

**Liberal Foreign Policy
and World Order Renewal**

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Photo: Foreign Ministers Koichiro Gamba (Japan), Guido Westerwelle (Germany), Antonio Patriota (Brazil), and Ranjan Mathai (India) of the G4 of aspiring permanent Security Council members at the beginning of their meeting on Security Council reform at the United Nations on September 25, 2012. © Corbis

The crisis of liberal democracy in North America and Europe has two sides: a domestic one and an international one.

This chapter will focus on the international side or, to be more precise, on the foreign policy of liberal democracies, mainly in North America and Europe. More specifically, it focuses on one dimension that has for a long time been considered central to both liberal foreign policy and the establishment and flourishing of a liberal world order — the political aim for and the successful establishment of rule-based institutionalized cooperation. Well into the 21st century, the history of liberal internationalism and international institutionalization could have been written in terms of a success story. Two variants of multilateral institutionalization made up this order: an inclusive or universalistic one essentially encompassing the UN system, and an exclusive one which aligned the liberal democracies of North America and Western Europe (and later on also Central Europe) in a dense network of political, economic and security cooperation (NATO, EU, OECD).

Many have argued that both parts of this liberal order are now facing increasing pressures. This chapter will show why the crisis of liberal order is, to a significant degree, the result of a crisis in liberal foreign policy, especially a declining commitment to multilateralism among the democracies of North America and Europe. A compressed history of the rise of liberal internationalism would highlight its beginnings in the late 1940s and 50s, the decades-long habituation to its operation under bipolar conditions, the sudden and apparent triumph in 1989-90 and its almost hegemonic expansion in the decade thereafter. However, today this success story seems to have come to an abrupt end with the catalytic fusion of three parallel developments: 1) the increasing disillusionment with military interventions primarily by the United States, Canada, and European states (beginning with Yugoslavia and ending with Iraq, Afghanistan, and even Libya), which in many ways seemed to mark the pinnacle of the complementarity of the inclusive and exclusive parts of the post WWII order; 2) the steady rise of and increasing coordination among

a diverse group of democratic and authoritarian great powers, the BRICS, which — even if they only form a heterogeneous coalition of often competing powers — are united in opposing some essential elements of the “Western” version of a liberal world order;¹¹⁴ and 3) the confluence of economic crisis and domestic political blockage in Europe and North America, which accelerated what is again being called “the decline of the West” — almost a century after the first publication of Oswald Spengler’s gloomy projection with the same title. The upshot of this is multilateral exhaustion and fatigue in both Europe and North America. Ironically, it also compounds what critically unites the BRICS, the renaissance of state sovereigntists against what is perceived to be hegemonic Western interventionism.

The problem is that multilateral fatigue and state sovereigntists are on the rise at a time when state-transcending global problems are proliferating. As the recently published study “Global Trends 2030” also points out, unilateral intergovernmentalism at the global level will not suffice to address these problems.¹¹⁵ However, nor are there easy fixes to overcome multilateral fatigue via a new wave of international institutionalization, either inclusionary or exclusionary. Among others, this is due to the fact that the fundamental instincts and preferences for liberal world order solutions — to the extent that such solutions are actually pondered — diverge even between as well as within North America and Europe. However, even though the current picture might look bleak, there are a number of possible avenues to help at least start a more concerted process of institutional imagination

¹¹⁴ Z. Laïdi, “BRICS: Sovereignty, Power and Weakness,” *International Politics* 49: 5 (2012), pp. 614-632.

¹¹⁵ See “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds,” published by the U.S. National Intelligence Council (December 16, 2012), available at <http://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends> (December 16, 2012), esp. pp. 51-61. The study predicts that “the current, largely Western dominance of global structures...will have been transformed by 2030 to be more in line with the changing hierarchy of new economic players.” Yet even if this were to happen, the report argues, it remains “unclear” to what degree the new or reformed institutions “will have tackled growing global challenges” given “the difficult tradeoff...between legitimacy and efficiency” (p. 58).

and deliberation among liberal democracies about the need and prospects of world order renewal.

Liberal World Order and Liberal Foreign Policy

The notion of “liberal world order” is notoriously vague — and at the same time extremely powerful politically. It is vague because it carries a multitude of meanings that sometimes even contradict one another. At the most general level, John Ikenberry has identified at least three historical versions of “liberal international order”:

- First, the Wilsonian system, emphasizing “Westphalian sovereignty” defined mainly in terms of “an international legal order affirming state independence and non-intervention”;
- Second, “Cold War liberal internationalism,” which “modified Westphalian sovereignty” in the context of an “hierarchical order” where the United States provided “public goods, rule-based and patron-client relations, and voice opportunities”; and
- Third, the current, transitional “post-hegemonic” liberal order with “increasingly intrusive and interdependent economic and security regimes” in which “various groupings of leading states occupy governing institutions.”¹¹⁶

Note that the characteristics of these *liberal* orders do not only differ, but sometimes even contradict one another, such as the strong norm against intervention in the early 20th century and the increasingly widespread call for “humanitarian interventions” in the context of a global

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¹¹⁶ G.J. Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 7:1 (March 2009), pp. 71-87.

“Responsibility to Protect” in cases such as Libya or Syria today. In defining the “liberal” qualifier, others have listed different distinctive features or have pointed to a wide range of “practices of liberal ordering” against the background of three “institutionalized ideas of liberal world order” such as internationalism, imperialism, and integration.¹¹⁷

References to “the liberal world order” are extremely powerful politically because the very reference creates or stabilizes a political image with far-reaching political consequences. It rallies those who associate mostly positive images with “liberalism” as much as it mobilizes critics for whom “liberalism” is a dirty word. In other words, “liberal world order” is politically powerful, even if (or precisely because) the meaning of the concept is vague. Vagueness serves as an umbrella to shield what is cherished or despised. In this sense, an approach that concentrated on reconstructing the different meanings of liberal world order would probably identify a multitude of “liberal orders” with quite different emphases.

We have emphasized these complexities and tensions among and within liberalism and democracy throughout this report. This chapter will focus on one line of tensions surrounding the notion of liberal internationalism: the tension between two institutional forms of international cooperation, multilateralism and unilateralism, which are often accompanied by one of two organizational expressions of international institutionalization, inclusive or exclusive international organizations. Here the focus is on the field of international security. *Genuine multilateralism* is an essential feature of international forms of cooperation, which deserve the label “liberal.” Building on the work by John Ruggie, multilateralism and unilateralism can be viewed as distinct organizing principles of inter-

¹¹⁷ T. Dunne and T. Flockhart, eds., *Liberal World Orders*, forthcoming.

state cooperation.¹¹⁸ Multilateralism is not merely the “practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states,”¹¹⁹ i.e. a form of diplomatic interaction that applies equally to dense institutional settings as well as ad-hoc coordination among great powers. Rather, it is a distinct and “generic” form of interstate collaboration based on “generalized” principles of conduct,” such as the indivisibility of certain goods (eg. peace), non-discrimination (as in trade agreements), or diffuse reciprocity, i.e. arrangements in which participants focus less on immediate and direct benefits in the form of specific quid-pro-quo than on roughly equivalent benefits in the aggregate and over time.¹²⁰ An illustration of such features in the realm of international security would be a collective security system that is essentially “a permanent potential alliance ‘against the *unknown* enemy’ (...) on behalf of the *unknown* victim.”¹²¹ To be sure, such a fully developed collective security system has never been realized, but a broad range of institutions or organizations with different scopes of multilateralism have existed or continue to exist in the field of trade (eg. WTO) or security (eg. UN, NATO). Their benefits are obvious: to the extent that they create binding ties, they reduce transaction costs and increase mutual reliability and trust. They are especially valuable for smaller states because the leverage that stronger powers can bring to bear in bilateral/minilateral settings is attenuated. Their costs are equally clear — mainly the loss of autonomy and possibly also sovereignty.

¹¹⁸ J.G. Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institutional Form,” *International Organization*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (1992), pp. 561-598. “Minilateralism” is not Ruggie’s term. It was actually coined by Moises Naim (Minilateralism. The Magic Number to Get Real International Action, July/August 2009, available at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/18/minilateralism> (December 10, 2012)) and is meant to describe a framework of cooperation that gets together the “smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem.” The institutional form alluded to here is similar in its organizing principles to “bilateralism” as developed conceptually by Ruggie.

¹¹⁹ This is the definition preferred by R. Keohane, “Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research,” *International Journal*, Vol. 45 (Autumn 1990), p. 731.

¹²⁰ Ruggie, pp. 571-572.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 569, quoting A. Salter, *Security*, London: Macmillan 1939, p.155; first emphasis Salter’s, second Ruggie’s.

The primary purpose of developing the distinction between multilateralism and minilateralism is to relate an organizing principle of liberal *order* to (ideal-typical) practices of liberal *foreign policy*. International order (defined as a contingent arrangement of rules and institutions governing the relations among states and peoples) is inherently fluid. The conceptual counter-point to international order is not “anarchy,” “chaos,” or “instability” but *foreign policy agency*: states shape international order via foreign policy, and their policies are shaped by any given order.

The conventional narrative of the post-World War II order, which sees the United States as having left the most visible mark on the global arrangement of rules and institutions, may illustrate the relationship between order and foreign policy. What used to be an international order largely shaped by the traditional power politics of Europe’s great powers now seemed worthy to be labeled “liberal”. This order, in turn, shaped the foreign policies of all states, including the United States. For instance, the Federal Republic of Germany, the successor of the Nazi rogue state, was enabled to radically transform its foreign policy not least because the liberal features characterizing the Western (European) order provided both a safe environment and additional material incentives for developing a foreign policy that emphasized integration and restraint. Thus, liberal order depended primarily, though not exclusively, on liberal foreign policy.

Another distinction is between a foreign policy that emphasizes the overall value and benefits of state autonomy and influence maximization in contrast to a foreign policy that emphasizes the overall value and benefits of mutually binding international arrangements, possibly even in juridified fashion.¹²² The former cherishes minilateral, bilateral, or unilateral foreign policy practices, whereas the

¹²² On different understandings of juridification, see L.C. Blichner and A. Molander, “Mapping Juridification,” *European Law Journal*, 14: 1 (2008), pp. 36-54; on the evolution of juridification in international politics, see M. List and B. Zangl, “Verrechtlichung internationaler Politik,” *Die neuen Internationalen Beziehungen. Forschungsstand und Perspektiven in Deutschland*, ed. by G. Hellmann, K.D. Wolf and M. Zürn, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2003, pp. 361-399.

China's Changing International Role

Martin Jacques

In the West, the Chinese model of governance is not seen as an alternative to the Western liberal political order. But as China overtakes the United States to become the largest economy and, over the next two decades, pulls well ahead — some forecasts predict that it will be twice the size of the U.S. economy by 2030 — then growing attention will be paid to the Chinese system of governance. The strengths of Chinese governance are its ability to think strategically, its infrastructural prowess, and the impressive competence of its government. While the Western tradition emphasizes democracy, the Chinese attach equivalent importance to state competence, which is closely linked to the idea of meritocracy. Given that state competence is a major weakness, and a seriously neglected issue, in the West, it would not be difficult to imagine this aspect of Chinese governance coming to influence Western thinking in the future. Given the deep roots of Western democracy and the absence of it in the Chinese tradition, however, the overall influence of Chinese governance in the West will remain very limited.

The situation is rather different in the developing world. There is an underlying affinity between China and the developing world because, unlike the West, they share, in broad terms, a similar stage of development. And China is indubitably the outstanding example of a developing country, having grown at around 10 percent a year for over 30 years and lifted around 600 million out of poverty. These achievements have brought China considerable prestige in the developing world. Combined with China's extensive trading and financial relations with many developing countries — which in the main are viewed very positively — this has fostered an increasingly close relationship between China and the developing world. As a consequence, there is great interest in many developing countries in how China is governed, in the competence of its state, and what they might learn from it.

For its part, China does not see itself as a model for others. Unlike the West, or indeed the Soviet Union, it does not proselytize about its own arrangements or seek to persuade other nations to copy it. The underlying reasons for this mentality lie in the fact that China has for many centuries regarded itself to be separate and distinct from others. In view of its deep historical roots, it seems highly unlikely that this attitude will change. It is noteworthy that recent debates about a so-called China model have been conducted largely outside rather than inside China and by foreigners rather than Chinese.

Since the beginning of the reform period in 1978, China's attitude toward the international system has been shaped by the overwhelming priority it has attached to its own economic growth and the reduction in poverty. To this end, it was seen as essential that China obtain access to foreign markets and gain admission to the World Trade Organization. Adaptation to and acquiescence in the existing international economic order thus informed the Chinese strategy. There has, so far at least, been no substantial change in this underlying approach.

But will this continue to be the case as China becomes a great global power? As many have observed, the present international system has served China well, having played a crucial and indispensable role in its economic transformation. It is still very much a developing country — around half the population still lives in the countryside — and is acutely aware, given its huge dependence on both exports and imports, of the importance of maintaining good relations with the

rest of the world. The Chinese leadership is extremely cautious and not given to acting in a rash fashion.

China is the world's largest exporter and will shortly be the world's largest importer. In 2009 and 2010, two Chinese banks, the China Development Bank and the China Export-Import Bank, lent more to the developing world than the World Bank. It is already a financial powerhouse. Within the next two decades, the renminbi will replace the dollar as the world's major currency. This is bound to transform the fundamental architecture of the international economic and financial system. Either the International Monetary System adjusts to the reality of Chinese power, together with that of other developing countries like India, by becoming something very different from what it is now or it will, in time, be replaced. The prospects for the World Bank remaining the main source of aid and lending for the developing world are zero.

In short, the present U.S.-inspired international economic system will not survive the relative decline of the United States, even though certain features of it may persist. The Chinese, for their part, will proceed very cautiously and avoid anything that might be seen as provocative or unnecessarily divisive. In all likelihood, they will seek a consensual process of reform. Be that as it may, China's increasingly dominant economic power will ultimately result in a very different international economic order from the present one. The same can be said of the international system more generally, but that is another story.

latter values multilateral strategies. Nazi Germany and the "Bonn Republic" again serve as excellent real world examples to illustrate both types.¹²³

Liberal Foreign Policy and the Rise and Decline of Multilateralism

The current crisis of liberal order is to a significant degree the result of a crisis in liberal foreign policy. Today, illiberal foreign policy practices have much more sway globally in structuring international cooperation and, therefore, world order. Warfare, is, fortunately, not part of the regular foreign policy repertoire of most powers. However, the renaissance of state sovereignty is a particularly worrying sign. While it is particularly noticeable

¹²³ Ruggie rightly and repeatedly returns to the preference of the Nazi regime for "bilateralist" arrangements as an illustration of the counter-point to "multilateralism." For a more detailed discussion of the ideal-typical distinctions of (il)liberal foreign policy (practices) with illustrations of the German case, see also R. Baumann, V. Rittberger, and W. Wagner, "Macht und Machtpolitik. Neorealistische Außenpolitiktheorie und Prognosen über die deutsche Außenpolitik nach der Vereinigung," *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 6: 2 (1999), pp. 245-286, and G. Hellmann, "'... um diesen deutschen Weg zu Ende gehen zu können.' Die Renaissance machtpolitischer Selbstbehauptung in der zweiten Amtszeit der Regierung Schröder-Fischer," C. Egle and R. Zohlnhöfer, eds., *Ende des rot-grünen Projektes. Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 2002-2005* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), pp. 453-479.

among the "rising" BRICS, it has also gained ground among the liberal democracies of North America and Europe. It is *not* that bilateral and/or unilateral cooperation is problematic per se, but rather that bilateralism and unilateralism have gained prominence in international cooperation as *preferred organizing principles* of international relations, thereby increasing the stress on those features of genuinely multilateral institutions such as indivisibility, non-discrimination, and diffuse reciprocity, which provided for a significant measure of transparency and predictability in recent decades and which a unilateralist system lacks.

The rise of unilateralism and the decline of multilateralism correspond with the rise of exclusive and informal international institutions on one hand and the decline of inclusive and formal international institutions on the other. However, inclusivity does not imply multilateralism, and exclusivity not unilateralism. For instance, although NATO and the UN represent opposite organizational forms, with one being very exclusive whereas the other is universal, both are based on

specific, if different, multilateral principles.¹²⁴ Similarly, both inclusive and exclusive international institutions can exhibit minilateralist organizing principles. Examples are some of the thematic UN conferences that turn out largely declaratory and non-binding resolutions or more exclusive institutional arrangements like the G20. These differences notwithstanding, there are certain proclivities — and the argument made here implies that we are observing a rise in exclusivity, informality, and minilateralism and this spells trouble for world order.

Well into the 21st century, two variants of multilateralism stood out as characteristic of the order created after World War II: an inclusive or universalist one, which was essentially made up of the UN system,¹²⁵ and an exclusive one, which aligned the liberal democracies of North America and Western Europe (and later on also Central Europe) in a dense network of political, economic, and security cooperation (NATO, EU, OECD). The UN Charter was meant to constitutionalize universal obligations related to peace and security.¹²⁶ The treaties founding the (predecessors of the) EU and NATO were meant to enshrine more specific liberal principles. Both the inclusive and global as well as the exclusive and regional institutions were crucially shaped by Western democracies, most prominently the United States. The emphasis on the universalist nature of the United Nations could be seen as an expression of the respect for the pluralist nature of different forms of rule (or “sovereignty”) whereas institutions based on the propagation of particular liberal values (such as the EU and NATO) were an expression

¹²⁴ On NATO, see Steve Weber, “Shaping the Postwar Balance of Power: Multilateralism in NATO,” *International Organization*, 46:3 (1992), pp. 633-680.

¹²⁵ CSCE/OSCE, ie. the “Conference...” (or, respectively, “Organization...”) for “... Security and Cooperation in Europe” are institutions that are certainly not universal in a strict sense since membership was (and is) concentrated on the “northern” hemisphere. Nevertheless they do (and did) not exhibit the more rigidly exclusionary or even aggressive elements of military alliances because they essentially included all the states in a certain regional context that were interested in actually participating in the respective multilateral arrangement.

¹²⁶ M. Doyle, “Dialectics of a Global Constitution: The Struggle over the UN Charter,” in: *European Journal of International Relations*, 18: 4 (2012), pp. 601-624.

of the exclusive alignment among the states in the transatlantic space.

For much of the time after World War II, the inclusive and exclusive forms of institutionalization served the interests of the liberal democracies in North America and Europe quite well — and in a complementary fashion. Close cooperation and even integration based on shared values and interests could proceed in the context of the EU (and its predecessors) and NATO. Moreover, the institutional core of the transatlantic relationship was nicely supplemented by the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, which enshrined multilateral principles in financial and economic matters. Although the bipolar Cold War world limited the role of the UN Security Council, with the three permanent Western powers encountering numerous veto positions by the Soviet Union and China, it still allowed for a semblance of an international legal framework. Thus, a rules-based order had taken shape that not only served the interests of Western liberal democracies, it was also based in significant segments on multilateral organizing principles and could be described in terms of values that were dear to the liberal democracies of North America and Europe.

In the past decade or so, this complementarity of global/inclusive and regional/exclusive organizations to the benefit of liberal democracies in North America and Europe unraveled. After an initial post-1990 boost, when the ascendance of “the West” culminated in an impressive global expansion, tensions increased not only among these liberal democracies and within the respective institutions but also between the latter. Securing mandates for the EU or NATO from the UN turned out to be much more difficult than it was in the 1990s. Moreover, as the rising prominence of “coalitions of the willing” from Iraq to Mali among EU and NATO partners shows, even the most closely knit exclusive institutions espousing liberal values have come under strain.

Thus, multilateralism has been significantly weakened while minilateralism is thriving. This trend is problematic to the extent that the spread

A Proposal for Track II Initiatives for Reforming the Global Security Architecture

UN reform in general, and Security Council reform in particular, are tricky and complicated. Many bright minds and creative practitioners have worked on this issue for many years — with modest success at best. However, the Security Council continues to be the single most important, and the only globally legitimate institution in the realm of peace and security. President Obama was right, therefore, when he pleaded during his first election campaign that “reform” is “urgently needed” if the global community is “to keep pace with the fast-moving threats we face.” More significantly, the UNSC is likely to become ever more important for a) managing the competition between “Western” liberal democracies, “non-Western” liberal democracies, and authoritarian great powers and b) for dealing with regional conflicts with escalatory potentials (such as Syria or Iran), which may be perceived in terms of larger geopolitical rivalries or competition for status and prestige. One of the many complicating issues regarding UN reform is that liberal democracies belong to those members of the UN that most fiercely fight for competing reform proposals. Four of the most ambitious UN member states — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan (also called the G4) — stand against a group of states (“Uniting for Consensus”), which includes, among others, Italy, Spain, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, and South Korea. Although it is difficult to see how the more immediate differences between these states might be overcome in the foreseeable future, the broader picture and the more long-term strategic outlook might render some forms of collaboration more realistic.

Building on existing informal coordination processes among the foreign ministries of nine North American, European, and Asian democracies would help. Since 2008, policy planning directors from these foreign ministries have met three times for informal exchanges.¹ While this has been a very informal and low-key setting and whereas “like-mindedness,” obviously, does not automatically imply identity of interests, reports from these meetings seem to indicate that a consensus could more easily be established on key issues of global peace and security among this group of states with a history of (more or less intense) collaboration. One way to build on these commonalities would be to initiate a process of multinational study groups from some of these countries (and possibly also from additional liberal democracies, such as India and Brazil) with the task of developing alternative visions for the institutional architecture of global security. The initiative could come from either the foreign ministries or well-connected think tanks in the respective countries. In any case, the idea would be to form thematic multinational study groups involving experts from both inside and outside government (eg. diplomats, knowledgeable members of parliament, foreign affairs experts from think tanks, and the academic community). Given the delicate nature of issues, such as UNSC reform, the foreign ministries may want to play a low-key role. Yet they might be open for new ideas generated in an exchange among experts from a multitude of national and professional backgrounds. Among others, the agenda of such study groups might include issues such as the value of expanding or contracting the role of particular international institutions; the balance between inclusivity and exclusivity, multilateralism and unilateralism; the commonalities and differences in outlook on these issues among the liberal democracies involved in such exchanges, etc. Given the fact that this would be a low-key and informal coordination mechanism among specialists tasked to “think big,” possible hurdles relating to national sensitivities about certain topics should be surmountable. The “Chatham House Rule” or similar mechanisms intended to preserve confidentiality could provide additional reassurance.

¹The countries included the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Italy, France, Germany, and the U.K.; for more detail see Jain, op.cit. and the discussion surrounding the presentation of his paper at the Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/democracy-promotion/advocating-liberal-world-order-strategy-aligning-worlds-like-minded-capable-democracies/p29842> (February 12, 2013).

of minilateral frameworks undermines existing institutions in terms of both legitimacy and effectiveness by encouraging ever more extensive “forum shopping.” This refers to a state’s choice of that forum in which it expects to achieve the most favorable outcome based on its often short-term preferences.¹²⁷ Other things being equal, this tendency privileges exclusive institutions at the expense of inclusive ones. North American and European democracies had their fair share in this practice during the last two decades — just remember the preference for NATO over the UN during the Kosovo war, or the preference for a “coalition of the willing” over the UN (or even NATO) in the 2003 Iraq war. The ironic result of forum shopping is that an “institutionally thick world” where forum shopping spreads not only fails to deliver valuable diffuse reciprocity but even “begins to resemble the neorealist depiction of anarchy.”¹²⁸

To be sure, multilateral fatigue among North American and European liberal democracies is also the result of disenchantment with recent experiences with malfunctioning multilateral institutions, both in the UN (eg. Syria) and with the EU and NATO. Unsurprisingly, therefore, there is a widespread tendency among those democracies to pursue *Realpolitik* strategies similar to the BRICS. In the United States’ case, for instance, this has been the emphasis on an exclusive regrouping among liberal democracies (such as a “Concert of Democracies,” or, variations that begin with “Alliance,” “Union,” or “League”). Often, this has been postulated as an alternative to the UN if “reform” fails. Sometimes such a democratic realignment has been suggested *because* it was already taken for granted that the UN cannot be

reformed.¹²⁹ An increasingly critical attitude vis-à-vis multilateralism is even detectable among a traditional champion of multilateral cooperation, Germany. For instance, critics charge that the institutional rules and practices of the EU are currently being rewritten more in line with German national interests than with a consolidation of a democratically accountable system of European rule. Thus, current trends in Europe and North America do not look very promising as far as new initiatives for global institutional reform are concerned. Nevertheless, the stakes of the old guardians of “liberal order” are much higher than those of the newcomers. Moreover, there are a few tentative signs that these liberal democracies may, after all, be ready to rethink what their responsibilities and stakes may entail.

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Readjusting the Balance between Inclusivity and Exclusivity, Multilateralism and Minilateralism

The tension between a more restrained, pluralist, and inclusive route toward institutional reform that may entail efficiency costs, and a more assertively “liberal” alternative that focuses on some core liberal values at the expense of legitimacy (eg. humanitarian interventions as in Kosovo) will continue to circumscribe the strategic horizon of possibilities for any type of multilateral reform initiative. To say that “the UN” does not work is often simply an expression of frustration that one has not gotten his/her way. In the field of peace and security, the UN nevertheless remains the only international institution with the most convincing claim to universal legitimacy. At the same time

¹²⁷ M. Busch, “Overlapping Institutions, Forum Shopping, and Dispute Settlement in International Trade,” *International Organization*, 61: 4 (2007), pp. 735-61.

¹²⁸ D. Drezner, “Two Challenges to Institutionalism,” A.S. Alexandroff, ed., *Can the World Be Governed? Possibilities for Effective Multilateralism* (Waterloo, ON: The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2008), pp. 139-159, here 151.

¹²⁹ See The Princeton Project on National Security, *Forging a World of Liberty under Law. U.S. National Security in the 21st Century*, G. J. Ikenberry and A. Slaughter, Co-Directors, Princeton University (September 27, 2006), available at <http://www.princeton.edu/~ppns/report/FinalReport.pdf>, esp. p. 7.

there is no reason why minilateral efforts among “like-minded” liberal democracies¹³⁰ could not be tailored to complement and strengthen inclusive institutional frameworks such as the UN. In this

sense inclusive and exclusive frameworks are not mutually exclusive. There is an increasing need to think about alternative strategies for readjusting the balance between them (see box on p. 109).

¹³⁰ A. Jain, *Like-Minded and Capable Democracies. A New Framework for Advancing a Liberal World Order*, Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper, January 2013.