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GLOBAL POWER AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The story of the last three decades of philosophical discussion of global poverty could be told as a quest narrative. The Holy Grail, Golden Fleece and Ithaca is the establishment of a demanding, as yet unmet responsibility of people in developed countries to give up advantages in the interest of needier people in developing countries. Without being quite ready to abandon the quest, some of us questers have lost faith in most expeditions (which are still at large. This is philosophy.) For example, while the route through General Beneficence was certainly worth exploring, we think that the duty of responsiveness to neediness as such, apart from special relationships, is too moderate and flexible to sustain a demanding duty to the global poor. On a moderate account that I have defended: one must display an underlying concern for neediness as such sufficiently great that more concern would impose a significant risk of worsening one's life if one met one's other responsibilities. But there is no duty to have any greater concern, and one has a broad prerogative to contribute to worthy causes close to one's heart that do not provide the most relief of the world's gravest needs.¹

In another important quest for the demanding, largely unmet duty, the mere fact of global economic interdependence has been used as a basis for extending demanding duties toward disadvantaged compatriots to the disadvantaged of the world at large.² But the mere fact of commerce had no such moral impact on relations among Bronze Age tribes. Why should it among us now?

In another endeavor, the foreseeable persistence of dire poverty under global institutions is said to entail a duty to use the institutions to end the poverty. But if the earlier route through General Beneficence was blocked, it is not clear why we should expect this passage to be open. Stern duties not to make matters worse for others might seem to provide an alternative route. But the question, "Worse than what?" is a major obstacle. Some responses seem to presuppose successful passage through General Beneficence ("Worse than what we affluent people could have done to relieve dire needs.") Others presuppose prior identification of the duties that are sought ("Worse than what justice requires.") Others insist on a duty to make good the consequences of past intrusions whose demands seem too limited or indeterminate, or whose current moral relevance is unclear (for example, massive wrongs of colonial conquest whose moral force seems to have faded with time.)³

These doubts certainly put giving up and going home on the questers' agenda. But moral common sense offers some hope. In ordinary moral thinking, demanding duties of concern are responsibilities to others in specific relationships, for example, children, parents, friends, compatriots and promisees. Extremely diverse in the nature of the underlying relationship, the values expressed, the kind of concern owed and the kind of beneficiary, none of these duties is, as a whole, a responsibility to avoid worsening. Perhaps the quest will succeed through multiple expeditions through several of the relationships that now span national borders.

Three types of interaction among developed and developing countries seem especially promising terrain for this multiple quest. I will investigate their prospects. They involve three ways in which individuals, firms or governments in developed

countries now take advantage of people in developing countries, and ought, instead, to pursue interactions based on genuine cooperation.

The first is a current feature of transnational production and exchange, giving substance to a charge of exploitation. People in developed countries take advantage of people in developing countries by deriving benefits from bargaining weakness due to desperate neediness. To express appreciation of the equal worth of people in developing countries and a proper valuing of their autonomy, people in developed countries must be willing to use the benefits to relieve the underlying desperate neediness.

In the second type of interaction, governments reach agreements over the institutional framework of global commerce in ways that currently justify the charge of inequity. The major developed countries, led by the United States, take advantage of bargaining weaknesses of the peoples of developing countries, often due to desperate neediness, to shape arrangements far more advantageous to developed countries than reasonable deliberations would sustain. This creates a duty of a citizen of one of the bullies (especially pressing in the Big Bully) to support measures that reasonable deliberations would yield.

Finally, some developed countries have foreign power far exceeding the shaping of a few international agreements. Above all, the United States exerts a pattern of domineering influence worthy of the metaphor "the American empire," taking advantage of other countries' difficulties in going against its will. Current failures to provide for needs of people subject to transnational domineering influence are failures to fulfill political responsibilities that follow in the wake of political power. I will pay most attention to this third route to demanding, unmet responsibilities, because it is, at once,

extremely promising and very hard to map. The relationships that create responsibilities are both importantly similar to and importantly different from the home territory of political philosophy, the ties among compatriots in a modern state.⁴

Globalization and Exploitation

First, for all its ambiguities, "exploitation" points to substantial, unmet responsibilities in global commerce. In some interactions, one party extracts a benefit from another because of the other's inferior capacity to pursue her interests through the interaction, extracting the benefit in a way that displays inadequate regard for her equal worth and inadequate appreciation of her capacity for choice. Then, in one strong, especially morally freighted sense of the term, he exploits her. Exploitation, in this intrinsically condemnatory sense, always includes exploitation in the weaker sense of the extraction of benefit on account of someone's inferior capacity to assert his will. However, while taking advantage of someone's weakness is a reason for moral concern, the interaction need not be morally wrong, need not be exploitation in the strong sense, when other considerations are taken into account. Presumably, Nike in Thailand extracts a benefit from the desperation of women escaping rural poverty. Both self-respect and pressing responsibilities toward children or parents make the escape from destitution into lesser poverty urgent for many of these sellers of labor, weakening the bargaining power of each. But perhaps if Nike did not take advantage of bargaining weakness due to desperate neediness to some significant extent, the interests of the desperately needy would be undermined, through slower growth of employment opportunities. Consideration of this countervailing reason might show that Nike's taking advantage of the bargaining weakness of its Thai stitchers (to some significant extent) does *not* fail to

express adequate appreciation of the worth of their lives and of their capacity for choice. Perhaps Nike takes advantage of their weakness without taking advantage of them.

Other considerations, such as excessive costs of a practice of restraint to those who might benefit from taking advantage of weakness, can provide an effective rebuttal of the charge of wrongful exploitation. But one defense does not deserve this standing. People can be wrongfully exploited even if they are better off than they would be in the absence of interaction with the exploiter. The desert-dweller who saves a lost traveler from dying of thirst in exchange for an effective agreement to be his menial servant for life, the militarily brilliant despot who saves subjects from chaotic disorder and extracts harsh tribute to sustain a luxurious court, and the Victorian husband who provides his wife with valued options of tranquil family life in exchange for her self-abnegating deference all take advantage of a person by taking advantage of an incapacity for effective self-assertion, wronging while bettering. This isn't to say that disengagement is the moral cure. Leaving someone in the lurch when continued engagement could benefit you and save her from disaster is normally terribly wrong, even if the wrong is not exploitive. This doesn't make it right to extract every last ounce of benefit from her compelling neediness.

Another familiar bad excuse is the exaggeration of the truth that restrictions on profit-seeking can slow commercial growth into a reason for doing nothing about transnational exploitation. Granted, a firm's unilateral compunctions about taking advantage of bargaining weakness can have costs that hurt the unemployed or pointlessly or unfairly burden the firm. While uniform minimal labor standards reduce burdens of compunction, they are limited by morally important dangers of inhibiting growth,

dangers that would be serious even if developing countries could coordinate their standards. Still, these problems at the sites of exploitation merely transfer burdens of responsibility to typical affluent people living in developed countries. As a consumer and investor, such a person benefits on balance from bargaining weakness due to desperate neediness in developing countries. To express appreciation of the autonomy and interests of people in developing countries, he should support measures that would use those benefits to reduce the underlying desperate neediness. He may not be in a position to pay Thai workers more, but he is a position to pay taxes to reduce the desperation that creates their bargaining weakness; this includes desperation in other, currently less exploited countries, say, Cambodia, that gives substance to the threat, "If your wages get too high, we will move elsewhere."

The stupendous growth in benefits of people in developed countries from manufacturing in developing countries must derive to a significant extent from bargaining weakness due to desperate neediness. In 2001, the flow of manufactured goods from low and middle income countries to high-income OECD countries was nearly four times as great as in 1991, constituting over 15% of total imports of the rich countries,⁵ while foreign direct investment in developing countries increased sevenfold (ninefold in lower-middle income countries.)⁶ To some extent, the low wages paid for work in manufacturing in developing countries reflect low productivity, but this is hardly the whole story. At the turn of the twentieth century, the ratio of labor cost per worker per year in manufacturing in the United States to value added per worker per year was .36, significantly greater than in a number of countries playing a large role in U.S. imports and investments, for example, .29 in Thailand and Mexico, .23 in the Philippines and

.20 in Malaysia.⁷ Moreover, these ratios for manufacturing as a whole vastly underestimate transnational benefits, since globalized manufacturing favors especially labor intensive processes that do not depend on elaborate and advanced local technology. Presumably, the sevenfold increase in foreign direct investment in a decade reflected appreciation of exceptional opportunities to make money, not the view that low wages barely balanced the difficulties of production.

The duty not to take advantage of partners in commerce is, then, one important source of responsibilities of people in developed countries to help relieve desperate neediness in developing countries. But its extent is unclear, since the sites of desperate neediness are also sites of reasons why employers would make low offers in the absence of superior bargaining power, reasons including local deficiencies in skills, supply, equipment, repair, coordination, infrastructure, access to the best markets, and the rule of law. There is, however, another sphere of global economic life in which outcomes are clearly and pervasively shaped by participants' power: the shaping of the international institutional framework.

Bullying Negotiations and Reasonable Deliberations

This process is now epitomized in the Uruguay Round of negotiations over the framework for international commerce. In its thirteen years, a joint commitment of governments to restrict their exercise of legitimate prerogatives was shaped by threats -- above all, threats by the United States to restrict access to its vast markets from countries that got in its way. Though usually implicit and rarely carried out, the threats were sometimes proclaimed -- flamboyantly, as when Carla Hills, the most important U.S. Trade Representative, warned that resistance would start "trade wars over all sorts of silly

things,"⁸ or in measured tones of ominous intimation, as in James Baker's declaration that less liberalization than desired would lead the U.S. to "explore a 'market liberalization club' approach, through minilateral arrangements or a series of bilateral agreements."⁹ It was no bluff when Carla Hills announced that she would be the "USTR with a crowbar ... prying open markets ... so that our private sector can take advantage of them"¹⁰ and decorated her office with a crowbar in a frame.¹¹

Threats to take one's business elsewhere are familiar in ordinary commercial interactions, and usually are not wrong. But in this different deliberative context, the threats may well show disrespect for autonomy, in manipulating fears of desperate people, whose basic needs are at stake, or those who represent them. The parties are being asked to restrict prerogatives that are their legitimate means of advancing the well-being of people for whom they are responsible; the outcome will affect the whole lives of many of these people, and carry a substantial risk of making the lives of vulnerable people substantially worse than they would otherwise be; vulnerable people and their threat-vulnerable governments have no realistic prospect of substantially improving threatened life-prospects by shopping around; the negotiation's law-like outcome can mitigate risks, losses and uncertainties. Here, the valuing of autonomy that entails broad permissiveness toward ordinary commercial threats produces strong moral constraints. A hegemon's recourse to threats might, nonetheless, be justifiable, since stable global economic order is hard to obtain, and vastly preferable to disorder from the standpoint of the global poor. Still, citizens have a political duty to promote arrangements that could be the outcome of reasonable deliberations. If they actually benefit from uses of threat-advantage that depart from this standard, they must express a proper valuing of others'

lives and autonomy by supporting the different division of benefits and burdens that reasonableness would have yielded.

Fully reasonable deliberations over the international framework are deliberations in which all relevant responsibilities are fulfilled. These include, first of all, responsibilities of good faith that reach across borders. Responsible governmental negotiators observe reciprocity in their reasoning: i.e., they justify their proposals on the basis of considerations that they recognize as relevant when offered by others, with a strength determined by the degree to which the considerations obtain, not by the identity of who offers them. (That is why the current selective attention to the needs of farmers when they live in rich countries shows appalling bad faith. Whatever the severity of the disruptions that rich-country farm subsidies are meant to prevent, it is much less than the severity of similar disruptions which they cause in developing countries.)

Compatriots have a responsibility to one another to do what domestic justice requires in the way of help for the needy, and this national responsibility generates further international responsibilities of good faith. On the one hand, this duty of self-reliance generates the familiar sliding scale in exemptions from jointly imposed burdens, in which countries lose privileges as they move from Cambodian to Indian to South Korean capacities for self-help. On the other hand, showing international good faith in accepting national responsibility rules out tempting complaints from rich countries about costs of displacement: one must not put costs of domestic injustice on foreign shoulders by supporting arrangements that are worse for needy foreigners in order to save vulnerable compatriots from costs that they would not endure if social justice were secured. For example, costs of injustice in the United States should not be put on Chinese

shoulders by instituting tariff protection instead of the protection of the displaced by the safety net that justice requires.

Apart from its impact on overarching requirements of good faith, governments' special responsibilities toward their citizens shape the specific pattern of distributive justice in reasonable deliberations over a trade arrangement. Insofar as the outcome of the trade arrangement itself is the relevant moral concern, the reasonable outcome will provide some benefit to every citizenry taken as a whole, since a responsible government will not restrict its legitimate means of advancing the well-being of its citizens except in expectation of benefit to its citizens. How, then, should governments choose among alternatives that benefit all their citizenries as a whole? They should, all else being equal, honor one another's responsibilities as representatives by seeking the trade regime that best meets needs among all those who are represented, wherever they live, taking neediness, numbers and impact into account. After all, unless other, especially morally serious considerations come into play, a government of a developed country can responsibly explain to its citizens, "We could have held out for even more, but this would have involved pervasive suffering that the agreement avoids." But unless the alternatives would be even worse for even needier people, the government of a poor country could not responsibly explain to those it represents agreement to a trade regime which is substantially worse for them, except as a response to threats.

When life prospects of some of its citizens are seriously threatened by arrangements that would benefit the citizenry as a whole, the default position of global need may be overridden: a responsible government will seek protection, if this is compatible with transnational good faith. But this special regard for interests within the

borders will be extremely hard to reconcile with transnational good faith by a government with vast economic resources that tolerates considerable economic displacement within its borders or expects such tolerance from others in advancing the trade regime. (Since the United States has all these characteristics, U.S. insistence on protection is extremely likely to show bad faith.)

The outcome of such reasonable deliberations would be the adoption of general standards like those that have been proclaimed and flouted for decades by the framework institutions. For example, deliberations over the international framework for the flow of goods and services would (as they supposedly now do) pursue a general reduction in restrictions on transnational commerce accompanied by measures needed to mitigate disruptions that are a special burden for people in developing countries, by especially broad openness to imports from developing countries that create escapes from dire poverty, and by special exemptions to permit people in developing countries to find their own way out of national destitution.

The faithful pursuit of these goals is a substantial, largely unmet responsibility. But the scope of this responsibility is severely limited. The underlying moral concern is that participating governments provide one another with adequate reasons to agree to long-term restrictions of legitimate prerogatives. Benefits and burdens of such agreements are at issue, but not success and failure in economic life as a whole. The greater suffering due to trade liberalization of people in developing countries will be a weighty reason for special concern (on grounds of equity, not beneficence), through greater protective prerogatives, foreign support for social funds or both. It isn't equitable to expect some to suffer so much more than others in pursuit of a common project. But

suppose that governments of developing countries were exempted wholesale from constraints on their trade prerogatives (as they were, in essence, in earlier stages of the trade regime.) Or suppose that they were exempted on an appropriate sliding scale of economic capacity, accompanied by measures to cope with disruptive liberalization (as they would be in the more radical proposals to make good on promises that started the Doha Round.) Then, deliberative responsibility in shaping the trade framework would end, while enormous suffering would endure. Extending the scope of responsibility seems to depend on extending the quest to transnational influence whose impact extends beyond any particular agreement or institution.

'Imperial' Obligation

In our post-colonial era, the systematic influence of great powers crosses borders unaccompanied by appeals to political allegiance or by the maintenance of institutions presented as the legitimate source of authoritative rules. This unconcern with allegiance and legitimacy hardly entails the absence of a duty of concern for those whose lives are shaped. In Stendhal's novel, the odious Ranuccio-Ernesto, Prince of Parma, dispenses with such appeals in the frank use of power to sustain a life of luxury at his court, yet no reader supposes that the Prince fulfills his political duty of concern. Still, in the international setting, the absence of an established political practice of justifying the transnational exercise of power to its targets makes the description of responsibilities of power an unfamiliar task. To make some headway, I will concentrate on the most important case. What transnational responsibilities to poor foreigners do citizens of the United States have, as a result of the power structure that might be called "the American empire"?

"The American empire," as I will use the term, involves the global superiority of the U.S. government in three mutually reinforcing types of domineering influence. In the first place, the United States far exceeds other countries in the global impact of prerogatives, i.e., capacities to pursue interests regardless of costs to others on account of America's importance in joint arrangements which, as a whole, answer to shared needs. Prime examples are U.S. credit and trade prerogatives due to the pervasive use of the dollar and American financial instruments. In the second place, helped by these prerogatives, the United States influences lives abroad through threat power, influencing choices because people have reason to fear what the U.S. will do if it does not get its way, in American conduct partly motivated by an interest in maintaining such fears. The crowbar of the Uruguay Round and, for that matter, the stone wall of the Doha Round are examples. The third element in imperial power, namely, the exercise of destructive power, makes threats credible, and does more besides. As in Iraq, it also serves as a means of destroying resources on which others' contrary threat power depends and forcibly gaining access to resources at others' expense.

In part, the phrase "the American empire" labels the global fact that each type of American domineering influence has substantial impact throughout the world, much more so than any other power's. In part, it labels a fact of territorial dominance: American domineering influence is especially deep, asymmetrical, and superior to competing outside influences in many developing countries.

Often, U.S. domineering influence on developing countries is exerted at one remove and without resort to fears of physical violence. The United States uses its domineering influence to shape the course of conduct of international institutions, which,

then, affect the terms of life in developing countries by decisions about the offering and withholding of resources. The World Bank's and IMF's use of loan conditions to shift over seventy countries toward greater reliance on market forces and away from state-directed development is a fit emblem of American imperial power. The multilateral institutions implemented Reagan's insistence on "the magic of the marketplace" in his 1983 address to the Bank much more effectively than the U.S. could have on its own. The benefits of this transnational practice to developing countries are, to put it mildly, controversial. In their extensive comparison of IMF-adjusted with otherwise similar non-adjusted countries, Przeworski and Vreeland found that being under an IMF structural adjustment program lowered growth by 1.53% on average.¹² But there is not much dispute that the broad trends pushed by the United States have benefited firms based in the United States and, despite inevitable backlash, reduced prospects for defiant independence of governments of developing countries.

What responsibilities come with this power? According to one, attractively simple view, power creates a responsibility of egalitarian justice: those whose exercise of power, direct or indirect, affects life prospects of a group of people share a responsibility to sustain arrangements that make the prospects of the worst off as good as possible -- or in any case, that maximally, impartially advance the interests of all enmeshed in the network of power. But closer scrutiny deprives power of this moral magic. Even sovereign political power, ultimately based on monopolizing permission to physically coerce, does not, by its very nature, create such demanding duties of concern. If farming households in an ungoverned valley set up a minimal state apparatus, just to protect against banditry and cheating on market days, they may (as even Robert Nozick would

have conceded) take on a responsibility to provide free protection for destitute people subjected to this minimal sovereign power.¹³ But this responsibility does not mushroom into a duty to make the worst-off among their compatriots as well off as possible (or as well-off as they would be if well-being were impartially promoted to the fullest extent.)

Of course, anything like the modern state is utterly different from this minimal state. Important dependence on demanding and wideranging civic loyalties generates correspondingly important duties of loyalty to compatriots. The types of public provision by the modern state that serve every compatriot's legitimate interests extend far beyond the protection of natural rights in the farmers' republic; this provision must show equal regard for the interests of all, to provide a basis for their self-respectful, loyal support. The joint imposition of terms of self-advancement by modern compatriots acting through their government extends far beyond the enforcement of natural rights and, along with the process of provision, deeply affects both chances of getting ahead and the nature of success; to reconcile their imposition of these measures with respect for those on whom they are imposed, compatriots must be willing to reduce benefits of imposed advantage as needed to relieve burdens of imposed disadvantage. In these and other ways, the phenomena of interaction that underlie the extensive responsibilities toward worse-off compatriots within the borders of any modern state are much weaker across borders, despite what the U.S. does in exercising transnational domineering influence. So one cannot simply extrapolate domestic responsibilities to imperial territories.

Difference in vehicles of influence should also make a difference in responsibilities. A country might tie its currency to the dollar to satisfy a contingency in a loan needed to emerge from a currency crisis. Or it might do so because of physical

coercion by an American threat to send in Marines or contras if it doesn't. The latter way of getting what America wants is a form of monetary annexation, entailing a stronger responsibility of the Federal Reserve to take account of the interests of those foreign citizens.

Once the moral complexities of domineering influence are admitted, two initial simplifications are useful. First, suppose that the United States were the only outside power independently exercising substantial, asymmetrical domineering influence over developing countries. Second, suppose that the only process of domineering influence is structural-adjustment-like: it involves putting conditions on access to resources and opportunities which governments of developing countries have to accept (and do) to act as responsibility would dictate in light of the high stakes for their people. Then, on an otherwise realistic assessment of American power, the United States would have the responsibility to help people in the subordinate countries to meet basic needs to whatever extent does not intrude on their collective duty of self-reliance. The responsibility would extend to the use of benefits derived from the domineering influence and, potentially, even farther, because of deep impact on terms of life.

By the goal of meeting basic needs in a society, I mean the goal of providing access to an autonomous life, i.e., a life in which energy and attention are devoted to the meaningful and enjoyed pursuit of valuable, intelligently chosen life goals, which exercise a reasonably broad range of capacities. As Joseph Raz has noted, we think that any other sort of life for a person is not truly her own.¹⁴ These needs will certainly include needs for subsistence, basic healthcare and physical security. But the point of a meaningful life is not mere survival. For example, someone who has lived up to her own

responsibilities (including a responsibility to adjust life-goals to available resources) lacks access to a life truly her own if she must devote nearly all of her attention and energy to gathering and selling firewood to keep her and her dependent children alive. Within a society of any current kind, if the government does not seek to provide the material basis for access to autonomous living, it is irresponsible and does not deserve the loyalty of those who are neglected.

Even if threats to withhold, as in structural adjustment or Uruguay Round bullying, were the sole means by which the United States affected terms of self-advancement in the territorial empire, this would create a residual responsibility to help meet basic needs. In part, this responsibility reflects the imperative to replace exploitation with genuine cooperation. America's capacity to impose its preferred course of development regardless of the course that a responsible local government would prefer typically depends on the urgency of satisfying basic needs that are in crisis. The benefits from taking advantage of this weakness should be used to relieve the underlying neediness, on pain of irresponsibility and disrespect for autonomy.

In addition, even in the absence of exploitive benefits to the United States, the depth of transformations produced by American domineering influence would give rise to a residual responsibility to help meet basic needs. If Rich Uncle gets Drifting Nephew to go to law school as a condition for a desperately needed loan, imposing the condition with the altruistic thought that this will end the drifting, Rich Uncle incurs a liability to aid career change if Drifting Nephew finds lawyering utterly unsatisfying. Undermining another's autonomy by substituting one's judgment for his own can be justified,

admirable, even a duty. But for autonomy to be honored, the undermining must retain moral relevance as a reason to help the new path lead to autonomous living.

The imperial responsibility that I have asserted is basic and residual: a responsibility for the satisfaction of basic needs in a territory of the empire over and above what can be done by the people of the territory. The familiar understanding of basic needs as needs for subsistence, basic health care and security can make this seem a meager responsibility. But even on this familiar understanding, the responsibility grows when one considers that all the needs, not just one, are to be fulfilled. If people's access to subsistence goods is enhanced by fiscal policies that destroy the public health system, basic needs are not satisfied. The responsibility gains further stature when one considers that constant struggle to satisfy the familiar needs does not satisfy the basic need for autonomy. In addition, basic needs for security and stability require widespread support for shared political institutions and this, in turn, requires attention to significant needs of people throughout society on the basis of some defensible interpretation of the common good. So a people acting through their government cannot satisfy basic needs by wholesale neglect of the non-destitute. The American empire would not be absolved of responsibilities if the people of the Philippines had the means of eliminating Filipino destitution by measures that left nearly all Filipinos just a bit above destitution. (In the promotion of the Millenium Development Goals, emphasis on how little money is involved in the income needed to raise all below an abject dollar-a-day threshold to just above it distracts from such hard truths.)

Still, the responsibility of Americans toward subjects of the American empire that I have asserted would require less than the demands of justice among Americans. At

times, Costa Rica has approached the satisfaction of basic needs. But if it were the fifty-first state of the U.S., the slim chances of most Costa Ricans of attaining the best careers in the fifty one states would be cause for redress. Why doesn't the domineering influence of the United States that we are exploring produce a residual responsibility to satisfy the much more demanding goals appropriate to fellow-Americans?

In part, the answer depends on the description of relationships among compatriots sustaining responsibilities within but not across borders. I gestured at this argument in the course of distinguishing the morality of modern citizenship from that of the farmers' republic. In addition, the response must point to aspects of the imperial process itself that limit consequent responsibilities to residual provision for basic needs. The reasons for this limit derive from the valuing of autonomy that generates the basic responsibility.

Self-respecting people in a territory prefer self-reliance, individual and collective, to outside help. In part, the preference for collective self-reliance expresses the proper valuing of ongoing relationships in which enduring mutual obligations are recognized. Also, self-respect includes a strong preference for reciprocity, the ultimate, wholehearted return of important benefits, which is sustained by such ongoing mutual projects. Not to expect Nicaraguans to do what they can to provide for Nicaraguan needs is to show contempt for them, not respectful concern. However, the goal of self-reliance loses its point unless it is accompanied by openness to indispensable help in overcoming enduring obstacles, frequently encountered, to meeting basic needs. Until those needs are served, one's life is not truly one's own. So help and autonomy are reconciled at this threshold.

In addition, interests in local cultural autonomy favor the limit to basic needs -- indeed, favor concentration on the familiar core of needs for subsistence, healthcare and

security. These needs are regarded as urgent in any culture. If the outside power, in addition, chooses among trajectories of development according to criteria other than the satisfaction of basic needs, there is a danger that the measures will distort the local process of determination of culture and institutions in favor of one faction or the outside power's culture. This distortion might seem to be reduced by giving locals a free hand in allocation. But inevitably this strengthens the hands of locals (typically, people with governmental authority) who are the first recipients of the funds and have a distinctive perspective on outstanding cultural choices.

Since the network of domineering influence emanating from the District of Columbia is complicated enough, I have simplified by supposing that the United States is the only ultimately independent exacter of domineering influence on developing countries. Of course, this is not true. France has its own metaphorical empire in Africa. EU countries are an independent force in Latin America. In global institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, the U.S. is the leader in a dominant coalition of developed countries, not the sole independent force. While the U.S. inveigles France, Germany and Japan into following its initiative in major shifts, they are not, by any means, client regimes, and are not under dire threats that absolve them of responsibility.

How should the efforts of the dominators be compared, to determine whether they are doing their fair shares in providing for basic needs in developing countries? Two dimensions of comparison are especially important. One is effective initiative, the extent to which the distinctive energy and the distinctive wishes of a government determine terms of self-advancement in developing countries. The greater the vigor with which one party pursues activities that threaten to disvalue the autonomy of another, the greater its

contributions should be to further activities that uphold the weaker party's autonomy. At the same time, when dominating is a shared activity, a fair division should reflect the burdensomeness to citizens of each domineering government. Among those joined in an activity generating further responsibilities, some have reason to complain if the burdens of meeting the responsibilities fall more heavily on them than on others. (Within borders, this might be a complaint of disproportionate tax burdens.) If the United States were a poor but militarily powerful country, taking the lead in shaping lives abroad but unable to meet joint responsibilities without special pain, then it might be difficult to take account of both dimensions of comparison in assessing the current American share. But in fact, the standard of burden and the standard of leadership roughly coincide. The leader in taking advantage of difficulties in resisting its will does least, in proportion to its own resources, to relieve basic needs. So the United States bears the greatest share of the unmet responsibilities of empire.

The other simplification was an extreme idealization. So far, I have only considered ways in which the United States derives advantages from pressures due to neediness to yield to conditions in offers, pressures on governments of poor countries responsibly coping with urgent basic needs. But domineering influence also involves the exercise of destructive power (directly and through sponsored violence), the propping up of client regimes, and benefits from the local political neglect of demands of economic justice. All of these interactions generate distinctive responsibilities; these responsibilities can exceed residual provision for basic needs, even though they fall short of a requirement of evenhanded promotion of wellbeing among a population including those affected and those at home in the imperial power.

Consider the case of client regimes, repressive governments substantially depending on support from great powers for their survival, support that is given in return for alliance. A great deal of the Middle East and Africa is governed by client regimes (for example, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel in its governance of the Palestinian territories, Somalia, Iraq) or regimes that are, at the very least, profoundly shaped by recent clientelism and hopes for future propping up as needed (for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.) In the Congo, the Israel-occupied territories, Somalia and Iraq, life prospects are probably worse than they would have been in the absence of transnational clientelism. In other cases, such as Egypt and Ethiopia, this counterfactual may be false. But the avoidance of such worsening is not the limit of the consequent moral liability. As guarantor of the Mubarak regime, the United States is responsible for making good political responsibilities that the regime does not discharge. Even if it has blocked the political autonomy of Egyptians for good reasons of regional stability, it can only honor the thwarted desire for autonomy if it advances local aspirations insofar as they are compatible with these security interests. Like the occupying power after a just war, the standard shouldn't be "What would make this country better off than it would otherwise be?" (not very demanding in the case of defeated Germany), but "What would a just government accomplish in advancing the interests of the people of this country?" Perhaps if the United States did not guarantee the Mubarak regime, Egyptians would convert brutal and corrupt decrepitude to fratricidal devastation. This no more justifies America's failure to pursue the goals of responsible governance in Egypt than my lawyer would be justified in spending funds I gave to his care by the secure knowledge that I will otherwise waste them on a stupid investment.

The expertise, resources and entrepreneurship of the Egyptian people are, presumably, capable of sustaining prosperity beyond basic needs, under responsible governance. So long as the current regime is a repressive extension of U.S. power, American responsibility extends to the whole difference from what the current irresponsible government sustains, not just to the provision of basic needs. (Similarly, the violent intrusions of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last several decades create a duty of repair extending to well-off as well as to poor Iraqis and Afghans.) The two reasons for restriction in the structural-adjustment case do not apply. The United States cannot appeal to local self-reliance as limiting its responsibilities where it sustains a repressive local political order. Heroic defiance of tyranny is admirable, but not a reasonable expectation. Also, so long as the United States profoundly shapes Egyptian social life by propping up a local elite, it is in no position to give less to the Egyptian people for fear of thwarting their autonomy.

Nonetheless, this is not a case for impartial concern for a population including Americans and Egyptians. What a responsible, effective Egyptian government would do would still be limited by Egyptian resources. Of course, those limitations themselves have a history. But U.S. citizens today can refuse to take on the full burdens of past imperialism. The burdens of the current American empire are another matter.

Beyond Foreign Aid

Quick and incomplete though it is, this tour has surveyed relationships generating unmet responsibilities in all developing countries. Those countries that are not shaped by asymmetrical domineering influence tend to have strengths that make transnational exploitation lucrative and, hence, common, as in China. Countries not of much interest as

sites of exploitation tend to be apt sites for client regimes and for exemplary projects of structural adjustment. Lacking large internal markets, they are deeply affected by the shaping of global trade and finance. (Imports and exports of goods amount to two-thirds of Honduran GDP, over a half of Malian GDP, but only a fifth of U.S. GDP.) If there are any utterly isolated, destitute countries, unaffected by the web of exploitation and subordination, and they could be helped by developed countries, this tiny group of people would fall within the limited scope of a political duty of beneficence. While concern to help the neediest does not monopolize the beneficence of those who are adequately responsive to human need, it is the default position, a proper concern of all whatever other particular concerns are dear to them. This is a source of a genuine, if limited political responsibility, not just a personal one. While one ought to respect variations in beneficent concerns among one's compatriots and afford adequate space for individual initiative, the importance of large-scale, well-coordinated, long-term projects, the dangers of negligent unconcern and the reduction of competitive losses to less beneficent compatriots are reasons to give a role to the government of one's country in meeting duties of beneficence toward the global poor.

Assuming no limit to the sacrifices that would help, the demands of all these duties would far exceed what is remotely politically feasible. Within the bounds of the politically feasible, partisans of global justice will need to find an equitable way to balance the urgency of the various unmet demands of justice, which can conflict: what is better for the poor of China may not be better for the poor of Bangladesh. Even apart from equity, they will not want their cause to dissolve in barrages of competitive complaints. Something like a global original position for individuals seems a fair way of

assigning urgency among the unmet responsibilities, responding to the severity and frequency of burdens and the ease of relieving them from an impartial perspective.

But the Grail/Fleece/Ithaka, a demanding transnational duty, has not yet been found. Interactions with poor people in developing countries do not generate a penitential duty, to make sacrifices regardless of whether they help. So the question of efficacy has to be faced. And there is considerable evidence that the philosophers' favorite way of helping, foreign aid, loses efficacy well before its provision would demand sacrifice in developed countries. The most compelling statistical arguments for aid efficacy -- as in the work of Clemens, Radelet and Bhavnani and of Hansen and Tarp -- are accompanied by warnings of diminishing returns that would typically dwindle to nothing in the current upper range of aid dependence.¹⁵ One important factor seems to be the tendency of large quantities of aid to interfere with the formation of the transformative leadership, effective bureaucracy and national network of demands and responsibilities on which successful development depends. As Ravi Kanbur put it, in light of his experience as Chief Economist for Africa of the World Bank, "[T]he real cost to Africa of the current aid system is ... the fact that it wastes much national energy and political capital in interacting with aid agencies, and diverts attention from domestic debate and consensus building."¹⁶ In the case of corrupt and repressive client regimes, aid is especially useless, except as a means of nourishing the underlying infection.

This is a substantial challenge to the proposal of Jeffrey Sachs, the U.N. Millennium Project and others that a vast scaling up of aid is what the world's poorest need. If the flow of aid to low income countries were doubled, about two thirds would be above the 15% threshold at which Clemens, Radelet and Bhavnani think marginal returns

may disappear in typical countries, while about half would have crossed the 25% threshold which Hansen and Tarp estimate to typically mark the onset of negative returns.¹⁷ (In *The End of Poverty*, Sachs proposes sample budgets for three African countries, in which their 2006-2015 average aid flows would constitute 16-18% of GDP.¹⁸)

In any case, even the vast scaling up that Sachs believes could be absorbed would only be vast on the small scale of current aid. The 2003-2004 annual average of official development assistance was \$105 per person in donor countries.¹⁹ No one proposes even quadrupling this figure. So far, people in developed countries are off the hook of a demanding unmet responsibility to give up advantages in the interest of the foreign poor.

But these people are not off the hook. The transfer of funds, credit, goods and services by governments (or, for that matter, beneficent individuals) is just one way of helping. If, as Andrew Charlton and Joseph Stiglitz propose, every WTO member would provide free market access to goods from any developing country with a smaller economy than its own, as measured by GDP, and less prosperity, as measured by per capita GDP, this would do a lot for the world's poor, without a cent of foreign aid.²⁰ If the developed countries were to open their borders to people from developing countries of all levels of skill, this would do a lot for immigrants and for those they leave behind, who would benefit directly from remittances and indirectly from a more seller-friendly labor market. (The responsibilities created by imperial power can make the exclusion of immigrants as morally absurd as the pass laws of the apartheid regime.)

Granted, these changes would do relatively little for the poor of the poorest countries, who have relatively little to offer in the world economy. But here, the weather

has intervened. The damage that would be done to countries by Business As Usual in greenhouse gas emissions is tightly correlated with their current poverty. It would be an enormous help to the world's poor if developed countries would monopolize reductions on greenhouse gas emissions, leaving people in developing countries to spew more carbon dioxide as they escape from destitution.

These measures would have costs, especially to vulnerable people in developed countries. This is a powerful reason for strengthened social democracy in these countries. But some costs of displacement would, in any case be serious, justifiable only because of the need to discharge transnational responsibilities.

None of these alternatives to foreign aid will be fully implemented. But neither will the goal of a vastly productive upscaling of aid. Once political realities in donors as well as recipients come into play, the constraints go well beyond limits to aid absorbency and are not, by any means, mere problems in getting more aid. They involve the secure connection between aid and the pursuit of geopolitical advantage. The vastly disproportionate funding of donor country experts and scholarships to donor countries -- 34% of bilateral official development assistance in 2004²¹ -- is wasteful from the standpoint of suffering humanity but a valuable source of deference and alliance. Volatility of aid, which typically involves the decline of aid when recipient government revenues decline, severely limits the effectiveness of aid in helping the global poor. In 2000-2003, aid volatility was 45 times greater than the volatility of government revenue in recipient countries.²² Yet volatility is an outcome of insightful agility of donors, especially the largest donor, using aid effectively in pursuit of national foreign policy objectives

Finding the Holy Grail of demanding unmet duty is one thing. The political task of bringing a bit of this bounty home to the world's poor is another, much more difficult. In this harder journey, those inside established institutions and those outside, planners of imperial policy and those who seek to hem in the excesses of empire have productive roles to play. I believe that a global social movement of social movements, opposed to the multiple excesses of the American empire, would play a leading role in the most promising strategy. But that is a different quest narrative.

¹ See Richard W. Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 32 (2004): 357-83.

² See, for example, Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999 (original edition: 1979)), especially Part III; Thomas Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), especially Part III.

³ The worries in this paragraph are addressed to ascriptions of transnational "negative responsibilities" made or strongly suggested in important writings of Thomas Pogge's, including "A Global Resources Dividend" in *The Ethics of Consumption*, David Crocker and Toby Linden, eds. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), especially chapter 8; and "Severe Poverty as a Violation of Negative Duties," *Ethics and International Affairs* 19 (2005): 55-83. Despite the differences in the responsibilities to which he and I appeal, his emphasis on the character of transnational interactions, not just the distribution of needs and resources, will also be fundamental to my own approach.

⁴ The derivation of responsibilities from all three sorts of transnational relationships is

developed in much greater detail in a book that I am writing, *Globalizing Justice: The Ethics of Poverty and Power*, especially chapters three through six.

⁵ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*, pp. 208, 318.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

7. *World Development Indicators 2003*, pp. 55f.

8. By Carla Hills, the most important U.S. Trade Representative during the Uruguay Round, cited in Jarrod Wiener, *Making Rules in the Uruguay Round of the GATT* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1995), p. 186.

9. By Secretary of State James Baker; see Ernest Preeg, *Traders in a Brave New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p.80. Preeg also notes similar threats to organize a "GATT for the like-minded" (U.S. Trade Representative Brock, p. 48) and "if insignificant progress is made ... to explore regional and bilateral agreements with other nations" (President Reagan, p. 51) and describes the crucial role of threatened trade discrimination in advancing U.S. proposals on intellectual property rights ("[Recalcitrant] developing countries came to realize that a multilateral agreement in the GATT could be the lesser evil to unilateral U.S. demands outside the GATT," p. 67.) Preeg was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Uruguay Round. His history of the negotiations is accompanied, on the back cover, by praise from Carla Hills and from Arthur Dunkel, the director general of GATT for most of this period.

¹⁰ Testimony at her nomination hearing at the Senate Finance Committee, in Steve Dryden, *Trade Warriors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 355.

¹¹ See Clyde Farnsworth, "New U.S. Trade Chief Is Set to Use a Big Stick Against Any

Barriers," *New York Times*, April 14, 1989, p. A20.

¹² Adam Przeworski and James Vreeland, "IMF programs," pp. 297, 399-402.

¹³ See Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 113-5.

¹⁴ See Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially chapter 14.

¹⁵ Michael Clemens, Steven Radelet and Rikhil Bhavnani, "Counting chickens when they hatch: The short term effect of aid on growth," (internet: Center for Global Development, 2004); Henrik Hansen and Finn Tarp, "Aid effectiveness disputed" in Tarp, ed., *Foreign Aid and Development* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 103-128.

¹⁶ Ravi Kanbur, "Conditionality and debt in Africa" in Tarp, *Foreign Aid and Development*, p. 419. See also Nicolas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.)

¹⁷ See, for example, the tabulation of aid intensities in Todd Moss and Arvind Subramanian, "After the Big Push?" (internet: Center for Global Development, 2005), p. 6. The study covers 52 low income countries, omitting 9 others for which insufficient data was available. Doubling puts 35 of the 52 countries at or above 15% ODA/GDP, 25 over 25%.

¹⁸ See Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, (New York,: Penguin, 2005), pp. 297f.

¹⁹ OECD, *Statistical Annex of the 2006 Development Cooperation Report*, Table 7. As usual in foreign aid statistics, the figure concerns, more precisely, the members of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, which includes all major donors except for Saudi Arabia. Inclusion of non-DAC donors would make no significant difference. The U.S. per capita burden was \$79.

²⁰ See Joseph Stiglitz and Andrew Charlton, *Fair Trade for All* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 94-102.

²¹ OECD, *Statistical Annex of the 2006 Development Cooperation Report*, Table 12.

²² See Ales Bulir and Javier Hamann, "Volatility of Development Aid," (Washington: IMF, 2006), pp. 10, 12, 13.