WORLD 2000

An international planning dialogue to help shape the new global system

William E. Halal

WORLD 2000 is a project of the World Future Society that is intended to define the emerging global system and to help shape its formation. The project accomplishes these goals by conducting an international planning dialogue that brings together the rich diversity of views from all sectors of society to form a global consensus on how the world may realize a commonly shared vision of the future—it could be thought of as 'strategic planning for the planet'. This article describes the WORLD 2000 Project, presents preliminary results in the form of a tentative global strategic plan, and invites participation by all those interested in the future of the planet.

Epoch-shattering events like the collapse of communism and the unification of Europe have made it clear that a new approach is emerging in global affairs, but there is great confusion over the nature of this brave new world and how we can get there. Many interpret these events to mean that a 'new world order' is at hand, while others are sceptical at the implication that any central authority can impose order on a world exploding with diversity and complexity.

The WORLD 2000 Project was conceived by the Board of Directors of the World Future Society as an attempt to define this emerging global system and to help shape its formation. A surge of similar 'global planning projects' has appeared during the past few years now that the prospect of a unified globe is at hand, but they seem to focus on special issues like the environment or have other limitations. WORLD 2000 does not approach this task from any particular perspective. Rather it strives to conduct a fresh examination of the forces that are integrating the Earth into a coherent global *order* as well as those that are creating the *dis*order that

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TABLE 1. WORLD 2000 PROJECT TEAM

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Harlan Cleveland, World Academy of Art & Science
Jerry Glenn, United Nations University
Willis Harman, Institute for Noetic Science
Kenneth Hunter, US General Accounting Office
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Tamas Meszaros, University of Budapest, Hungary
Michael Marien, *Future Survey*
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Joan McKinney, Global Community Organization Services
Morris Miller, Teleconferencing International
Pat and Gerald Mishe, Global Education Associates
Alexander Nikitin, Russian Academy of Sciences
Mary Rabaut, Gemini Consulting Corporation
John Renesch, *The New Leaders*, Sterling & Stone, Inc
Abdul Aziz Said, The American University
Ziauddin Sardar, Independent Scholar, London
Turid Sato, Organizing for Development, Inc
Robert Theobald, Author, Consultant, and Change Agent
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characterizes our time; both the unification of markets and communications, as well as the vast differences in culture, local problems and values erupting around the globe. By avoiding preconceived ideologies or solutions, we hope to gain new insights into the world of the future that may help overcome the difficult obstacles ahead.

While WORLD 2000 avoids any substantive limits, it is based on a procedural approach of collaborative planning dialogue. Just as executives use strategic planning to guide their organizations through a turbulent economy, this project uses a similar but broader type of global strategic planning to guide society through a turbulent epoch. And just as progressive leaders know they must help others make their own decisions, this is a collaborative planning process that helps people understand how trends are driving global change and how they can choose the future they want.

The WORLD 2000 project team is composed of scholars, intellectuals, researchers, change agents, business executives, public officials, and others from diverse backgrounds (see Table 1). In order to provide a solid point of departure, the

project team began its work by integrating central themes from the literature, the popular media, and the views of international authorities into a white paper for discussion and revision. This white paper was conceived along the lines of a 'global strategic plan' which focused on three major elements that are common in planning:

- *Global trends* now being shaped by technology, population, economics, politics, and other deeply rooted forces were analysed to project the most likely future trajectory driven by the present course of social evolution.
- *Critical issues* presented by this historic transition were identified, highlighting the unusual dilemmas involved and the unfavourable consequences that could result.
- *Strategies* for the resolution of these critical issues were suggested, including scenarios which vividly depict the different global conditions that seem likely if various alternative policy paths are chosen.

The white paper then served as a basis for conducting strategic dialogues involving widespread participation, in a similar manner to the participative planning which many organizations, cities and states have used for years. This phase is still in its early stages, but we intend to extend the process by presenting the cumulative results of past dialogues to corporations, government bodies, professional groups and international meetings attended by policy makers, scholars and other people from all walks of life to ensure that the views of all sectors and cultures are represented.

One of the challenges facing the WORLD 2000 project team is improving our ability to conduct this dialogue in a way that fully acknowledges the enormous diversity of views, successfully integrates this diversity into some type of coherent framework, and reaches conclusions that may be supported widely. While we do not yet feel that this goal has been reached, our first efforts have been very encouraging. We are finding a vast untapped reservoir of deep concern, inventive ideas and abiding hope over the prospects for creating a better world in the near future.

We realize that our goal—conducting strategic planning for the planet—may appear grandiose, but the further this project progresses the more convinced we become that it can be done effectively. The general feeling seems to be that WORLD 2000 nicely sums up the type of changes needed at this point. It focuses on the biggest issue of our time—the emergence of a unified global order—and it also moves attention from the intellectual approach that dominated global studies in the past toward a more action-oriented approach. We invite comments on this article and your active participation in the ways noted below.

The results of our efforts thus far are presented below in a white paper outlining a tentative global strategic plan. Some concluding thoughts are then offered about the role of the WORLD 2000 project team in this vast undertaking and about our future plans.

The WORLD 2000 global strategic plan: a preliminary white paper for discussion and revision

Studies of the emerging global system have become commonplace now, and so the central challenge facing the WORLD 2000 Project must be addressed head on: what can this effort hope to achieve that would be truly new and useful?

This white paper hopes to go beyond the current discussion over a global economy, sustainable development and other hot topics that are now widely discussed. Instead, it synthesizes current thought in order to discover fresh insights which can mobilize people and institutions to better guide their lives and the future of the planet. We first summarize nine supertrends which describe a long-term trajectory to an advanced stage of 'global maturity'. Then we note five principal issues which must be overcome to clear the way ahead. Finally, we argue that these issues are likely to be resolved by a newly emerging perspective which recognizes the essential unity of the emerging global community.

Implicit in this analysis is the view of global systems theory,[1] which views the Earth as a system that is now evolving rapidly to some higher state of organization, though guided by collective human choices. By viewing the world through this vivid image of a living organism that is being co-created by humans interacting with a natural evolutionary process, a more useful grasp can be discovered of our role in shaping this critical transformation in the life of the planet.

The trajectory to global maturity

The following trends represent the principal driving forces which are now moving the world in new directions —they could be called 'supertrends'. Little attempt is made to offer justifications, and many other trends that capture finer details are not covered.[2] This is simply a quick summary of the major features that can with confidence be said to characterize the emerging shape of the globe as it moves along a long-term trajectory toward a new stage of global maturity.

Trend 1. A stable population of 10–14 billion people. A planet already teeming with 5.5 billion people is expected approximately to double its population to reach a stable level somewhere between 10 14 billion humans by roughly the mid-21st century.[3] About 95% of this growth will occur in the LDCs.

Trend 2. Industrial output will increase by a factor of 5–10. The aggregate level of material consumption, or the output of the global industrial system, should increase by a factor of 5, and possibly as much as a factor of 10, over the next few decades as most remaining parts of the world industrialize to reach roughly the equivalent standard of living enjoyed by Americans, Europeans, Japanese and other modern people.[4] Industrial *throughput*, however, should increase far less as more efficient means are found to insure a sustainable form of development.

Trend 3. The wiring of the globe. Information technology (IT) is a revolutionary force that will continue to overthrow governments, restructure corporations, and unify the world as it wires the Earth into a single communication network forming the central nervous system for a planetary society.[5] However, the gap between information haves and have-nots and the proliferation of infoglut should persist.

Trend 4. The high-tech revolution. Knowledge is the heart of scientific progress, and so the IT revolution is accelerating technical advances as never before to create breakthroughs in all fields—the mapping of DNA, genetic therapy, robotics, materials research, sustainable 'green technology', automated transportation, and even a 'technology of consciousness'.

Trend 5. Global integration. The globe is integrating into a single community connected by a common communication system, a global economy, and a shared international culture. In time this process should unify today's growing economic blocs and political federations into a universal system of open trade, a global banking system and common currency, and some form of world governance.

Trend 6. Diversity and complexity. It is a great paradox that global integration will be accompanied by *dis*integration into a highly diverse system. As journalist Strobe Talbott put it, '... power is devolving upward toward supranational bodies, outward toward common markets, and downward toward autonomous units'.[6] Ethnic regions like the former republics of the USSR will continue to seek autonomy, various groups within nations will form pockets of self-governing subcultures, and modern societies generally should splinter into a far more complex, differentiated social order.[7]

Trend 7. A universal standard of freedom and human rights. Freedom and the recognition of human rights should continue spreading around the globe, although this movement may ebb and flow at times.[8] A majority of nations now practise political democracy and market systems, and the number should grow such that freedom becomes the accepted norm, with authoritarian systems being the exception.[9] Consumer goods, capital and information now move freely around the globe, and some contend that migrations of people across national borders are likely to grow.[10]

Trend 8. Limited crime, terrorism, war and disease. All will not be sweetness and light, however, because this traumatic upheaval is likely to throw off continual pain as disgruntled individuals, groups, and nations resort to a variety of crimes, terrorism, limited wars, and possibly even nuclear strikes, and as major new diseases like AIDS continually appear. However, global wars and the old fear of nuclear holocaust now seem unlikely, but still possible of course, and illnesses like AIDS are likely to be cured in time.

Trend 9. Transcendent values. As this transformation unfolds, people should increasingly strive for quality of life, community, self-fulfilment, art, spirituality, and other higher-order values that transcend material needs.[11] Many are cynical about such claims, especially spirituality but the philosopher André Malraux predicted before he died: 'The 21st century is going to be the century of religion'.

A composite scenario. These supertrends can be integrated into a composite scenario to help visualize what the world should look like in a broad, general sense when it stabilizes into a coherent global order about the mid-21st century. Enormous challenges must be overcome, of course, which will be treated in a moment, and the failure to resolve these challenges could produce severe crises, as we will also see. But viewed from the perspective of systems theory, the Earth appears to be moving along a fairly well prescribed path of development, roughly akin to the type of growth experienced by all individuals, nations, and other living systems, although on an infinitely larger scale that almost defies comprehension.[12]

    By regarding the world as a living organism (Gaia) analogous to an individual, the previous supertrends come to life more vividly. The population explosion can be seen as the equivalent of a youth's accelerated growth into a fully developed

TABLE 2. THE CENTRAL SCENARIO

The dynamics of an evolving global system should drive the planet toward a mature stage of development marked by a few dominant features at roughly the middle of the 21st century. World population should peak somewhere between 10–14 billion people who live mainly in knowledge-based societies, although some will still remain at the industrial or agricultural phases of development. This stable global population will interact mainly through information networks to operate an advanced civilization that focuses on the pursuit of knowledge and major new endeavours like the serious exploration of deep space. Environmental pressures created by a resulting 5–10 fold increase in economic output will force techno-economic systems to be designed so they are ecologically benign, sometimes only because of crashes in biological ecosystems. Society will work to curb the destructive tendencies of troubled or disaffected people with limited success, so occasional wars, crime, and other acts of violence will persist. Most nations should be part of a cohesive single community, but the global system of governance should also nourish a rich diversity of smaller sub-communities which possess the freedom to control their own affairs. These differences will be held together by a broadly shared international culture that agrees on a few essential matters, such as common standards of public behaviour, the paramount role of human values and freedom, and a widely accepted set of general spiritual values, all of which will serve to unify the globe into a functioning whole.

adult within a few short years. Likewise, the emerging global communication network is not too different from the increased social and intellectual contacts which accompany the adolescent's passage into maturity. And global diversity is much like the rich complexity of the fully developed human personality. In short, the world is undergoing a natural process of maturation as it evolves from a relatively brutal, youthful past into a far more difficult but more sophisticated adult-like phase.

The critical obstacles which could deflect this path of development into other directions will be explored more fully below by briefly sketching out other scenarios that could result. However, we think the evidence summarized in the above supertrends indicates that a long-range trajectory of global development is moving rather clearly towards a 'central scenario'. This central scenario could be thought of as the 'standard future' from which other scenarios can be defined as variations from the norm, some being less desirable future states while others may be more desirable. Which of these variations is likely to occur is hard to say, but they should all share the same common features of this standard scenario because it defines the most likely shape of the emerging world order in general terms. Table 2 outlines this central scenario which should be played out as the above trends are fully manifested over the next few decades.

Critical issues blocking the passage ahead

While it may be true that this evolutionary trajectory is likely to reach a state of maturity in time, the following five extremely difficult issues must be resolved because they pose barriers to this forward movement. As before, no details are offered but simply a quick survey to highlight key issues now posing the major obstacles to progress.

Issue 1. Making the leap to a global order. Most of the problems over which the world struggles are the result of the fragmented global chaos of separate nation-states which remain limited by prevailing industrial age technologies. Trade barriers, fluctuating currency exchange rates, difficulties in communicating, and occasional outbreaks of war are 'old' problems that should not exist in a 'new' global order that is managed as a coherent system; they do not exist in the USA,

Germany, India, Japan or China, for instance, because these societies are governed as coherent systems. The transition to some type of global order is monumental precisely because it requires a leap to an unprecedented level of governance that is unknown, and it also requires a sophisticated communications network to integrate the globe into a single system.

Issue 2. Achieving sustainable development. The present conflict between economic growth and environmental protection will be resolved either rationally or through economic decline because the anticipated 5–10-fold increase in industrial output is incompatible with any reasonable forecast under existing conditions. Many solutions are being proposed to achieve sustainable development, but the task of implementation remains formidable. Ecological systems are suffering unsustainable stress even under today's far more modest load, DCs show little inclination to alter their profligate lifestyles, and LDCs seem to be striving for the same Western-style affluence.[13]

Issue 3. Reconciling economic interests. Communism may have yielded to markets, but markets are not the same thing as capitalism. The strength of Japan, for instance, hinges on a market system based on collaborative working relations that has been called a 'human enterprise system'.[14] In contrast, the capitalism practised in most Western nations, especially in the USA, is failing because it exacerbates conflicts between labour v management, rich v poor, business v government, domestic v foreign trade, the rights of capital v social issues such as sustainable development, and other basic incompatibilities.[15] A sound global economy for the future, therefore, awaits the creation of a new economic paradigm based on some form of free enterprise that can reconcile these diverse interests into a productive yet harmonious global system.[16]

Issue 4. Managing complexity. One of the most striking trends of the emerging future is an explosion of complexity which is almost impossible to contain within today's cumbersome economic and social systems. Much of what passes for unsolvable disorder actually reflects an inability of present institutions to respond effectively to the rich diversity of individual personalities and community problems. That is the great flaw that brought down communism, but the problem is almost as severe in the West. Top-down corporations are struggling to diversify so they can serve myriad market niches, and centralized governments have not yet begun to come to grips with the awesome intricacies of education, poverty, crime, and other chronic social problems. Dramatically different institutions are needed before we can begin to manage this complex new world, but this may require an upheaval not too unlike the one now underway in the former communist bloc.

Issue 5. Alleviating the North South gap. The enormous disparity between the wealth of LDCs in the South and the DCs of the North shows little sign of improvement, fanning an explosive antagonism between these two halves of the globe. Average income in the South is now about 6% of that of the North, and differences in economic growth rates show that little progress is being made in alleviating the misery of these people who comprise three-quarters of all humanity.[17] Unless serious efforts are made to close this gap by bringing LDCs into the modern world, the Southern hemisphere will seethe with the same potential for violent confrontation that was released in the Los Angeles riots of 1992.

TABLE 3. THE TRANSITION TO A NEW GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

	Old perspective	**New perspective**
Technological base	Physical technology	Information technology
Economy	Capital-centred	Human-centred
Frontier of progress	Material growth	Sustainable development
Institutions	Hierarchical	Decentralized
Working relationships	Conflict	Cooperation

These dilemmas are exacerbated by one of the most pervasive problems of our time—a collapse of faith in the familiar old world system which guided humans through the past epoch with good success. It could be thought of as a 'meta-issue'. Western values of democracy and free enterprise are being celebrated around the world, yet it is ironic that the nations which created these ideals are themselves in crisis. At the time of this writing in 1992, for instance, Americans have become seriously disturbed over the dismal future facing their nation, while Europe, Japan and the rest of the entire global economy have entered a poorly understood decline.

With the USSR now defunct and the USA is crisis, the lack of superpower leadership has left a vacuum of power, ideas and spirit at the very time when the globe is facing Herculean new challenges. The task looming ahead is so overwhelming that most people, institutions, and even leaders are paralysed with confusion and anxiety because they are bereft of intellectual and moral guides to cope with an onslaught of disorderly change. The result is gridlock in the face of crisis, destructive personal stress, social disorders like crime and drug abuse, and many other symptoms of breakdown. Out of all this apparent chaos, a new paradigm, model, story, or belief system must somehow be formed that allows people to make sense of today's radically different global realities.

A strategy based on global wholism

An enormous variety of policies and remedial programmes are being proposed to resolve the above problems, but their sheer number and diversity scatter attention into confusing, uncoordinated and ineffectual directions. This section synthesizes these proposals into a 'master strategy' that incorporates the full spectrum of feasible solutions. Even the most sensible plans are doomed to fail, however, unless they are supported by deeply rooted intellectual models, ethical principles and moral values from which all behaviour originates. Thus, we also show that these strategies comprise realistic outcomes that are likely to evolve in time because they flow from a dramatically different, wholistic perspective now gaining increasing attention which recognizes the essential unity of the emerging global system.[18]

They key to understanding the emerging worldview is to see that unprecedented new imperatives have arisen, principally the revolutionary force of IT, which are unleashing powerful new forces to integrate the globe into a unified whole.[19] As communication systems ring the Earth to form a central nervous system for the planet, the fragmented parts of today's dying global order are being joined together into an interconnected, coherent system. The most recent report of the Club of Rome[20] notes that today's dramatic changes represent the first *global* revolution because the entire earth is experiencing these events together at the same time. This revolutionary shift in perspective can be summed up in Table 3.

This perspective then leads to the following elements of a master strategy required to overcome the issues defined before:

Strategy 1. Disseminate advanced technology to unify the globe. Although many people fear the effects of technology, the fact is that the relentless advance of modern technology, and especially IT, is the primary force driving the globe through its present transition. It was the ubiquitous presence of TV, radio, fax and videos, for instance, which leaked a stream of outside information into the communist bloc to arm these people with the knowledge required to mobilize an overthrow of their corrupt governments.

The dissemination of advanced ITs should be encouraged to integrate the Earth into a coherent system, therefore, either by corporations selling sophisticated products abroad, governments fostering scientific research, individuals sharing technical knowledge among one another, and any other reasonable methods. All technology can be misused, so care is needed to ensure that it is applied appropriately. The emerging global order is being constructed on a technological foundation, however, and the sooner that foundation is in place, the sooner this system can behave as an advanced global community.

Strategy 2. Integrate economics and society. One of the greatest dilemmas of our age is the separation of economic life from social life, which has been criticized by countless reformers ranging from Karl Marx to Ralph Nader.[21] The time for reconciling this unnecessary conflict is at hand, as evidenced by breakthroughs that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Japan has shown the world that a union of economic and social interests is *more* productive, spurring others to emulate this 'human-centred' form of enterprise. Even General Motors, long regarded as the antithesis of this idea, has formed GM Saturn as a prototype of socially responsive business, managed by a coalition of workers, customers, suppliers, distributors and local citizens. To clinch this lesson, the Saturn production lines cannot keep up with demand because Saturn cars are now the best in their class, proving that social goals are compatible with economic goals.

Intense global competition should in time force most economies to adopt this posture simply because it is efficient.[22] Decisions from the shopfloor to national macroeconomic policy may then be made by bodies composed of all affected parties, including workers, consumer advocates, environmentalists and ordinary citizens.

Strategy 3. Nestle society into its environment. A harmonious economy–society interface will mean little if it is not supported by a viable ecosystem, so civilization must be carefully nestled into its living environment. Here again, a breakthrough has arrived in which business firms are competing to prove how green they are because the public demands it.[23] Stephen Schmidheiny, Chairman of the Business Council for Sustainable Development, put it best: 'Progress toward sustainable development makes good business sense because it can create competitive advantage and new opportunities'.[24]

A wide range of difficult adjustments are under way to integrate ecological realities into economic and social life.[25] Sustainable technologies are being developed to increase energy efficiency, adopt more modest but wholesome lifestyles, develop renewable energy, reforest denuded regions, convert to organic

agriculture, recycle waste, and improve pollution controls.[26] To evaluate this complex situation realistically, social indicators must be incorporated into financial measures like GNP, and social costs like pollution should be internalized in the form of taxes and credits to guide balanced economic choices.[27]

Strategy 4. Decentralize institutions to empower individuals. Almost all serious analysts agree that social institutions need to be restructured for a knowledge-based global order, but confusion reigns over what is needed. We suggest that the most useful guide can be found in two dominant imperatives now sweeping through modern nations: institutions are being decentralized into networks of small autonomous units to contain unmanageable complexity, and policy making is moving toward collaborative, democratic control to unify all this diversity into a harmonious whole.[28]

Various sectors are following these two imperatives rather precisely. Large corporations are being disaggregated into small 'internal enterprises' that form the equivalent of market economies within their organization—'internal markets'.[29] US education is on the verge of a revolution in which monolithic government control is yielding to a market system offering 'choice', while schools are beginning to be governed democratically by teachers, parents, local citizens and administrators. Under the pressure of limited budgets and public demands, politicians are finding that most government functions can also perform better by allowing the public to choose among competing agencies that are governed democratically.[30]

Change is also needed at the international level. The traditional view advocates extending the UN mandate to address new problems such as the environment, which would magnify the UN's liability as an unwieldy bureaucracy. An alternative approach is to form international institutions staffed by volunteers working as a collaborative task force, roughly like the free enterprise model.[31] Good examples are the Law of the Sea Conference, the Club of Rome, and the G-7 summit meetings.

Many years of experimentation will be needed to find the way ahead, but central to all possible solutions is the overriding goal of restructuring authority relationships. Markets and democracy share the common trait of placing control in the hands of ordinary people, and, as the collapse of communism reminds us, that is emerging as the central principle needed to rejuvenate modern life. The most promising approach to successfully managing a complex world requires placing the responsibility for social control in the hands of individuals. The decentralization of institutions, then, serves the ultimate purpose of empowering people to care for their own lives, with institutions offering support.[32]

Strategy 5. Foster collaborative working relationships. These changes will be difficult because the prevailing view is that the world is a zero-sum game which invariably pits one party against another. Fortunately, it is also becoming clear that a knowledge-based society fosters pockets of collaborative problem-solving in which all partners benefit, while competition between these pockets serves to drive collaborating parties together. That's why no-nonsense business executives are creating a flurry of strategic alliances, even with their competitors. Cooperation has now become the most powerful trend in world affairs.

This different perspective offers the prospect of forging productive alliances to knit together a global community of business and government, economists and ecologists, competing nations, and so on. Note that an ethic of cooperation does

not imply altruism, but rather a reciprocity of interests that benefits all partners. It is enlightened self-interest.

The concept could dramatically alter international relations. Governments around the world are losing control as power leaks across their borders, making the old concept of national sovereignty increasingly obsolete. Pooling sovereignty through collaborative alliances (like the EC), however, allows governments to regain control through sharing responsibility for international problems. The conflict between North and South, for instance, could yield as cooperative ventures such as the North American Trade Agreement are fostered between DCs and LDCs based on mutual advantages for both parties—LDCs gaining capital, jobs, and know-how, while DCs gain access to markets and less costly labour.

Failures to pursue the master strategy

It should be obvious there is no assurance that the world will pursue a path of this type, and so it is quite possible that some variations from the standard future may occur, as we suggested above. The following briefly outlines five alternative scenarios that could result from a failure to pursue the five previous corresponding strategies. These scenarios could be thought of as variations or deviations from the long-term evolutionary trajectory. Obviously a range of more subtle gradations between the central scenario and these more dramatic extremes is also possible.

Variation 1. Low technology. Technological advances always incur costs, and the enormity of the coming technological revolution could easily produce a counter-revolution back toward the 'low technologies' that marked the past. This could take the form of a return-to-the-land movement, values extolling the virtues of simple life styles free of electronic gadgets like TV, and even outright bans on suspect technologies like nuclear power, genetic engineering, and the like. While this may seem like a pleasant return to an idyllic past, actually living without the benefits of modern life usually turns romantic fantasies into hard realities, as ample experiences testify.[33]

Variation 2. Neo-capitalism. The collapse of socialism has emboldened advocates of a more pure form of capitalism, so the notion that enterprise should be designed to serve social interests as well as profit may prove elusive. South America, the USA, and possibly even the former Soviet Union have been celebrating the unfettered pursuit of wealth recently, and this trend toward neo-capitalism could easily accelerate. Large parts of the world might then revert to a replay of the laissez-faire capitalism that once gave rise to an age of robber barons.

Variation 3. Ecological collapse. The pursuit of ecologically sustainable technologies, economics and lifestyles requires hard discipline, so it is understandable that many are reluctant to make such sacrifices. Indeed, a fierce anti-environmental movement is growing even now in the USA. If these reactionary forces prevail or even retard progress significantly, we could witness serious degradations of fragile ecosystems, massive loss of species, and a spreading collapse of the ability to sustain human life in some parts of the world, such as are occurring now in Africa.

Variation 4. Authoritarian rule. Democracy is a thin reed that bends quickly under the weight of crisis, and any of the above scenarios would be sufficient excuse for a

'man on a white horse' to restore order by assuming dictatorial powers. The spectre of economic decline in the USA drove one-third of the electorate toward a frantic rush to embrace Ross Perot before he revealed his flaws. It is quite possible that trying conditions could produce authoritiarian control in corporations, national governments, and even some form of global dictatorship, similar to the way that the German Third Reich, the Soviet Union, and many other empires tried to impose their rule on the world.

Variation 5. Social conflict While cooperation seems to be gaining slowly because it is efficient, it also provokes heated resistance from those more inclined toward an adversarial, individualist posture. Thus it is easily conceivable that a breakdown of today's growing alliances may erupt into conflict between labour and management, business and government, or nation and nation. An almost palpable glee could be heard among some when the currency crisis scuttled plans for a unified Europe in 1992.

Although these deviations from the central scenario are certainly possible, and some are even likely to occur, the systems perspective of global evolution may help to clarify the prospects ahead.

If one thinks about it, the despair often voiced over the future[34] sounds not too different from the anguish teenagers express over their struggle to grow up. This comparison is not intended to belittle the formidable troubles facing today's world, since it is certainly true that difficult issues pose dangerous junctures which could deflect the trajectory toward maturity into dismal directions. However, the fact is that historic breakthroughs have occurred in the past few years—the collapse of Soviet communism, a greatly reduced threat of nuclear holocaust, and worldwide concern over the environmental crisis—largely through the natural evolution of the globe. Barring unforeseen disasters, it is reasonable to expect that the other remaining obstacles noted above could also be resolved in due course out of this same natural process, although we may not now be able to anticipate how or when.

This does not mean that humans are simply passive observers of an immutable process of natural development. The widely accepted concept of co-creation offers an effective way to understand this interaction between natural evolution and human volition. Evolutionary forces beyond human control are certain to present us with bold new challenges and possibilities, but we bear the responsibility to act wisely in order to make the future a reality. Neither alone is sufficient, however, and there are realistic limits to what both can accomplish together, so it is important to be honest about what can and cannot be done so as to direct our limited energy with precision.

For instance, governing the globe in a rational, unified manner seems impossible without the implementation of worldwide information systems. But the world is moving relentlessly to make this a realistic goal in a decade or two, and this historic development transcends the actions of any particular individuals, corporations, or even governments. It is a technological revolution erupting from countless sources that seems destined to arrive within our lifetimes.

This pivotal example illustrates the essential paradox of large-scale social change. Global change is utterly beyond our personal control since massive evolutionary forces are involved, yet these forces largely emanate from the collective actions and awareness of countless individuals. The key is to understand where the next evolutionary niche lies waiting to be filled, and then to somehow initiate a

chain reaction that will ignite spreading masses of people in that direction. Co-creation.

The role of WORLD 2000

The above constitutes a global strategic plan, but it is only a tentative plan that serves as a starting point for further discussion among other parties in the world with differing interests. The WORLD 2000 project hopes to use this white paper to continue its global dialogue among business executives, government officials, educators, journalists, scholars, clergy and other people from all walks of life around the world. A particular effort will be made to coordinate our efforts with the UN Millennium Project, Agenda 21, the World Business Academy, the Global Tomorrow Coalition, Holis, and the many other global efforts that are springing up.

Two main goals seem reasonable. The first is to redefine continually this strategic plan, using what is learned through dialogue, in order to arrive at some rough international consensus, and to understand the irreconcilable differences that may remain. Second, the parties in this dialogue can be assisted in carrying out some part of the plan. For instance, we may help business executives to create human-centred corporations, politicians to restructure governments, educators to develop courses on a global society, householders to adopt self-sustaining life-styles, and so on. We are finding that the broad, wholistic approach of WORLD 2000 can in principle encompass any particular interest. If the essence of the new world is connectedness, this type of dialogue offers the way to understanding and action.[35]

We have no illusions that this will change the world because the project claims few resources and people with limited time and energy. But by acting in the role of co-creators described above, we hope to serve as a catalyst for change and thereby exert leverage beyond our own capabilities. That explains the significance of the project title. It is defined as WORLD 2000, not because we hope to see the world reach maturity by that time, but because the year 2000 represents a critical point for exerting strategic change. The revolutionary force of information techno-logy should reach its full power at about the turn of the millennium, which will also coincide with other reinforcing trends. The mission of WORLD 2000, then, is to conduct this strategic dialogue among the key parties who will shape the new global system during this strategic period through their critical decisions and seminal new ideas.

Accomplishing this ambitious mission, however, will test all of us severely. Not in difficult work, although that will be needed, but because our unavoidably special perspectives as individuals will have to yield to a broader perspective. The enor-mous diversity of the emerging global order can only be integrated into a workable whole by accepting the legitimacy of foreign views, even those we may feel to be antithetical to our own.[36] The type of wholism that is central to the new global system is not some breathless, liberal mysticism. It must include everything. Conservatives play an important role because they raise crucial objections that test new proposals to avoid going off half-cocked, like scientific debates, and their influence maintains a healthy continuity with past traditions. For example, George Will incisively questioned the current faith in global warming by noting that a similar belief in global *cooling* was widely embraced not long ago.[37]

The primary skill required to make WORLD 2000 succeed, then, is a gentle,

attentive humility that is rare today, which may be the biggest reason why little serious progress is under way. The new global system will not be built by any one group, but by reconciling the conflicting, endlessly changing, overwhelming complexity posed by an enormously diverse world—while still acting with clarity and purpose. This ability to listen intently to others, rather than to offer pearls of wisdom, may be the most important talent needed to navigate in these uncharted waters. Bob Theobald describes it as 'living in the questions'. What is involved, fundamentally, is a more prescient way of being that permits us to regain control over our lives, paradoxically, by relinquishing the illusion of self-control in favour of shared control.

If the WORLD 2000 project team can master that skill, we may accomplish our mission to some extent by modelling the very essence of the solution that must be widely adopted if the world is to form a global community.

Future plans

After an initial kick-off meeting at the World Future Society's 1992 Conference in Annaheim, California, we are planning to make WORLD 2000 a major track at the 1993 World Future Society Assembly in Washington, DC. Some more ambitious ideas are also being proposed which are innovative but a little risky, so the project might fill a special role serving as a 'laboratory for change' within the Society, much as the Saturn Division has done for General Motors. For the time being, however, we are focusing our energies on using the 1993 Conference to get this project mobilized and moving in the right directions. The following are tentative plans for the meeting:

- *Track/Theme.* WORLD 2000 will form a track consisting of 10–15 sessions running through the 1993 meeting, as suggested below. We are also thinking of using the project as the major theme around which the next assembly(ies) will be organized.
- *Sessions.* This track will consist of the following:
    (1) An opening plenary in which plans for the meeting are presented.
    (2) Sessions conducting strategic planning dialogues for key issues like sustainable development, the new economic paradigm, and the North–South gap.
    (3) Sessions cutting across these issues which focus on major regions of the world.
    (4) Sessions focusing on the role of global corporations, governments, NGOs etc.
    (5) Presentations by other 'word planning organizations' such as the UN's Millennium Project etc, and attempts to create strategic alliances among these groups.
    (6) Teams working on media/promotion, fund raising, and other practical activities needed to make the project work.
    (7) Some approach for synthesizing all this into a coherent global vision, strategic plan etc.
- *High-tech.* Preliminary plans are underway to use groupware and other computerized conferencing systems to conduct the strategic planning dialogues more effectively, thereby incorporating the high-tech environment that is driving global integration.

TABLE 4. HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD 2000

- Attend the 1993 meeting of the WORLD 2000 Project, which will be held as part of the World Future Society General Assembly, June 27–July 31, 1993, in Washington, DC, in order to learn about the Project and to offer your views.
- Contribute and help raise funds to cover travel expenses, mail, clerical help, long-distance communications, and other administrative costs.
- Promote the project by placing reports in newsletters, magazines, journals, radio, TV, computer bulletin boards, and other types of media.
- Encourage managers, executives, and professionals from corporations, governments, and other institutions to participate in the study through any of the ways listed in this article. For instance, members of the WORLD 2000 project team are available to conduct workshops on 'Strategic Planning in a Global Context' for key personnel of any type of institution.
- We are especially interested in hearing from those who would like to take on the responsibility for organizing one of the sessions at the 1993 meeting or any other type of project within World 2000.
- Send suggestions, useful information sources, creative ideas, and proposals on any of the above possibilities to Professor William Halal, 203 Monroe Hall, George Washington University, Washington, DC, 20052, USA. Fax: 202 994-5975.

- *International representation.* A special effort is being made to bring people from around the world to the meeting, possibly with help from local embassies in Washington. Ideally, half or so of the conferees will be non-Americans.
- *Project governance.* A process is being planned to allow the conferees to frame a system of governance and select its leadership. If feasible, the World 2000 Project could then become a model of governance for the global organizations now evolving.

These plans are being coordinated by an invisible college of concerned individuals who contribute their time, resources, ideas and leadership by working together through meetings, telephone calls, fax, and computer conferencing. Our efforts at this point focus on forming advisory/consultant groups which may offer to conduct a strategic planning dialogue within a global context for corporations, governments, or other organization; producing articles, books, videos, and other types of communications; and so on. These may be for-profit ventures, projects sponsored by a foundation, and virtually any other type of undertaking.

Because of the enormous scope and goals of WORLD 2000, we are making a major effort to invite all members of the futures community, as well as other professional and intellectual communities, to join this effort by helping in any way they choose. See Table 4 for suggestions on how you may participate. Almost any set of interests can be included in WORLD 2000, so please tell us what you or your organization would like to achieve and we will help work it into our plans. The time is right, and together we could accomplish something of global significance.

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