

# Comprehension Exercise

## Global Politics

### Passage A: From Executive to Cosmopolitan Multifateralism by David Held

1. Contemporary globalization shares elements in common with past phases, but is distinguished by unique organizational features, creating a world in which the extensive reach of human relations and networks is matched by its relative high intensity, high velocity and high impact propensity across many facets of social life. The result is the emergence of a global economy, 24-hour trading in financial markets, multinational corporations which dwarf many a country's economic resources, new forms of international law, the development of regional and global governance structures and the creation of global systemic problems — global warming, AIDS, mass terrorism, market volatility, money laundering, the international drugs trade, among other phenomena. A number of striking challenges are posed by these developments.
2. Contemporary processes of globalization and regionalization create overlapping networks of power which cuts across territorial boundaries; as such they put pressure on, and strain, a world order designed in accordance with the Westphalian principle of exclusive sovereign rule over a bounded territory.
3. The locus of effective political power can no longer be simply national governments — effective power is shared and bartered by diverse forces and agencies, public and private, at national, regional and international levels. Moreover, the idea of a self-determining people — or of a political community of fate — can no longer be located within the boundaries of a single nation-state alone. Some of the most fundamental forces and processes which determine the nature of life chances are now beyond the reach of individual nation-states.
4. A distinctive aspect of this is the emergence of 'global politics' — the increasingly extensive forms of political activity. Political decisions and actions in one part of the world can rapidly acquire worldwide ramifications. Sites of political action and/or decision-making can become linked through rapid communications into complex networks of political interaction. Associated with this stretching of politics is a frequent intensification of global processes such that 'action at a distance' permeates the social conditions and cognitive worlds of specific places or policy communities. As a consequence, developments at the global level — whether economic, social or environmental — can acquire almost instantaneous local consequences and vice versa.
5. The idea of global politics challenges the traditional distinctions between the domestic and the international, and between the territorial and non-territorial, as embedded in modern conceptions of the 'political'. It highlights the richness and complexity of the interconnections which transcend states and societies in the global order. Global politics today, moreover, is anchored not just in traditional geopolitical concerns but also in a larger diversity of economic, social and ecological questions. Pollution, drugs, human rights and terrorism are among an increasing number of transnational policy issues which cut across territorial jurisdictions and existing political alignments, and which require international cooperation for their effective resolution.
6. Nations, peoples and organizations are linked, in addition, by many new forms of communication which range across borders. The revolution in microelectronics, in information technology and in computers has established virtually instantaneous worldwide links which, when combined with technologies of the telephone, communication. The intimate connection between 'physical setting', 'social setting' and politics which distinguished most political associations from, premodern to modern times has been ruptured; the new communication systems create new experiences, new modes of understanding and new frames of political reference independently of direct contact with particular peoples, issues or events. The speed with which the events of 11 September 2001 ramified across the world and made mass terrorism a global issue is a poignant example.

7. In the past, nation-states principally resolved their differences over boundary matters by pursuing 'reasons of state' backed by diplomatic initiatives and, ultimately, by coercive means. But this power logic is singularly inadequate to resolve the many complex issues, from economic regulation to resource depletion and environmental degradation, which engender — at seemingly ever greater speeds — an intermeshing of 'national fortunes'. We are, as Kant almost eloquently put it, 'unavoidably side by side'. In a world where powerful states make decisions not just for their peoples but for others as well, and where transnational actors and forces cut across the boundaries of national communities in diverse ways, the questions of who should be accountable to whom, and on what basis, do not easily resolve themselves.

### **Passage B: Global Governance and Democratic Accountability by Robert O. Keohane**

1. In the contemporary world entities other than states help to compose society. It seems more appropriate to speak now of global rather than international society. But 9/11 should make us be cautious about believing that global society is becoming universalized. Terrorists have brought sudden external violence and the fear of such violence back into our lives with a vengeance, and the security-seeking, force-wielding state has not been far behind. We therefore need to remind ourselves that a universal global society remains a dream, and one that may be receding from view rather than becoming closer. An increasingly globalized world society has indeed been developing, but it exists within a violence-prone system, both international and transnational. The world is not neatly divided in "zones of peace" and "zones of turmoil". Relationships of peaceful exchange among societies, and violent conflict involving non-state actors, can occur in the same physical spaces.

2. Human rights advocates have long been aware that a universal global society is more aspiration than reality. The torturers and mass murderers of the world do not share fundamental values with committed humane democrats. In the wake of 9/11 we have become acutely aware of terrorists' attempts to kill other people, personally unknown to them, who merely stand for hated values or live in states whose policies the terrorists oppose. Perhaps even more soberly, we realized that millions of people cheered or at least sought to justify the evil deeds of 9/11.

3. On the global scale, common values are lacking. The Taliban did not try to emulate the social organization of Western society, and in fact rejected much of it, such as the practice of enabling women to live public lives. Many fundamentalist religious people do not share — indeed, reject — secular ideals such as those of pluralist democracy. Indeed, one reason that democratic values are not spreading universally is that dogmatic religions claiming exclusive access to comprehensive ultimate truth contain fundamentally anti-democratic elements. Their claim of comprehensiveness means that they assert authority over issues involving the governance over human affairs. Their claim of exclusive excess to ultimate truth means that the appeal for authority, not to human experiences, science or public opinion but to established authority or privileged knowledge of the divine, and they reject accountability to public and human institutions. Insofar as people believe that power is legitimated by divine authority, they will not be drawn toward liberal democracy.

4. We must unfortunately conclude that the vision of a universal global society is a mirage. There is indeed a global society: common values and common institutions are not geographically bounded. But the global, society in which we live is not universal: it does not include members of al-Qaeda, suicide bombers, or substantial elements of the populations of US allies such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It also excludes other fundamentalists who believe that as the "chosen people" they have special rights and privileges. People with these beliefs may belong to global societies of their own, but they do not belong to the same global society as do those of us who believe in liberal democratic values. To genuinely belong to an open global society, one must accept others, with very different beliefs about ultimate truth and the good life, as participants, as long as they follow principles of reciprocity in accordance with fair procedural rules.

5. Even a universal global society would propose a challenge to global governance under that best of circumstances, and it would be difficult to implement a cosmopolitan vision. If globalization of public authority occurred, individual citizens would have few incentives to try to monitor governments' behaviour. Indeed, the larger the polity, the more individuals can rationally be ignorant, since each person's actions would have so little effect on policies. That is, the very size of a global polity would create immense incentive problems for voters — in mass election campaigns as it would seem pointless for voters to invest in acquiring information when one's own vote would count relatively speaking, for so

little. It would also be hard without political parties that operate on a global scale, or a coherent civil society, to aggregate interests and coherently articulate claims. Even a universal global society would lack a strong civil society with robust communication patterns and strong feelings of solidarity with others in the society.

### QUESTIONS ON PASSAGE A

1. Explain what is meant by 'Westphalian principle' (para 2). Use your own words. [1]
2. What relationship does the writer imply diverse forces and agencies have with the use of the phrase 'shared and battered' (para 3)? [1]
3. What does the 'stretching of politics' (para 4) imply about the nature of global politics? [3]
4. What is the writer's purpose in mentioning "We are..unavoidably side by side" (para 7) [1]

### QUESTIONS ON PASSAGE B

5. Explain what the author means by 'a universal global society remains a dream, and one that may be receding from view rather than becoming closer' (para 1). Provide evidence to support your answer. [3]
6. Justify with evidence from paragraph 2 the writer's attitude towards the issue of terrorism. [2]
7. How is an international society (para 1) different from a global society (para 4)? [2]
8. Looking at paragraph 4, how can the universal global society be attained, as implied by the author? [1]
9. Using paragraphs 3 to 5, summarise in no more than 120 words, the difficulties in establishing a universal global society. Use your own words. [8]
10. David Held describes global politics while Robert O.Keohane presents the difficulties in achieving a global society. Discuss how your nation should respond to the impact of global politics and how it can overcome any one difficulty to help achieve a global society.

In your answer develop some of the points made by the writers and give your own views and some account of the experiences which have helped you form them.

## **ANSWERS To questions from Passage A**

### **1. Lift from para 2**

The Westphalian principle refers to the sole/complete/undivided/absolute/independent/autonomous/self-governing/control/change/command

**over**

a delimited/bordered space.

### **2. Lift from para 3 (shared and bartered)**

They have a cooperative and negotiated relationship.

### **3. Lift from para 4**

The stretching of politics implies political resolutions and activities (or policies) in one part of the world can quickly produce international outcomes.

because different parts of the world are connected via fast communications into layered/complicated/intricate systems of political conversation.

Conversely, occurrences/happenings at the global level can also produce almost immediate national implications.

### **4. Lift from para 7**

The writer's purpose is to illuminate the fact that people are Inevitably/inherently interdependent/in the same boat.

## **ANSWERS To questions from Passage B**

### **5. Lift from para 1 and 2**

The author means the universal global society is still/stays a vision/ambition that is retreating/withdrawing from reach/fulfilment.

The evidence lies in the fact that tormentors/persecutors and mass murders do not subscribe to the same basic morals/ethics/principles as dedicated compassionate democrats, and

These terrorists try to murder strangers who simply represent abhorrent/despised ideals or who reside in places with policies the terrorists disagree with/dissent from.

Many celebrated and tried to rationalise the atrocities of 9/11.

6. In labelling the acts of terrorism as tormentors and killing many people the writer is strongly critical of the issue of people who rationalise the acts.

7. A global society is one where joint ideals and organisations are not restricted to nations. In contrast, an international society is made up of nations with their unique ideals and organisations.

8. A universal global society can be attained when people accept others with very different beliefs about ultimate truth and the good life. OR A universal global society can be attained when people follow principles of reciprocity in accordance with fair procedural rule.

### **9. Summary :**

The first difficulty is that universally½ shared beliefs hardly exist½ Religious extremists oppose½ non-religious beliefs of liberal democracy. ½ Indeed democratic beliefs ½are not gaining worldwide influence½ since fundamentalist sole claim to absolute truth½ is essentially opposed to democracy ½and they claim complete control½ over public concerns.½ Instead of turning to human support, they invoke ½ the power of a supreme being½ to legitimise their claim.

Another difficulty is how the global society excludes the non-mainstream and extremists who being the honoured few½ belong to a global community distinct from ours.½

The last difficulty is that in a global society the public is less motivated ½to act as a government watchdog½ since the bigger the political entity, the more likely for the public to be apathetic½ because what an individual does ½ hardly influences the system½. Also since it is futile½ for voters to know each candidate better½ it becomes difficult to put together½ and voice out public concerns ½ especially where there is an absence of effective communication½ and cohesiveness½ within the global society itself.