world population will grow from its current (2006) total of over six billion to between 10 and 12 billion in 2050, depending on whether world fertility will continue to decline. Whatever the final future, most experts are certain that the world population will continue to grow during this century and well into the 22nd. There is also wide agreement that the most rapid growth will be in the Global South. This is because, in addition to high birth rates and falling death rates, the Global South is going to experience *population momentum* due to the large number of women now arriving at childbearing age and this seems set to continue despite the AIDS pandemic which has hit Africa and other parts of the

Global South. (I have taken AIDS into account in my estimate of the population growth rate.) Roughly 70 per cent of those infected with AIDS live in Africa as compared with South and South-East Asia where, it is estimated, around six million are infected with AIDS. The economic effects of the AIDS pandemic have been nothing less than calamitous. The medical services in the worst affected African countries are simply unable to cope and, because the majority of victims are young or middle aged, the effect on economic performance is devastating as families can no longer support themselves, produce food, or care for their relatives.

The third major factor threatening the very survival of the civilian population of many areas in the Global South is the effect of conflict. For example, in Africa, over 30 per cent of countries have experienced particularly lethal wars which have driven people out of their farms and villages. Last but not least, the plight of the Global South countries has been made infinitely worse by environmental disasters such as drought, desertification, and deforestation.

The process of globalization which enables financial and investment markets to operate internationally, mainly as a result of deregulation and improved communications, and which allows companies to expand and operate internationally, have not had the result of narrowing the gap between the AICs of the Global North and the LDCs of the Global South. On the contrary, the main effect has been to make the Global North states richer, because when they do choose to locate manufacturing plants in LDCs, the profit from these enterprises mainly benefits the Global North. Some commentators choose to stress the alleged advantages of 'interdependence' to the LDCs. In reality only those LDCs which produce commodities which are in high demand in the AICs, such as oil and natural gas, are likely to become beneficiaries of globalization. The rest of the LDCs have become more and more dependent on aid because if they were to rely solely on the production of a simple agricultural produce, such

as coffee or bananas, they would simply remain in the poverty trap forever. Moreover, if the LDCs are dependent on exports of agricultural produce to the Global North they will find that they are confronted with protectionist trade measures of the rich states, such as tariff barriers and quotas. It was hoped that the World Trade Organization talks of 2006 would find ways of considerably reducing these obstacles, which in effect prevent LDCs from benefiting from the world trade system, but at the time of writing there was no significant breakthrough in sight.

The Gleneagles 2005 Agreement of the G8 Ministers to write off very large amounts of LDC debt is certainly a welcome relief. UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, and his colleagues and the 'Make Poverty History' NGO campaign can take some satisfaction from the G8 debt relief decisions. However, we need to recognize that this generous gesture is not going to address the fundamental causes of underdevelopment inherent in the international system.

The search for solutions

As is the case with the other major problems I have briefly reviewed, there is no simple solution to the problem of the widening gap between Global North and South. It is fair to say that there has been a serious shortage of well-informed strategic thinking about the challenges of international development in recent years. The last really serious effort at designing a comprehensive international development strategy was the work of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, chaired by Former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, in the late 1970s. In 1980 they published their remarkable report, *North–South: A Programme for Survival*. The Brandt Report approach could aptly be described as international Keynesianism. Its underlying assumptions were based on economic liberalism modified to fit the special needs of the Global South. It argued that the world trade system needed to adjust its rules to enable

the LDCs to gain a fair return on their exports. Brandt also argued that foreign aid should be targeted more carefully in order to assist recipients to become more economically self-sustainable, and to give more help to LDCs in capacity-building, for example, by providing technical expertise and training where this was unavailable through private sector investment. One of the Commission's most important conclusions was that NGOs in the international development field have a key role to play and that this should be recognized fully by governments so that they could cooperate in more effective partnerships internationally.

All these lessons are just as valid today, though a great deal has been done to improve international cooperation on development issues and the UN's specialized agencies have a particularly distinguished record in this field.

However, it would be grossly misleading, indeed dishonest, to pretend that all the potential partial solutions to the problem of underdevelopment are in the hands of the Global North and the IGOs. It is up to the political leaders, citizens, and legal systems of LDCs to root out the corruption and large-scale organized crime which often take place not just through government incompetence but with the connivance of the state authorities. Any report of serious malfeasance by officials, including the illegal diversion of aid, should be reported and thoroughly investigated, and the authorities should ensure that aid is distributed fairly and properly accounted for. Opponents of aid in donor countries will seize hold of any reports of maladministration to justify stopping aid altogether, however desperate the need.