

Leadership *in* Action

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A View on Global Leadership

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As we approach the next millennium, the world faces a growing number of economic, political, and technological challenges that significantly affect people no matter what national or cultural borders they live within. Our primary resource for meeting such challenges is leadership, but the practice of leadership that works across borders—what is often referred to as *global leadership*—is relatively new, and our understanding of it is still evolving.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to think at length about global leadership, and the privilege to interact with a large number of both distinguished and emerging global leaders. I would like to share with you what I learned from this experience, in the hope that this will contribute in some small way to what I think is essential for the development of global leadership: an ongoing exchange of ideas and lessons that can deepen our understanding and improve our practice.

Influences on Global Leadership

In the latter half of the twentieth century, there have been three major influences on the practice and understanding of global leadership. Let me begin with the one that I think is crucial but that is sometimes overlooked or even discounted.

Leadership by Institutions

An important influence on the practice of global leadership has been the international effort to create organizations whose purpose is to provide it. Two such organizations have been created. The first was the League of Nations. Established at the end of World War I, it presented its mandate system as a

“sacred trust of civilization.” It was to be a triumph of universal values over parochial values, but its operation turned out to be little different from the political balance-of-power system of the Congress of Vienna (which had restored and defended the conservative monarchical order that had been disrupted by the Napoleonic Wars). The league became a congress of European powers determined to defend colonialism at all costs against the rising tide of self-determination and the challenge of communism; it turned a blind eye to the danger of fascism in Europe. The result was a failure of leadership, which ultimately led to World War II.

The United Nations (UN) came into existence in 1945. It also promised leadership based on universally shared human values and ideas. But the reservation clause to the statute of the International Court of Justice, which allowed countries to opt out of UN compulsory jurisdiction; the veto power held by the permanent members of the Security Council;

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Global Leadership as Seen by Distinguished Leaders

Many of the ideas expressed in this article were developed as I organized two international leadership programs, in 1997 and 1998, in Amman, Jordan, for the United Nations University. Each program brought together emerging leaders (elected government officials, diplomats, heads of nongovernmental organizations, private sector managers, doctors and lawyers with international practices, university professors, and UN officials) for five weeks of experiential learning, including working sessions and study tours to various countries. A number of distinguished leaders from around the world were also present to interact directly with the participants. The programs, which together involved over two hundred participants from more than one hundred countries, thus gave me the opportunity to observe and to interact with a wide range of leaders and leadership experts. In the course of this I was able to get a sense of what many distinguished leaders think is the essence of global leadership. Here is a selection of these views (as I understand them):

An essential aspect of global leadership is . . .

- Humility and people orientation* (the late King Hussein, Jordan).
- Hard work and social justice* (Queen Noor, Jordan).
- Working to promote human security* (then Crown Prince Hassan, Jordan).
- The courage to change convictions* (Shimon Peres, former prime minister, Israel).
- Dynamic and forward-looking involvement* (Amr Moussa, foreign minister, Egypt).
- Perseverance in the face of adversity* (Yasser Arafat, president, Palestinian National Authority).
- A quest for multidisciplinary knowledge* (Yaqub Khan, minister, Pakistan).
- Coalition-building skills* (Simone Veil, former president, European Parliament, and minister, France).
- Transforming information into useful knowledge* (Harlan Cleveland, president, World Academy of Art and Science, and member of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations, United States).
- Courage and personal convictions* (Paul Findley, former congressman, United States).
- Passion for one's own convictions* (Paul McCloskey, former congressman, United States).
- Openness and long-term vision* (Hui Hongzengh, minister, China).
- Critical thinking, even about superiors* (Lord Gilmour, former minister of defense, United Kingdom).
- Passionate commitment to human development* (Lord Judd, former minister of development, United Kingdom).
- Initiative and hard work* (Lord Steel, president, Liberal International, United Kingdom).

Courage to defend one's convictions (Arundati Ghose, India's permanent representative to the UN, Geneva, Switzerland).

The ability to facilitate (Jan Egeland, secretary of state, Norway).

Education (Oscar Arias, former president, Costa Rica).

That it be enriched by art and education (Harriet Fulbright, executive director, President's Committee on Art and Humanities, United States).

Self-knowledge (John Alexander, president, Center for Creative Leadership, United States).

Successful negotiating, which requires critical analysis and great preparation (John Ohiohenuan, TCDC director, United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]).

Consensus building (Essmat Abdel Meguid, secretary-general, Arab League).

Education (Adnan Badran, deputy director-general, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]).

Understanding that human development is greater than economic development (Tariq Hussein, representing the president of the World Bank).

Education, especially for promoting women in leadership (Nafis Sadik, executive director, United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]).

Problem solving and diplomatic mediation (Alvaro de Soto, assistant secretary-general for political affairs, United Nations).

Linking peace, democracy, and development (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former secretary-general, United Nations).

The ability to learn from one's failures and the importance of positive thinking (Mikhail Gorbachev, former president, former Soviet Union).

The desire to find a commonly accepted definition of leadership proved to be a preoccupation for many of the emerging leaders who attended the program. In contrast, the distinguished leaders often hesitated to offer a clear definition. This is perhaps not surprising: first, because there are as many definitions of leadership as there are leadership activities and, second, because leadership frequently involves making difficult, controversial choices that can't be explained simply by theoretical formulations. (Mikhail Gorbachev, who didn't attend the programs but who I invited to Amman for a separate series of seminars, and the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat are examples of people who in struggling to make their leadership global are viewed as unusually successful by some and strikingly unsuccessful by others.) Third, most of the distinguished leaders were much more occupied with the activity of leadership than with theoretical reflections about it.

and the realities of the Cold War meant that the UN initially reflected the balance of power at the end of World War II.

The end of the Cold War gave rise to hopes that the UN, freed from the paralysis of ideological conflict, would be able to provide effective global leadership—especially by resolving disputes nonmilitarily and maintaining the peace.

Keeping the peace in the post-Cold-War era, however, has proven to be a formidable task. Between 1945 and 1987, the UN established thirteen peacekeeping operations. Between 1988 and 1995, it had to establish another twenty-one. We have seen intense ethnic conflicts, border disputes, disintegration of states, and a massive increase in the number of displaced persons. For instance, the number of people the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is concerned with has gone from seventeen million in 1991 to twenty-three million in 1993 to more than twenty-seven million in 1995, with a growing number of states obstructing the arrival of asylum seekers and returning refugees to their countries of origin.

Realizing that the end of the Cold War created unique opportunities for institutional global leadership, former UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali strove to strengthen the organization and emphasize its leadership role. For instance, he stressed preventive diplomacy and introduced the

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idea of peace-building. Resolving a military conflict, he said, is only the first step. Peace-building goes beyond the cessation of hostilities and addresses the underlying causes of the conflict. To build peace, efforts should be directed at improving educational and economic opportunities, building the infrastructures of good governance, and empowering the less privileged people in society.

Boutros-Ghali's agendas—Agenda for Peace (1992), Agenda for Development (1994), and Agenda for Democratization (1996)—must figure among the UN's many leadership achievements, reflecting his view that peace is a prerequisite for development, that democracy is essential for development to succeed over the long term, and that democracy is necessary not only inside states but also among states in the international community.

In June 1997, the UN General Assembly adopted the Agenda for Development. Secretary-General Kofi Annan hailed the achievement as "one of the most far-reaching agreements on the central issue of development ever attained by the international community," and this agenda does go far beyond the usual areas of economic growth and poverty eradication. It covers such issues fundamental to development as human rights, good governance, and the empowerment of women. "The Agenda," said Annan, "represents a major step in articulating an international consensus of the diversity of views concerning the fundamental goals of and requirements for economic and social development."

The efforts of the United Nations on behalf of global leadership have been necessarily restricted because the UN has limited resources and because it is able to do only what its members, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, will allow it to do. Despite these limitations, the efforts have been praiseworthy. Some good, practical work has been accomplished. And furthermore the UN and, to a lesser degree, the League of Nations have promoted what I think is an essential aspect of global leadership: universal values.

Corporate Management and Leadership

A very influential force, for both good and bad, in the understanding and practice of global leadership is the prominence of what I call the *field of leadership*. This field, the product of many years of interaction among researchers, consultants, and practicing managers, is universally recognized because of its success; it has generated ideas that have worked (and many that haven't, but the failures are studied and recycled).

It is a large field, with a great deal of prescriptive work (done by such people as Peter Drucker and Stephen Covey) and a small but growing body of work on public policy leadership (done by such people as Warren Bennis, James McGregor Burns, Harlan Cleveland, Howard Gardner, and Ronald Heifetz).

Although in theory concerned with all types of leadership, the field is in my opinion almost exclusively dominated by leadership understood as effective corporate management. Essentially, according to this view, an effective leader-manager is one who thinks proactively, reacts situationally (finding solutions that come out of the needs of the situation), strikes a balance between task orientation and people orientation, has a vision, inspires commitment to work, empowers,

and communicates well. The prominence of this understanding of leadership is certainly a consequence of its many successes, and there is a lot that we can learn from it. Many of the leadership skills and attitudes associated with effective corporate management are transferable to other environments.

Lately, people in the field have made great efforts to take a global perspective. This is largely because of the increasingly international conduct of business: trade, finance, and investment opportunities for multinational corporations.

This is not a bad development per se, but whatever its other merits, such globalization has left out the notion of universally shared human values. It is axiomatic that effective management of the corporation is first and foremost measured by the economic interests of the corporation. If and when there are other economic and social benefits to society at large, they come as a by-product, not as a principal goal.

For instance, the economic benefits of globalization, if measured by direct foreign investments, have gone largely to East Asia (70 percent, with China alone accounting for 40 percent), whereas

Africa, suffering already from a fall in official development assistance, is receiving only 4 percent of foreign investments.

The prominent French political writer Ignacio Ramonet reminded us in a recent issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* of some UN statistics that rarely come

up when the benefits of globalization are being enumerated: In 1960, the income of the 20 percent of the world's population living in the richest countries was thirty times greater than that of the 20 percent in the poorest countries. In 1995, it was eighty-two times greater. In more than seventy countries, per capita income is lower today than it was twenty years ago. Close to one-half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day. Almost one-third of the one billion people living in developing countries have no safe drinking water. Every year, nearly thirty million people die of hunger. This at a time when the total wealth of the world's three richest individuals is greater than the combined gross domestic product of the forty-eight poorest countries.

According to UN calculations, the basic needs for food, drinking water, education, and medical care for the entire population of the whole world could be covered by a levy of less than 4 percent on the

accumulated wealth of the 225 largest private fortunes. To meet the world's sanitation and food requirements would cost only \$13 billion, less than the amount that the people of the United States and the European Union spend every year on perfume.

Globalization has not caused this dismal state of affairs, but it has created the environment in which a market-driven survival-of-the-fittest attitude has undercut political leadership—which I see as the third major influence on global leadership.

Political Leadership

Amartya Sen, the winner of the 1998 Nobel prize in economics, suggests that the absence of democracy and a free press may be the principal culprit in the politics of hunger. And he asserts that greater responsibility for the well-being of society must be given not to the market but to the nation-state. He urges states to be sensitive to the needs of their citizens and, at the same time, show concern for human development throughout the world. But are the states up to the challenge? It's a question of political leadership.

There was a time when leadership was equated with political governance, and there were many examples to support that idea: Churchill, de Gaulle, Gandhi, Nasser, and Roosevelt. These and others were leaders who spoke to and strongly represented the aspirations of their people, guiding them through times of upheaval. The state was supreme, sovereignty and nationalism were well established, and leaders were larger than life. Charisma and authority were synonymous with leadership.

Today the information and communication revolution has loosened the grip of sovereignty and made its relevance tenuous. Globalization has defeated protectionism. Economic liberalism has diminished the power and size of many states. Although the challenges facing the world are formidable, our leaders are no longer larger than life. In fact, political leadership is in many places in a state of crisis. Despite this, many in the media still equate leadership with political leadership.

Developing Global Leadership

I believe that we are witnessing a change in the understanding and practice of leadership in general. There are people all over the world engaged in leadership activities, deriving their charisma and authority from what is accomplished.

This change acknowledges that the problems we face are too widespread to leave their solving to states and political leaders, corporate leaders, or

Globalization has left out the notion of universally shared human values.

leadership institutions. The men and women engaged in important leadership activities can be found in public and private sectors, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, national and international institutions, the academy, and citizen movements. We are, in fact, seeing the democratization of leadership.

An essential question, however, remains: How can this new kind of leadership be made global? We can certainly draw on what has been learned by our institutional experience (that it is crucial to be guided by universal human values), corporate experience (that it is essential to take a proactive approach to problems, one that balances tasks and people and that uses vision to inspire, empower, and communicate), and political experience (that it is key to strongly represent the aspirations of people in any change process).

In addition, truly global leadership will require the ability to bring about a harmonization, not a clash, of cultures; to facilitate crossing borders, not only with goods but with people and ideas; to sensitize people to the imperative of both resolving conflicts and building peace; and to advance the cause of human rights not only for individuals but also for groups.

Such global leadership will challenge and modify the dominant discourse on globalization. When we talk about the globalization of business, we will also talk about the globalization of human concerns. When we discuss the globalization of national security, we will also discuss the globalization of human security. And when we consider the international interests of states, we will also recognize the emerging global civil society. In order to do this, management that is driven by economic interests must grow into leadership that is driven by human interests.

Finally, developing such leadership will not be easy. There is a need for leadership training that is oriented toward public service, focuses on good governance and good management, and promotes multilateral cooperation. Emerging global leaders should be encouraged to create a network among themselves so that they can pursue together the articulation of universal human values.

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Lessons of Global Leadership

I offer ten lessons that I have learned from thinking about and organizing developmental opportunities for global leaders.

1. Global leadership cannot be achieved with a recipe. It requires understanding integrated with practice.
2. A prerequisite for a good understanding of global leadership is the ability to see the big picture, to have a long-term vision, and to be ready for life-long learning.
3. A prerequisite for the practice of global leadership—for leadership in action—is comfort with risk taking and change.
4. There can be no global leadership in the absence of some strong convictions and the personal courage to change convictions.
5. Global leadership is different from management. Management skills cannot drive it but must play a part in it.
6. Globalization is a product of leadership understood only as effective corporate management. Whatever its other merits, globalization's primary concern is not leadership for the benefit of common human values and welfare. Therefore it is not the key to global leadership.
7. Leadership as corporate management, even on a global basis, is driven by economic interests. True global leadership will not ignore economic interests, but it must be driven by human interests that are forward looking, border transcending, and multidimensional.
8. Global leadership will come from men and women committed to advancing common global concerns (human survival, development, and welfare) and establishing universal values through their contributions in the public and private sectors, in multilateral institutions and institutions of learning, in nongovernmental organizations, and in citizen movements.
9. The development of global leadership can be facilitated by providing training opportunities to emerging leaders that will allow them to work together toward good governance (peace, development, and democracy), good management (self-knowledge, empowerment, and communication), and multilateral cooperation for the advancement of common human values.
10. Global leadership is ultimately about the power of ideas. In itself it is an idea whose power will, in due course, effect a paradigm shift in how we all think about our common human concerns.

Distance Feedback

Christina A. Douglas, Bernadette B. Perkins, and Sam Manoogian

It is not unusual for a manager to travel a long distance to attend a leadership development program that includes a one-on-one feedback session. In such a session, a feedback specialist who has observed the manager and evaluated assessment material (including 360-degree material: performance ratings from boss, peers, and subordinates) collected prior to and during the program sits down with that person in a private room to help him or her understand this complex, highly personal information and integrate it into a personal development plan.

Yet many managers who would like to benefit from such a program, and particularly from this kind of feedback, find themselves constrained by the costs of travel, by the time involved in getting to and from distant locations, by organizational barriers, and by family demands.

Communication technology, which is rapidly developing, is one way to overcome these problems. Recently, the Center for Creative Leadership and the Rensselaer Learning Institute (a CCL network associate in Hartford, Connecticut, and a pioneer in delivering academic and executive programs through distance technology) joined forces to use *interactive compressed video* (ICV) to conduct a leadership development program. As a part of this effort, an exploratory study was conducted to assess the participants' reactions to the feedback portion of the program. We wanted to find the answers to two questions: Is feedback via ICV less effective or more effective than face-to-face feedback? and, How can videoconferenced feedback be improved?

Twenty-three participants received face-to-face feedback and nineteen received ICV feedback. They were then asked to complete a questionnaire that measured five feedback session variables (level of comfort, opportunity to participate, overall satisfaction, increased self-awareness, and impact on development). In addition, they and the feedback specialists responded to open-ended questions that asked them about their overall impressions of the feedback sessions, their suggestions for improving the sessions, and whether the method used presented any problems or advantages.

Was Face-to-Face or ICV Feedback More Effective?

The differences between the two groups in terms of level of comfort, opportunity to participate, overall satisfaction, increased self-awareness, and impact on development were statistically insignificant.

Many managers who would like to benefit from feedback in the context of a leadership development program are constrained by costs and time.

Although the participants receiving face-to-face feedback reported slightly higher levels of comfort and impact on development, these differences were very small.

The comments to us from all the participants reflected both sides of the issue. One stated that she was very comfortable with video feedback after she got used to the technology. Another told us that the speck of distance that video feedback provides put him more at ease. Conversely, one participant said that face-to-face was much more effective because body language was "not as full" in video feedback. And several other ICV participants were bothered by the delays in responses caused by the specific Pictel system at their sites. (They experienced a slight lag in time between seeing the other person speak and hearing the words.)

Most of the comments about the ICV feedback, however, were very positive, and in general, participants and feedback specialists were satisfied with it. Several advantages were noted: feedback specialists found it easier to observe nonverbal behaviors and were amazed at how quickly they adjusted and were able to pick up body language and facial expressions, some participants liked the psychological