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## Kapuscinski Lecture: How to respond to global threats in the decade ahead

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### Planet of Great Opportunities

Thank you very much for this invitation to contribute to the series of Kapuscinski lectures. I never had the pleasure meeting Ryszard Kapuscinski in person, but I have read most of his books and I have followed in his tracks, visiting many countries that he had brought to life for his readers. I have been an academic and a politician. As a researcher I have studied processes of development. In politics I have been active in international relations, in particular relations between Western countries and developing countries. In both capacities I have benefited from the example given by Kapuscinski and from his look at the world, its peoples and its nations: a journalistic approach, reflective, beyond the mere description of facts and events. He had the eye of an anthropologist like Malinowski, whom he held in high esteem, and the ethical mind of a philosopher, like the much admired Levinas. Kapuscinski tried to dissect processes of social change as precisely as possible, putting phenomena in a historic context and comparing them with events elsewhere. He did this in a scientific manner, objectively, taking distance from culturally determined Western values. But he did not shy away from approaching his findings subjectively, using cosmopolitan values.

#### *The Other*

Such an approach is not common today. In many societies people increasingly look at other people of a different ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, with suspicion and animosity. In his address on the occasion of a Doctorate Honoris Causa at the Jagiellonski University in Krakow, Poland, in 2004, Kapuscinski made a strong plea in favour of the opposite: respecting the dignity of each human being, regardless cultural differences, and engaging oneself in dialogue, aiming at mutual understanding and a sense of togetherness.

Kapuscinski made this plea also in other addresses, which he brought together under the title *Ten Inny*, which is Polish for *The Other*, that is: the other person, perhaps a stranger, belonging to a different culture, but anyway a person, another human being. Many people in his audiences may have agreed with him. For people of high moral spirit Kapuscinski's pleas in favour of human solidarity sound familiar, reasonable and self-evident.

Yet, what many people may appreciate as natural is not common wisdom for humankind as a whole. Solidarity beyond borders never has been an all inclusive value, the essence of humankind. Perhaps it never will be, anyway not to the extent meant by Kapuscinski in the last lines of his speech in Krakow, quoting another journalist and literary man, Joseph Conrad, who described solidarity in terms of "common dreams, joys, anxieties, objectives, illusions, hopes and

fears which tie together humankind as a whole, the dead with the living and the living with the yet unborn.”

### *Values and institutions*

Such a grand description of human solidarity as a norm aims high. However, in order to meet the standard, a declaration of values is not sufficient. The human deficit - Christians would call it ‘sinning’ - is innate. A society in which people have pledged their commitment to high moral standards requires that values, once agreed, are enshrined in law and that its institutions promote and uphold these values, that they guarantee the laws incorporating them, and protect people against erosion of these values and violation of these laws.

This is a must, not only in a national society, but also globally. The world needs common values and common institutions. Powerful institutions lacking shared values will breed disillusion and conflict. High moral values lacking strong institutional protection will breed hypocrisy and exclusion.

In this lecture, following Kapuscinski, I will stress the need to reform and strengthen international institutions in order to uphold global values. Let me, in order to make my point, take you back to the first half of the previous century.

That half-century was marked by two World Wars, the first global wars in history. In between those wars people suffered from a severe economic crisis with global proportions. Those were the years of the rise of fascism, Nazism and communism, not only as ideologies, but as cruel dictatorships, with millions and millions of victims. It was the period of the Holocaust, the gravest genocide ever. It was also the century of global imperialism and widespread colonization, wider than before, heyday for the colonizers, down-right oppression of the colonized. And the disasters culminated, when the first nuclear bomb was thrown.

In short, the first half of that century was a catastrophe. A world-wide crisis seemed to take on permanent features of lasting instability and insecurity, more and more violence and brutal violations of human rights. During the nineteenth century people had to endure major catastrophes as well, but in the twentieth century the evil got worldwide proportions.

What happened then? Around 1945 our grandparents built a new structure, with common values, joint institutions, agreed policy rules and shared policy instruments. World leaders negotiated a common framework, in order to meet common objectives on the basis of mutually shared values. For the first time in world history such values and rules were accepted, embraced and institutionalized globally, on the basis of a world consensus.

Maybe humankind could only change the course of world history after having suffered from the ordeals of the years before. The awareness grew that these ordeals, if permitted to continue, could destroy civilisation. So, in the end, after World War II, the last catastrophe of the early twentieth century, a global consensus was reached: “this should never happen again!” This conviction became the more vigorous, when people became aware of potential global nuclear annihilation. It was a close call, but, anyway, clear decisions were made to head for a different direction.

Perhaps this could only have happened due to the new power relations in the world. A multiple power structure would probably have resulted in indecision and further decay. But - again - anyway, the United States of America, at that time the strongest world power (economically, technologically, politically, and militarily) was willing to use its power surplus to back up a new world order, rather than only in its own short term interest. This was unique. It had never happened before in world history.

The decisions taken ushered a new phase in globalization: globalization not only of economic and technological opportunities, but also of values and institutions, in order to serve common global objectives. Six objectives stood out. First, peace: avoiding new world wars and major conflict escalations. Second, security: addressing international and domestic conflicts that would endanger world security. Third, stability: preventing and mitigating world economic, financial, trade and food security instabilities. Fourth, development: enabling progress, in order to improve the welfare of nations and the life conditions of their people: more food, more employment, higher income and more equal participation, it being understood that unequal access to welfare could result in conflict, violence and insecurity. Fifth, freedom, of both nations (decolonization) and citizens, by fostering processes of emancipation and democratization. And, finally, sixth: protection of human rights, initially mainly civil and political rights, for instance of minorities and people living under dictatorship, and later on also economic and social human rights.

There were more objectives, but these six were essential. They could not be accomplished separately. Right from the beginning it was understood that they were related to each other. They had to sustain each other. Violation of each individual objective would endanger also the others.

That is the reason why the new order was constructed as an integrated system. The new institutions had to belong to one and the same family: the system of the United Nations.

Establishing a world government was politically impossible, because notwithstanding their common objectives, nation states still had different interests. However, the institutions were given powers to address violations of common objectives. They got explicit mandates together with rules and procedures of decision making. They acquired operational capacities and instruments to implement decisions. A modus operandi for review, appraisal and appeal was established in order to ensure compliance. All proceedings were based on the newly agreed principles and values of the system. All agreements (Charters, Treaties, Covenants and Resolutions), reached after long negotiations, formed together a system of world governance, a body of true international law. International law became the embodiment of the global values. Looking backwards, it would be fair to say that consensus based international law was a breakthrough in international civilization.

#### *United Nations and United Peoples*

The new world consensus was based on two main principles. First: sovereignty of the nation state. No country would have the right to intervene in other countries, invade them, impose its will on them and oppress their people. All countries were entitled to full autonomy, provided that they would not use this autonomy to violate the autonomy of other nations. Second: equal human rights for all. Within sovereign nation states all human beings, without any discrimination, would enjoy the same civil, political, social and economic rights. Individual nations, as well as the international community as a whole, would have the responsibility to uphold and protect these rights.

So, the sovereignty of the nation state was not an aim in itself. It should enable the state, in cooperation with other nations, to preserve the human rights of the citizens and improve their living conditions and welfare. This two pillar system was meant to enable the peoples of the world to address root causes of conflict, insecurity, violence and war, and, thus, to work and live together in peace.

The new system had a number of built in flaws, due to the specific way it had been established right after World War II. All countries would be sovereign, but the construction of the Security Council did allot more powers to some of them. However, at the time it was the best attainable. And it was a sea change, unprecedented in world history. A world consensus concerning crucial values was agreed, power was shared, and common interests of humankind were recognized. That is why, I repeat, it is legitimate to call this a breakthrough in civilization.

Moreover: the new order and its institutions scored successes. A third World War was averted. Economic reconstruction after World War II, together with agreed new rules in international finance and trade, made sure that the economic depression of the thirties gave way to stability and growth. Human rights were better kept after 1945. There were still many violations, but there was progress. Unmistakably, the sovereignty of nation states was met through decolonization. In no more than about three decades most former colonies became independent nations. This was a great achievement of the UN, though incomplete. Formal legal independence has to be complemented by political autonomy and economic self-reliance, promoting social development and people's welfare. This took much more time. However, the gradual emancipation of nations in the new world system went hand in hand with a growing self-esteem of their citizens. As Kapucinski pointed out, people living in a world that Westerners had looked upon as not only different but also of lesser value, with a lower culture and backward traditions, worthy of conquest, enslavement, conversion and suppression, or, at most, benevolent uplifting from outside, those 'other' people were gradually getting a sense of their own dignity. That process became irreversible.

Look at China and the Chinese, sixty years ago and today. Look at the development of India, Vietnam, Chile and Brazil. Look at the quest for autonomy by indigenous people all around the world. Look at Africa in 1950 and at present. Look at the position of Islam, then and now. The process of growing self-esteem is steadfast. The voices are louder and louder. Listen to the people of Southern Sudan, Tunisia and Egypt, this very year.

#### *Innovation*

Where is the world today, sixty five years after the birth of the new order in the mid 1940's? In the life of people and their institutions sixty five years are a long period. Maturity has been reached, experience accumulated, wisdom collected, retirement is drawing near. Without renewal of ideas and innovation of structures, stiffening looms ahead.

Innovation is a must. Six decades stand for two working generations, or, perhaps, three cultural generations. This, together with ever faster changes in technology, in particular information technology, which alter people's perceptions on society each new decade, implies a challenge to review and renew. Half a century ago the challenges and priorities were different from today. The technological and economic means were different. The context was different, witness for instance intensified globalisation. And, last but not least, people's perceptions have changed. What at that time most people considered desirable or necessary, is no longer self evident. Regular reassessments of the aims, character and functions of institutions is essential, if we want them to live up to expectations. Otherwise changes in their technological, economic, social and political environment will render them obsolete, and beyond the capacity to renew themselves. That also applies to the system that was established to address the causes of the catastrophes of the first half of last century.

#### *The sky as the limit*

During the second half of that century running globalisation has blurred the distinction between developed and developing countries, between North and South. There is no distinct Third World anymore in terms of economic development. Many developing countries achieved the status of emerging economies. Some of them, including the large economies of India and China, have accomplished annual rates of economic growth which could only be dreamt of sixty years ago. The economic future of Brazil has brightened as well, and quite a number of countries in Africa and South East Asia have been able to sustain higher growth rates than during the first two decades after decolonization.

During this period also the ideological conflict between East and West was overcome. The Cold War came to an end. The arms race was arrested. The fear for a Third World War between nations subsided. The Group of Non Aligned Countries, which had come into existence at the

Bandung conference in 1956, has also ceased to exist, because there is no reason anymore to declare alignment or non alignment in political terms. Countries can choose their own path towards political and economic self-reliance, without risking political intervention by powers fearing that their sphere of influence will be affected. Spheres of influence are no longer territorially based or geographically determined.

The same globalisation that grew to maturity after the fading of frontiers between North and South and between East and West, has for the first time in world history resulted in a real world market, facilitated by unprecedented breakthroughs in communication and information technology, dwarfing costs of transportation of goods, services, persons, knowledge and ideas, enabling people to disregard differences in time and place. After 1989 the sky became the limit, economically and technologically, and the rest would follow. So, in 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, a new spirit of optimism prevailed. World leaders pledged to allocate the world's resources for investment in the reduction of poverty and the preservation of the environment. A new Agenda was adopted: Agenda 21. The twenty first century would be the century of sustainable development. Profit oriented market forces would work together with public authorities in order to demonstrate a common responsibility for the planet and its people.

### *Cloudy skies*

You may remember the story of Sherlock Holmes, who went on a camping trip with his assistant Dr. Watson. After sharing a good meal and a bottle of wine, they retired to their tent for the night. Somewhere in the middle of the night they woke up and Sherlock Holmes asked his friend: "Watson, look up into the sky and tell me what you see?"

Watson said, "I see a fantastic panorama of countless of stars."

Then Holmes asked, "And, what does that tell you?"

Watson replied, "Astronomically, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and planets. Allowing for similar chemical distribution throughout the cosmos it may be reasonably implied that life - and possibly intelligent life - may well fill the universe. Theologically, the vastness of space tells me that God is great and we are small and insignificant. Horologically, it tells me that it's about 4 AM. Meteorologically, the blackness of the sky and the crispness of the stellar images tell me that there is low humidity and stable air and therefore we are most likely to enjoy a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Then Holmes retorts, "Watson, please, don't you see? Someone stole our tent ...."

Watson saw the parts, but he did not get the picture. He was fascinated by the promises of a new day, but he did not observe the dangers. Somebody had taken away his cover, the protection which he had erected against rain, wind, animals in the field and possible other threats.

If I look into the future I do not see a fantastic panorama full of bright stars. On the contrary, I see a cloudy sky. I foresee storm and turmoil. Progress made during the last twenty years – technological breakthroughs, high economic growth, detente between the world powers – went hand in hand with major setbacks: more violent conflicts within countries, climate change, international terrorism, a world financial crisis, to mention but a few. These were not isolated incidents. They are structural phenomena, inherent to the path and character of present day world development. Will this be different in the years ahead? I am afraid not. I foresee that the structural causes of these threats will not diminish as a consequence of globalization, but will become ever more manifest and determine the future. The catastrophes of the early twentieth century are behind us. However, there are new challenges, confrontations and insecurities, and they are frightening.

### *Challenges ahead*

Despite unprecedented world economic growth since 1990, world poverty has hardly decreased. At the beginning of this century world leaders endorsed the so-called Millennium Development Goals, with the aim to cut world poverty by half, in no more than fifteen years. These goals will not be met. Still about two billion people live below or just above a decent level of subsistence. Globalisation has resulted in a sharp increase in social and economic inequality within all countries. This has created a different North South divide, between people with adequate access to markets and technology, and people that are not only exploited or forgotten, but left out on purpose, excluded from the market, without sufficient purchasing power or resources to invest in order to increase their productivity. They lack access to modernity or to the means necessary in order to live a life in decency, beyond survival. One third of the world's population has been deprived from adequate access to one or more of the essentials: fertile land, clean and safe water, food and nutrition, non-depletable sources of energy, primary health care in order to check maternal death after child birth and prevent children dying of diseases that easily can be cured, essential medication to enhance life expectancy, basic education in order to secure oneself a place in a rapidly changing society, and a healthy habitat. Within all countries societies have become structurally dualistic. This has resulted in a dualistic world economy. The North South divide between nations, which has prevailed until the turn of the century, has changed. North-South presently is a worldwide divide between classes, within all countries, in India and Africa as well as in Europe and the United States. Globally about two third of the world's population belongs to the upper and middle classes, or can at least reasonably expect further emancipation. One third is living in circumstances which can only be characterized as stagnation or decline.

In all countries those people who are better off, and wish to cultivate their comfort, lay a heavy claim on the scarce resources of our world. Water and non-renewable energy and a number of minerals, raw materials and other resources, which are essential for material economic growth, are becoming ever scarcer. This scarcity is not only due to physical limits or astronomically high costs of exploration, but also to demographic change, increased demand in general, chosen production techniques and revealed consumption preferences. All these patterns are structural. They will result in further climate change, global warming and irreversible losses of biodiversity. These scarcities and trends, together with more dense people's settlements - in megacities and in ecologically vulnerable rural areas - and greater technological vulnerability, will make countries more prone to disasters. This is bound to result in more casualties. We may expect that in many parts of the world, including those where natural disasters have been rather exceptional, these catastrophes will become more frequent and have a greater impact.

This is an alarming scenario. It is further complicated by its consequences. Scarcities and inequalities will result in more conflicts and escalating violence. In many parts of the world people will have to compete for survival. Economic and social conflicts will affect tribal, ethnic, religious and other cultural disputes, and result in violent clashes. The quest of people for greater respect, larger freedom and more welfare will not halt. Polarisation is on the rise. People that have been excluded and suppressed are no longer voiceless. They have found new possibilities to communicate and let themselves heard. Globalisation will boost the pursuit of emancipation. It will also enhance the capacity for sophisticated hard-line coercion. In short: the conflict potential is mounting.

At the same time many nation-states plagued by frequent conflicts are themselves getting weaker. In Southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa and North and Central Latin America, more and more nation-states find themselves in a situation of 'half war, half peace'. In these states regimes cannot cope with the conflicts. Due to globalization, and to an unholy alliance between trade in drugs, arms and people, mostly women, international crime is spreading and increasing. Often the regimes in these countries feed the conflicts, either through corruption or bad governance, or because they are themselves an offspring of the conflict and take sides.

Globalisation is also facilitating the spread of conflicts to other parts of the world. Conflicts cannot easily be contained anymore to a specific region. Migration, refugee movements, diasporas, together with easy access to information, unimpeded money transfers, unchecked trade in sophisticated and small arms, lead to quick and easy escalations of conflicts, including the spread of international terrorism. Moreover, proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction can no longer be prevented. Not only regimes that seek international confrontation, but also power groups in disintegrating nation-states or insurgents and rebel movements, will get access to such weapons.

These contests within and between nations can be expected to result in new divides at the world level, following the North South divide and the East West divide in the previous century. New confrontations between major world powers, both traditional powers and newly emerging powers, are likely. A scramble for scarce resources seems unavoidable. The competition for resources that had taken place during the nineteenth's and early twentieth century had stimulated technological breakthroughs, which had resulted in the development of new production methods and the use of substitutes for traditional raw materials. However, emerging physical scarcities and a steeply rising consumer demand will make the scramble ahead of us uncompromising. Parallel to this contest we are witnessing a new confrontation between the West and the rest, in particular the Arab world and the world of Islam. This confrontation is partly cultural and religious, but no lesser threat to peace and security than the scramble for resources. Cultural and religious conflicts are more difficult to contain than economic conflicts.

On top of this all we are in the midst of a world financial and debt crisis of alarming proportions. This too is due to the character of globalisation, which has resulted in the rise of uncontrolled supranational financial powers, propagating values squarely to the principles which had been agreed half a century ago. Those principles of responsible economic behaviour, meant to ensure balanced international development, were undermined by unchecked market forces. They became liable to erosion when public responsibilities were substituted by private, capitalist greed. Not only international banks and financial speculators are to be blamed. International oil and mineral companies, chemical and pharmaceutical enterprises, and large plantations, tobacco companies, seed producers and food chains are also culpable. Most of these firms are heedlessly putting aside the people-planet-profit commitment of Agenda 21. The spirit has left the bottle and nobody seems to know how the resulting forces can be pushed back.

*A diminishing capacity to address the challenges.*

All threats and challenges which I have touched upon are structural. They are larger than before. They last longer, not only because they are mutually related and reinforce each other, but also because they are not addressed coherently.

This is alarming. However, what should worry us most are not the dangers themselves, but the fact that we have dismantled our capacity to deal with them.

The two pillar system that we had created mid last century - a global values consensus and law based international institutions putting those values in force - gave the international community the means to avert further manmade catastrophes. The system was perhaps no more than a clever self help capacity in case of global threats, but as such it provided some form of common protection. The system functioned as a cover, a tent. Presently both poles are staggering. The values have been eroded and the institutions crippled.

The tent has been stolen. It has not been taken care off. The tent got torn and tarnished. Principles of international law do not mean much anymore. Security Council resolutions are but a piece of paper. UN agencies are sidelined. Their position has been taken over by the Group of Twenty and by so-called coalitions of good will, by no means representative for all people who had sought cover in the tent. Agencies that had been established to provide some form protection against instabilities and backsliding have been wilfully weakened. International institutions with a

mandate to deal with finance, capital, money, investment, food and agriculture, trade, environment, development, human rights, relief and refugees, have been played off against each other. Global common public institutions give way to trans-national private market powers. Global common security and indiscriminate protection of human rights have become subordinate to arbitrary perceptions of national security.

National security is regarded as a political precondition for attaining other objectives, including human rights. Security increasingly seems to be understood as an absolute and superior value, in no way dependent on other values, such as justice or equality. Absolute security is security getting out of proportion. It does not allow for nuances. It is biased towards end of pipe solutions, such as military means to impose security, rather than political and socio-economic means to address root causes of insecurity. National security, rather than being understood as an integral element of world security for all, has become a concept that excludes *The Other*. "My security is endangered by you, or might be endangered by you. I don't trust you. This entitles me to exclude you. I may even deliver a pre-emptive strike." So, attack before possibly being attacked. The pre-emptive strike is back again in the international system. Once again, war has been given a chance.

Security, instead of being perceived as a common public good, has become a private commodity that can be bought and sold on the market. There is no guarantee whatsoever that commercial enterprises selling security will live up to principles as human rights and sustainability or that they have an interest in peace. The killing of bystanders in the name of national security - for instance with the help of drones - , whether these people are innocent or not, is accepted as collateral damage. Collateral damage, when applied to people, is dehumanizing. The priority of national security breeds a new culture, a culture of fear: other human beings are taken for possible enemies and looked upon as second rate people.

Beautiful new concepts have been introduced, such as human security, human development, precaution, sustainability, the responsibility to protect, and other ideas, opening a delightful perspective to the Dr. Watsons of our world. However, in practice they do not mean much. The political and market mechanisms of today have resulted in less precaution, less security, less sustainability and less protection. The new concepts are fashionable, but the gap between theory and practice has widened. Hypocrisy has crept into the propagated values. The same rights, liberties and responsibilities are believed to have a different meaning for *The Other* than for ourselves. Striving for security by violating the security of others has become legitimate again. The new world order that our grandparents had carefully built after 1945, in order to put a halt to this, has become paralysed.

There is no tent anymore. It has been taken away, not by passers-by deep in the night, but in broad daylight, from within, by those who felt the tent a straitjacket rather than a shield.

"You see ..., but you do not observe", Sherlock Holmes said to Watson, in Conan Doyle's story *A Scandal in Bohemia*. Watson was not an average citizen. Admittedly, he was the sidekick of Sherlock Holmes, but he was an excellent doctor and surgeon, intelligent, an expert and an intellectual. However, looking around, he saw, but he did not get the picture.

World leaders and opinion leaders seem to behave in a similar fashion. We look around, forward and upward, and still consider the sky the limit. Admittedly, there are some clouds, but we do not see a storm. And we do not observe that the cover has gone and that we have lost our common coping capacity. Today the motto seems to be again: everybody for himself. *The Others* may perish.

*Grasping the opportunities.*

In order to reverse this trend we need a radical turn on two fronts: values and institutions. This is the challenge today, drastic reassessment of values and fundamental innovation of institutions,



not because of the sixty years life cycle behind us, but because of impending world insecurities in the sixty years ahead, which threaten the sustainability of the earth and the social fabric of humankind.

We do not have to start from scratch. Innovation and renewal, preventing decay, include restoration and reform. Reform of institutions, strengthening of values, and shoring the world's social fabric. In other words: preserving the tent.

The values themselves are not the main problem. Their two-tongued interpretation, the disregard for international law, and the ambiguity of the so-called common objectives are the bigger problem.

This requires research, education and political mobilisation. Research and science can help citizens to get better insight into realities and scenario's and to choose a different position than that of mere on-lookers or even ostriches, burying the head in the sand. Mere bystanders look, see, but do not observe. As citizens we should be challenged to detect and deduce, to understand connections and the historical context.

Citizen's views, however, are easily manipulated by commercial powers that seduce and persuade them to consume, ever more, whatever the consequences. Citizens are also easily manipulated by political groups with an interest in power for its own sake, and which try to keep this power by means of divisionary policies and discrimination. Commercial groups use the channels of value transfer, in particular media, to bombard citizens with commercial messages. They claim to know what people really want. Political interest groups bombard citizens with a similar populist message: "you need security above everything else and we will take care of that". Along with these bombardments values such as sustainability, human rights, justice, equity and mutual responsibility lose out to private profit, entertainment, market efficiency, winner takes all, and asymmetrical security.

Citizens also have been made to believe that society is not makeable and that the future is by definition unknown territory. When people believe so, they will accept any new technological option as progress, and agree that everything that can be made should be made, whatever the risks. Society seems to expect that future generations will be able to find the technological solutions for all problems, including the problems that we create and casually shift on to them: nuclear waste, nuclear weapons, drones, genetically modified organs, pesticides, the bio-industry, fossil fuel based energy, biomass energy, hydro power based on large dams, polluting chemicals, and so on. It is a rather frivolous attitude.

Not every change means progress. Innovation is not an aim in itself. It should serve a purpose, not for market partners, but for society. Reform of institutions, including the UN and the way decisions are made within this system, should guarantee a just and equal consideration of all interests, and in particular the interests of two categories of people. First, the poorest of the poor. In the production systems of the last two decades, which are primarily based on capital and technology, rather than people and nature, the poor have been exploited and excluded no less than in earlier phases of world capitalism. Second: the yet unborn, the future generations, our grand children and grand-grand children. People in the underbelly of the world's economy and people that once will come out of the shadows of the future have one thing in common: they do not (yet) have a voice. But they have a claim.

Sixty years ago a new order was established to make such a claim manifest, to declare legitimacy of claims and to find ways and means honouring rightful claims. That order is the tent that had been set up to provide protection to these two groups in particular. Today both groups seem to have been turned out of the tent. And those who remained inside do not attach much value anymore to the protection provided by the tent. Instead, they take it down.

Kapuscinsky described our world as a *Planet of Great Opportunities*. It is our responsibility to grasp these opportunities, in the interest not only of ourselves, but also of *The Other*. Using this terminology and quoting Joseph Conrad, Kapuscinsky made very clear that he meant humankind as a whole, “the dead with the living and the living with the yet unborn”.

**END**

Sources

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2. Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Tale of the Sea*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1979