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Blair, Brown and the Gleneagles agenda:
Making poverty history, or confronting
the global politics of unequal
development?

ANTHONY PAYNE

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RSPAS

Australian National University

Canberra ACT 0200

Australia

Tel: +61 (2) 6125 2166

Fax: +61 (2) 6125 8010

Email: intrel@anu.edu.au

Web: <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ir>

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Abstract

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the United Kingdom Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer respectively, set out a highly ambitious 'development' agenda for 2005 when it was the UK's turn to hold the Presidency of the Group of 8 and thus host the annual summit, held on this occasion in Gleneagles in Scotland. This agenda embraced issues of aid and debt, trade and climate change. It was given additional prominence by the activities of the Making Poverty History campaign. However, the G8 could never have worked to 'make poverty history' because such an achievement was not remotely within its compass. The details of the agreements reached at Gleneagles and at subsequent international meetings reveal a much less impressive record than the initial hyperbole suggested. The global politics of development is not animated any longer—if indeed it ever was—by what the 'North' is willing to do for the 'South'. It is driven instead by a complex 'global politics of unequal development' into which Blair and Brown's Gleneagles agenda has been swept up. The outcome may represent significant change in some of the patterns of global politics, but it will not mark the ending of poverty.

Blair, Brown and the Gleneagles agenda: Making poverty history, or confronting the global politics of unequal development?

ANTHONY PAYNE¹

Addressing the annual Labour Party conference in Brighton in England in September 2004, the Irish rock star, Bono, described Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom (UK), as the Lennon and McCartney of the global development stage. For two politicians steeped throughout their careers in the politics of spin it did not get much better than that. One journalist later reported that ‘both Blair and Brown grinned away like autograph-hunting schoolboys as the U2 man made his point’.² Bono did indeed have a point. In May 2004 Blair had established an Africa Commission charged with systematically analysing all aspects of Africa’s plight with a view to placing these problems centrally upon the international political agenda. Brown, for his part, had devoted much of his speech on the opening day of the Labour conference to a call for a new debt initiative designed to help the world’s poorest countries and for significant moves to be made to open up the international trade barriers that were hampering the economic prospects of so many non-industrialised countries.

In a series of speeches, statements and interviews given in the aftermath of the conference both men pressed their joint agenda still further, focusing specifically on the opportunity presented by the year 2005 when it was the UK’s turn to hold the Presidency of the Group of Eight (G8) and thus host the annual summit, scheduled on this occasion to convene in Gleneagles in Scotland in July. Brown, for example, delivered a powerful and moving lecture to the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in memory of Pope Paul VI in which he described 2005 as ‘a make or break

¹ Department of Politics, University of Sheffield.

² Brian Wheeler, ‘Bono pushes the right buttons’, BBC News Online, 30 September 2004.

year for development'.³ He called specifically upon the richest countries of the world to enact a comprehensive financing program to help poor countries, to advance further to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed by nearly all world leaders at a United Nations (UN) summit in September 2000 and to deliver the Doha development round under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on terms that would make it 'the first world trade agreement to be in the interests of the poorest countries'.⁴ Blair in turn added another dimension to the emerging package in his speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2005. He reiterated his determination to act to help Africa and went on to identify climate change as the other great issue he wanted to address via the UK's Presidency of the G8. His aim here, he said, was to inject new political will into consideration of the problem and, above all, to 'set a direction of travel' for G8 and all other countries in confronting the damaging consequences of climate change.⁵ Blair was even alert to those who downplayed the Presidency of the G8 as 'little more than a chance to show-case the host nation at the annual summit'. He saw it rather as 'an important opportunity to influence the international agenda of some of the world's most prosperous and powerful countries', especially given that the G8 summit was to be followed later in the same year by a series of other high-level meetings including the UN MDG Review conference to be held in New York in September, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting to be held in Montreal in November–December and the WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Hong Kong also in December.⁶ In sum, the year 2005 offered what Blair himself was quite willing to highlight as 'a unique set of opportunities'.⁷

3 Gordon Brown, 'Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at CAFOD's Pope Paul VI memorial lecture', 8 December 2004, <www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/newsroom_and_speeches/press/2004/press_105_2004.cfm>.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Tony Blair, 'Special address by Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the World Economic Forum in Davos', 27 January 2005, <www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1078995903270&aid=1106749656900>.

6 Tony Blair, 'A year of huge challenges', *Economist*, 1 January 2005.

7 Blair, 'Special address'.

The political stakes had thus been set at a high level by both Blair and Brown themselves even before the UK's G8 Presidency had really begun.⁸ But, as the early months of the year unfolded, they were raised to an even greater, and probably unprecedented, level by the huge success of the Making Poverty History (MPH) campaign run by a UK coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), itself a part of a wider global movement of consciousness-raising and protest organised through the Global Campaign Against Poverty. Highlights of the campaign included the wearing of symbolic white wrist-bands by hundreds of thousands of people, a big march in Edinburgh just prior to the start of the G8 summit and the series of 'Live 8' pop concerts put on around the same time by Bob Geldof and Bono.

This working paper seeks to make some political sense of Blair and Brown's Gleneagles agenda and the outcomes of the various key diplomatic meetings of 2005. It does not attempt to assess the source or the extent of the motivations of the two men, presuming them, for want of alternative evidence, to be genuine; nor does it seek to evaluate the strategy and ultimate impact of the MPH campaign, presuming that it can only have added to the political pressure felt by all the G8 leaders at the time they met in Scotland. What it does aim to do is to reflect on the aspirations and achievements of Gleneagles and all that followed; offer a critique of the conceptual framework within which Blair, Brown and the MPH campaign all seem to operate; and propose an alternative, and more hard-headed, political reading of the way that the Gleneagles agenda unfolded during the course of 2005.

THE GLENEAGLES SUMMIT

G8 summits are the descendants of an initial, exclusive meeting of Western world leaders held in Rambouillet in France in 1975. They have since become regular events and have grown increasingly formal, prepared meticulously by representatives of the leaders known as 'sherpas'. Over this period the institution has come to acquire a reputation for launching bold new ideas and initiatives, and then failing to implement

8 William Blyth et al., 'Blair's G8 gamble: Prospects for Gleneagles', Chatham House Briefing Paper No. 05/01 (London: Chatham House, June 2005).

or live up to them.⁹ Nevertheless, on some notable occasions the leaders have given a decisive steer to the making of policy in key areas of global concern and in general the G8 process has not been given the attention that its centrality to global political decision-making has lately come to merit.¹⁰ For it is the case that the G8 is the closest institutional representation of an organising political intelligence at the summit of the world order presently in existence. Indeed, John Kirton has gone further and described it as ‘prospectively the effective center ... of global governance’,¹¹ a claim reinforced by the fact that the G8 network also now embraces meetings of foreign, finance, trade, justice, environment, home, employment, energy and education ministers, as well as ad hoc meetings, task forces and working groups to address pressing issues and embrace the leaders of other groupings.

The Gleneagles summit was thus preceded by a full program of other G8 ministerial meetings, with finance ministers working especially hard in that they convened three times between February and June 2005. At the summit itself meetings with non-G8 countries—or ‘outreach’, as it has rather revealingly come to be called—took two forms. On the first day, the G8 heads met with the leaders of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, described in the official documentation as ‘emerging economy countries’, with a view to associating them with their deliberations on climate change. On the second day, the G8 were joined for their discussion of Africa by the leaders of Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania. As ever, the summit was prolific in respect of the production of documents—a total of fourteen in all, in addition to the Chair’s summary and the emergency statement on terrorism issued at the end of the first morning. Early, imprecise reports of the terrorist attacks in

9 For generally supportive accounts that nevertheless concede this weakness, see Nicholas Bayne, *Hanging in there: The G7 and G8 summit in maturity and renewal* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), and *Staying together: The G8 summit confronts the 21st century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

10 For exceptions, see Andrew Baker, ‘The G7 as a global “ginger group”’: Plurilateralism and four-dimensional diplomacy’, *Global Governance* 6(2) 2000, pp. 165–89; and Hugo Dobson, ‘The G8 and global governance: Concert diplomacy in an age of globalisation’, in Glenn Hook and Hugo Dobson, eds, *Global governance and Japan* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2006).

11 John Kirton, ‘Explaining G8 effectiveness’, in M. R. Hodges, J. J. Kirton and J. P. Daniels, eds, *The G8’s role in the new millennium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 46.

London began to be received in Gleneagles just as the summit opened and there is no doubt that these events affected the mood of the entire gathering. It is likely that a desire to show what kind of leadership could be offered by democratic countries encouraged a willingness to make concessions in some of the key areas of decision and it is possible too that Blair's absence for most of the first day (he flew back to London for seven hours), as well as the decision to shorten the discussion of Africa in order to end the summit early on the second day, may have generated some extra imprecision in what was actually agreed.

Nevertheless, the main outcomes of the summit in relation to the substantive agenda set by the UK Presidency in advance of the meeting can be summarised easily enough. In relation to Africa they included decisions:

- to double aid to all developing countries by around US\$50 billion per year, with at least US\$25 billion extra per year for Africa;
- to take forward via a working group discussion of innovative financing mechanisms to generate more aid, including the 'International Financing Facility (IFF)', pushed for the past two years by Brown, and an air-ticket solidarity levy, recently suggested by the French government;
- to cancel all of the debts (estimated to be more than US\$40 billion) owed by eligible Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) to the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (AfDB); and
- to boost investment in health and education in Africa, and to take action to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other killer diseases.¹²

In relation to trade, the G8 leaders pledged 'to work to further increase momentum towards our goal of an ambitious and balanced outcome' in the forthcoming WTO negotiations in Hong Kong, with a view to bringing

¹² The phraseology in these bullet points is taken from the so-called Chair's Summary issued by the UK government in Blair's name at the end of the meeting, <www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1119518698846>.

them to conclusion ‘by the end of 2006’.¹³ In relation to climate change, a separate statement acknowledged at the outset that ‘human activities’ contributed to ‘the warming of our Earth’s surface’; it committed the G8 to ‘act with resolve and urgency’ to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to ‘work together, and in partnership with major emerging economies’ to achieve ‘substantial reductions’ in such emissions, and to continue to pursue these ends within the existing UNFCCC process, which meant making a success of the Kyoto Protocol by those member countries of the G8 that had ratified it.¹⁴ More adventurously, the leaders also initiated a wider Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development and invited other interested countries to join. Blair agreed to convene the first meeting in the UK in the latter part of 2005; Russia indicated that during its G8 Presidency in 2006 it would focus on energy (on which theme the leaders produced a worthy set of mostly technical proposals for common action); and Japan undertook to receive a report on the Dialogue’s achievements at the 2008 summit that it would convene. Blair’s summary document as Chair made it clear that the five ‘emerging economy countries’ had agreed to participate in this new dialogue. They themselves issued no public comment beyond a pre-summit ‘joint declaration’ in which, *inter alia*, they reiterated the founding Kyoto principle of the ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ of countries with respect to climate change and pointed out, gently but firmly, that this meant that ‘developed countries should ... take the lead in international action to combat climate change’, leaving developing countries to focus on economic and social development and poverty eradication as their ‘first and overriding priorities’.¹⁵ They certainly did not make any mention of committing themselves to reduce the greenhouse emissions of their own countries.

As one might perhaps expect, the implications of many of these agreements were not necessarily what was first implied. They had been

13 ‘Trade’, statement issued by the G8 Gleneagles 2005, <www.g8.gov.uk>.

14 ‘Climate change, energy and sustainable development’, statement issued by the G8 Gleneagles 2005, <www.g8.gov.uk>.

15 ‘Joint declaration of the heads of state and/or government of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, participating in the G8 Gleneagles summit’, issued by the Embassy of Brazil, London, 7 July 2005.

drafted with skill and were designed obviously to boast about achievement and obscure discord. Much of the rest of the working paper is devoted to a full and thorough exegesis of the whole Gleneagles agenda and it will be seen as we proceed that much less was delivered by the summit than these headline outcomes seemed to proclaim. But it is interesting just to consider for a moment the immediate debate to which the publication of the summit's various communiqués and statements gave rise. Blair typically sought to set the agenda of the world's media. In a closing news conference he conceded that 'it is in the nature of politics that you do not achieve absolutely everything you want ... we do not simply by this communiqué make poverty history'. But, he went on, 'we do show how it can be done, and we do signify the political will to do it'. Indeed, pressed by a journalist on this last point, he declared that the various new commitments on aid, debt and health were 'strong' and, perhaps injudiciously, went on to add that, if delivered, 'they will make poverty history'. On trade Blair was prepared to admit that he had argued for the inclusion of a specific date for the ending of G8 agricultural export subsidies, but had not been able to get agreement. On climate change, though, he was distinctly optimistic, evaluating the summit's statement as follows:

What it isn't ... is a renegotiation of a climate change treaty, or a going back over the disagreement over Kyoto. What it is ... is a firm consensus that this problem needs to be tackled, has to be tackled now, together with a dialogue for the future and a plan of action that brings on the one hand the major wealthy economies, including America, and on the other hand the emerging economies of China, and India and other countries together. That ... is something to be proud of.

All in all, Gleneagles in his view represented 'significant progress' and was a demonstration, in marked contrast to the terrorist tactics deployed in London the day before, that 'there is a better and more hopeful way of doing politics in the future'.¹⁶

16 All quotations in this paragraph are derived from 'British Prime Minister Tony Blair reflects on "significant progress" of G8 summit', statement to journalists, 8 July 2005, <[www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/ Front?pageName=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1078995903270&aid=1119520262754](http://www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pageName=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1078995903270&aid=1119520262754)>.

Blair's accomplished use of spin created problems for the various NGOs that made up the MPH coalition. The truth was that it had been cleverly co-opted by Blair and Brown in the run-up to Gleneagles, with the consequence that it was initially wrong-footed by the tone taken by Blair, in particular, in the immediate aftermath. The campaign's official reaction reflected this uneasiness. 'Today', it announced on its website, 'the G8 have chosen not to do all that campaigners insist is necessary to free people trapped in the prison of poverty. Important steps have been taken ... but more action is urgently needed'.¹⁷ This barely concealed the very real differences of opinion expressed by specific individuals and groups. Geldof himself awarded the leaders impressive scores: 'on aid, 10 out of 10; on debt, eight out of 10 ... mission accomplished frankly', a comment for which he has since been widely derided within many parts of the NGO movement.¹⁸ At the other end of the spectrum more critical voices felt not only a genuine disappointment that the G8 had not delivered more—CAFOD, for example, stated that 'warm words can't replace concrete action'¹⁹—but also that the MPH campaign had actually weakened the main G8 summit protests in Scotland. For example, Walden Bello, director of the Bangkok-based NGO Focus on the Global South, argued that the MPH leadership 'chose not to radicalise' the main pre-summit march in Edinburgh. 'This was a very different mood from previous G8 counter-mobilisation', he asserted; 'here it was, "Let's work with the G8", and a rather mellow atmosphere, while other mobilizations have been more confrontational'.²⁰ By implication, MPH had become unduly influenced by celebrities and had positioned itself too close to Blair and Brown and their like. These are, of course, classic dilemmas for all protest groups and there is another good article that could

17 'Detailed statement in response to G8 communiqué', 8 July 2005, <www.makepovertyhistory.org/docs/8-07-MAKEPOVERTYHISTORYresponsetoG8communiqué.doc>.

18 See, for example, George Monbiot, 'And still he stays silent', *Guardian*, 6 September 2005. For Geldof's eventual response, see Bob Geldof, 'What did 2005 achieve for Africa?', *Guardian*, 28 December 2005.

19 Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, 'CAFOD reaction to the G8 on trade: Analysis', no date, <www.cafod.org.uk/var/storage/original/application/phpgKcr9B.doc>.

20 Quoted in Rachel Shabi, 'Was Africa short changed?', 13 July 2005, <www.focusweb.org/content/view/621/27/>.

and should be written about the whole MPH campaign, especially now that, as of early February 2006, it has formally dissolved itself.

However, from the perspective of the argument being developed here, what is striking, and worthy of scrutiny, is the high degree of consensus about how to think about the issues being tackled by the G8—the key organising assumptions, if you like—shared by both Blair and Brown, on the one hand, and the mainstream MPH campaign, on the other. The problems were very much presented as if the G8 could solve them, if only it could summon the necessary political will to do so. The presumption, in effect, was that poverty could be made history by command of the leaders of the world's richest countries. The difference of opinion was then reduced to the matter of whether they were serious about enacting and implementing such a program of change. Some may have given them eight, or even ten, out of ten; others, scores that were much lower; but all could engage in the game as if it was ice-skating, rather than international politics. The commonalities even extended to the conceptual language deployed, specifically that the purpose of the politics in question was to bring what was always unquestioningly referred to as a 'development' dimension to the making of policy. The concept of development itself was rarely, if ever, defined, the presumption being that it referred in some uncontested way to the improvement of the lot of the less developed countries of the world. It was conventionally assumed, in other words, that we could all approach these events as if a simple developed countries/developing countries, North/South dichotomy was the best—indeed the only—way to frame the issues at stake. For most, to be sure, the relationship between these two worlds was no longer to be conceived of as a matter of charity. For Blair, explicitly, what was desired was 'a partnership' between the G8 and Africa.²¹ Others in the MPH movement may more generally have preferred to think that what was required was better described as justice. But this was at best no more than a somewhat harder position on the same spectrum. What, however, if the very notions of 'developed' and 'developing' countries, of 'North' and 'South', as organising categories of both action and analysis had long since become outdated, to the point where they actually worked to mislead and

21 'Tony Blair makes statement to Parliament on the G8 summit', 11 July 2005, <www.g8.gov.uk>.

were only being preserved because a professional ‘development community’ had built its existence around them and academics had become too lazy (or involved in that community) to bother to challenge their continued usage?

RETHINKING THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT INSIDE THE STUDY OF GLOBALISATION

I have recently argued at some length that we must, at last, move on from the bipolarities that have characterised much of the classic terminology of the field of development studies and try to re-engage with the concept of development in a more complicated way by rethinking what it might sensibly mean within the context of those wider discussions of global economic and political change (‘globalisation’) that have lately been taking place inside the emergent field of critical political economy.²² The argument made in that study can only be briefly summarised here, but it does perhaps contain within it the basic elements of an alternative, and hopefully improved, way of conceptualising the international politics of development than that deployed in most existing reflections on the significance of Gleneagles.

The necessary rethinking can be effected via four moves. First, it rejects the ‘exceptionalism’ of a special category of countries deemed to be in particular need of development and instead casts the whole question of development as a universal question, as ‘a transnational problematic’ grounded in the notion that ‘*all* societies are developing as part of a global process’.²³ Second, it focuses attention on development strategy, principally as still pursued by a national economy, society and/or polity, albeit within a global/regional environment. More than a decade ago, in fact, Björn Hettne described development as no more (but also no less) than ‘societal problem solving’, implying that ‘a society develops as it succeeds in dealing with predicaments of a structural nature, many of them emerging from the global context’.²⁴ Third, it recognises that such strategy necessarily involves the interaction, and appropriate meshing, of internal *and* external elements,

22 Anthony Payne, *The global politics of unequal development* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

23 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, ‘The development of development theory: Towards critical globalism’, *Review of International Political Economy* 3(4) 1996, p. 543. My emphasis.

24 Björn Hettne, *Development theory and the three worlds: Towards an international political economy of development* (Harlow: Longman, 1995), p. 263.

even if in many cases the latter do seem to be increasingly overbearing. In this vein Philip McMichael recently noted that 'states still pursue development goals, but these goals have more to do with global positioning than with management of the national "household"'.²⁵ Fourth, it insists upon due recognition of variations of time, place and history in development predicaments, something which Stuart Corbridge called for years ago and which, to be honest, was not characteristic of a lot of classical development theory in both its modernisation and dependency guises.²⁶ To sum up these claims, then, development can be redefined for the contemporary era as:

the collective building by the constituent social and political actors of a country (or at least in the first instance a country) of a viable, functioning political economy, grounded in at least a measure of congruence between its core domestic characteristics and attributes and its location within a globalizing world order, and capable on that basis of advancing the material well-being of those living within its confines.²⁷

The salient point underpinning this definition was that it retained the traditional focus of the study of development on countries, but argued, perhaps distinctively, that *all* countries in the world should be seen as having to pursue development. In other words, I suggested that it no longer made sense to think of development as something that only 'developing countries' needed to achieve or have done to them. By the same token, the so-called 'developed countries' could not be thought somehow to have completed their development, for they too manifestly still had to engage with the world order and chart domestic strategies for so doing. In short, the argument was that development was an issue for every country.

The further point is that all country development strategies inevitably also have a critically important external dimension upon which international relations specialists can properly focus their enquiries. Countries cannot

25 Philip McMichael, *Development and social change: A global perspective* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2000), p. 150.

26 Stuart Corbridge, 'Post-Marxism and development studies: Beyond the impasse', *World Development* 18(5) 1990, pp. 623–39.

27 Payne, *Global politics of unequal development*, p. 41.

avoid reaching outwards in pursuit of advantage, interests and position and, in so doing, they come into conflict with the strategies of other countries working to exactly the same dynamic. In an old-fashioned turn of phrase, this might be described as the international relations of development. I preferred instead to talk of a global politics of development as the best way of highlighting the full complexity of the patterns of inter-state conflict that emerge from the intrinsically competing development strategies of the whole range of states now in existence in the world because it seemed to me that such a phrase signals better that international (inter-state) politics now takes place—and has to be understood as taking place—in the changed, and still changing, structural context which the concept of globalisation, however imprecisely, seeks to capture. It is certainly not presumed *a priori* that the countries involved in these relations fall neatly into ‘developed’ or ‘developing’, ‘North’ or ‘South’, or even ‘richer’ and ‘poorer’ groupings: instead, they spread across the full spectrum of material capabilities, they are located in different regions of the world, they have experienced different histories and they are characterised by different state–society relationships. In the final analysis, there is no alternative but to recognise, and try to analyse, the enormous complexity of the global politics that flows out of the great variety of positions taken up by states on all of the development issues around which they have to negotiate.

The next sub-sections of the working paper seek therefore to deploy this ‘global politics of development’ approach to draw attention to the tough inter-state politics which actually ran through all of the areas of policy addressed by the Gleneagles agenda. In so doing, the aim is to expose the Gleneagles outcomes to closer critical attention, to go on to explore relevant post-Gleneagles meetings and discussions and ultimately to establish what of Blair and Brown’s Gleneagles agenda had, or had not, been agreed by the end of 2005, and explain why. The discussion covers that agenda by dividing it into three separate, but obviously interlinked, arenas of development diplomacy, namely, finance, trade and the environment.

Finance

The background to analysis of the financial proposals made at Gleneagles is that there had begun to be revived over the preceding two or three years

something akin to the pattern of the Cold War era where aid flows were predominantly dictated by perceived security concerns rather than humanitarian needs.²⁸ As a consequence, it had come to be increasingly acknowledged that the attempt to shift the whole tenor of aid politics to a new level, which was what the strategy of formally adopting the MDGs was really about, was in grave danger of failing even before it had properly started.

In that context the increase in official development assistance (ODA) promised by G8 donors at Gleneagles was manifestly welcome. Notwithstanding growing doubts about the efficacy of aid, especially to Africa,²⁹ any increase could not but be welcomed to some degree. That said, Oxfam has calculated that this much publicised sum (around US\$50 billion a year by 2010, compared to 2004) represents, first, only a US\$16 billion addition to the global aid budget above and beyond already current trends as projected by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and, second, would need to be boosted by an astonishing further US\$121 billion (in other words, to US\$169 billion) if the pledge of granting 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), originally agreed as a target as long ago as 1970, was actually to be met by the G8.³⁰ The majority of the projected increase in aid is scheduled to come from the European Union (EU) members of the G8 and Japan. In May 2005, just before Gleneagles, EU countries as a group set an interim target of 0.56 per cent by 2010, on the way to fulfilling the 0.7 per cent pledge by 2015. At Gleneagles the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, responded to Blair's entreaties by announcing increased ODA of some US\$10 billion over the next five years. President George W. Bush agreed, albeit somewhat unspecifically, to double US aid to Africa between 2004 and 2010, but refused to be bound by the 0.7 per cent target. Canada similarly refused to go beyond the increased aid commitments (to a mere 0.33 per cent of GNI by 2010) it had earlier made at the Monterrey 'Financing for Development' conference in March 2002. In short, it took a

28 See Ngaire Woods, 'The shifting politics of foreign aid', *International Affairs* 81(2) 2005, pp. 393–409.

29 See, for example, Ian Taylor, "'Advice is judged by results, not intentions": Why Gordon Brown is wrong about Africa', *International Affairs* 81(2) 2005, pp. 299–310.

30 Max Lawson and Duncan Green, 'Gleneagles: What really happened at the G8 summit?', *Oxfam Briefing Note*, 29 July 2005, pp. 2–3.

lot of political pressure to secure even the announcement that was made. It should be remembered too that the various commitments are only promises. Within the EU, the German and Italian governments have already warned of possible budgetary constraints, whilst the US government has long had a poor record of matching disbursements to commitments and still needs to get the support of Congress for its component of the Gleneagles aid deal. Finally, a large proportion of the increases in the next two years will actually be used to fund debt relief for Iraq; this alone will inflate overall ODA by some US\$30 billion without any new money going to the poorest countries of the world.³¹

The overall picture revealed here in relation to aid is certainly not totally gloomy, but there is no doubt that, away from the limelight of the summit itself, some of the limits of the possible become apparent. Despite being prompted by strong expressions of public concern about aid in the period before they gathered together, the G8 leaders can be said to have moved only cautiously and hesitantly beyond their own selfish interests. What was announced at Gleneagles was at best a collection of separate promises of varying quality, put together at the last minute. It was definitely not a plan to put delivery of the MDGs safely back on track. Nor did such a plan take shape at the UN World Summit held to review progress towards meeting these goals in New York in September 2005. The so-called 'Outcome Document' did in the end reaffirm the MDGs, and that was in itself a modest achievement since the new US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, had initially stunned those preparing the text by tabling no less than 750 amendments to the outline draft, including deletion of all reference to the MDGs!³² This was probably no more than a crude—but nevertheless effective—bargaining tactic, because the US ultimately relented, at least on this highly symbolic matter. But, by general consent, the final text was a great disappointment, reflecting the lowest common denominator of agreement.³³ For example, no collective agreement could be reached on a timetable by which to meet the longstanding 0.7 per cent ODA target, recalcitrant

31 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

32 See Julian Borger, 'Road map for US relations with rest of world', *Guardian*, 27 August 2005.

33 2005 World Summit Outcome, Resolution 60/1 adopted by the General Assembly, <www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html>.

countries that had not yet done so merely being urged to make concrete efforts in that direction. Nor did signatory governments offer any explanation for the lack of progress that was being made towards reaching the MDGs.

The Outcome Document also applauded those European countries—the UK, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden—which had launched just a few days earlier a pilot International Finance Facility for Immunisation, a scheme which aimed to raise an additional US\$4 billion over the next ten years to support the vaccination of children. What was left unsaid was that this was all that had so far emerged from Brown's original plan to set up a wider IFF capable of borrowing against future aid flows on the international capital markets.³⁴ Although the European G8 countries had eventually endorsed this concept, albeit with some conditions, the US, Japan and Canada had refused to entertain it, each for their particular developmental reasons. The idea is still not totally dead, and Brown certainly continues to promote it within the community of G8 finance ministers, but it is not likely to be realized in the near future.

The UN summit document endorsed in similar broad terms the necessity of securing the financing to support the various health-related MDGs, just as the Gleneagles communiqué had also done. But this too belied the harsher reality of the decisions taken, or rather not taken, at the First Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that had been held in London in early September. Itself the product of an earlier Italian-led G8 initiative, the Global Fund had opened its doors in January 2002 and had initially received and spent substantial sums of money, generally to good purpose. However, by the time of the replenishment conference, that growth had stalled.³⁵ At the London meeting donors were willing to pledge enough money to continue ongoing programs in 2006 and 2007, but their efforts fell US\$3.7 billion short of what was

34 Gordon Brown, 'Speech by the Chancellor at the RIIA/Chatham House conference on corporate social responsibility', Chatham House, London, 22 January 2003, <www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/newsroom_and_speeches/press/2003/press_08_03.cfm>.

35 Bernard Rivers, 'Stalled growth: The Global Fund in year four', *Global Fund Observer Newsletter*, Issue 52, 7 November 2005, <www.aidspace.org/gfo/archives/newsletter/GFO-Issue-52.pdf>.

necessary to finance fully the new activities the Fund had planned.³⁶ Perhaps unsurprisingly, this meeting generated virtually no media coverage anywhere in the world, a far cry from the attention such issues received immediately before, during and after Gleneagles.

This just leaves the debt deal to consider. The G8 has in fact been discussing the severity of the debt burden ratios built up by some of the poorest countries of the world since at least its 1998 summit. The following year it negotiated various improvements to the original, and much criticised, HIPC initiative put together by the World Bank and the IMF.³⁷ Thereafter, and to its credit, the UK government tried hard to keep the question of poor country debt in the minds of other leading Western governments, but it seemed increasingly as if the political energy had gone out of debt as a G8 issue. It is therefore again very much to be applauded that, during the run-up to Gleneagles, Brown was able to bring his fellow G8 finance ministers back to the problem of debt and to lead them to converge around a proposal to offer full relief of the debts owed to the Bank, the Fund and the AfDB by some poor countries. At Gleneagles the leaders endorsed, but added nothing to what their finance ministers had agreed to do. Brown, incidentally, was not even present at the summit. The deal was unquestionably a significant move by the G8, even though there were still many ‘devilish details’ to weigh into the balance.³⁸ Indeed, the proposal had still to be worked up properly and approved at the autumn 2005 annual meetings of the Bank and Fund and there were genuine worries that some (non-G8) countries would not agree to fund the write-off in ways that compensated the two multilateral institutions for the lost reflows. Brown himself, from his position as chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of

36 Communiqué, ‘The Global Fund’s first replenishment 2006–2007, Third Meeting, London, 5–6 September 2005, <www.theglobalfund.org/en/files/about/replenishment/communique_london_2005.pdf>.

37 For specific discussions of HIPC, see A. R. Boote and K. Thugge, ‘Debt relief for low-income countries and the HIPC initiatives’, *IMF Working Paper WP/97/24* (Washington, DC: IMF, 1997); Tony Killick, ‘HIPC II and conditionality: Business as before or a new beginning?’, unpublished paper commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat for policy workshop on Debt, HIPC and Poverty Reduction, London, July 2000; and J. J. Teunissen and A. Akkerman, eds, *HIPC debt relief: Myths and reality* (The Hague: FONDAD, 2004).

38 See Gail Hurley, ‘Devilish details: Implications of the G7 debt deal’, European Network on Debt and Development NGO Briefing, Brussels, 14 June 2005, <www.eurodad.org/uploadstore/cms/docs/Overview_G7_debt_deal.pdf>.

the IMF, did, however, succeed in piloting the proposal through most of the opposition,³⁹ although it should be noted that the funds provided, whilst additional for the Bank and Fund, will still be taken from the ODA budgets of donor countries. Nevertheless, the decisive announcement was eventually made by the IMF in late December 2005 that, as of the beginning of 2006, a first group of nineteen countries would be granted 100 per cent debt relief under the terms of what was renamed the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Campaigners had again feared that several countries (possibly Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Rwanda and Senegal) would be knocked off the list as publicised at Gleneagles, but in the event only Mauritania fell by the wayside.⁴⁰ The deal also possesses some other less attractive features. It requires that beneficiary countries receive dollar for dollar reductions in IDA flows equivalent to the amount of debt cancelled; continues to tie them into the flawed HIPC process with its unpopular and often damaging conditionalities; does not include debts to other multilateral bodies, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank; and of course excludes many, many other poor, indebted countries (although it is the case that some other countries currently at or approaching their HIPC 'decision point' could become eligible with time). In all of these senses, therefore, 'the G8 debt deal in no way represents 100% debt cancellation: it neither covers 100% of countries nor 100% of debts'.⁴¹

Finance thus emerges as an arena within the global politics of development where, notwithstanding considerable public pressure and sterling efforts to open up some room for social democratic manoeuvre by Brown, there nevertheless exists sustained evidence of the domination of the diplomatic and policy agenda by the most powerful countries of the

39 See Communiqué of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC, 24 September 2005; and Press Conference on the 2005 annual Meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee with Gordon Brown, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer and Chairman of the IMFC, and Roderigo de Rato, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC, 24 September 2005, <www.imf.org>.

40 'IMF concedes on 19 out of 20 but still a long way to go on debt cancellation', European Network on Debt and Development press release, Brussels, 10 January 2006, <www.eurodad.org/articles/default.aspx?id=673>.

41 *Ibid.*

world. Gleneagles presented the best public face that could be put on the raw power of the G8 countries, but it could not conceal some harsher continuing realities: that countries in need of aid are still, in essence, supplicants at the top table, that the HIPC's remain closely supervised by the IMF and the World Bank, and that the policies of rich countries are rarely driven for long by notions of generosity.

Trade

The background to the trade dimension of the Gleneagles agenda is that, by the summer of 2005, the so-called Doha Development Agenda (DDA), initiated within the WTO in November 2001, had made little substantive progress towards an agreement and time was running out if the 'round' was to be completed some time in 2006.⁴² The G8 summit discussed the matter but could not move beyond exhortation. Blair did seek to exact some specific commitments from the leaders, but everybody in the end preferred to leave the whole question to the forthcoming meeting of trade ministers in Hong Kong. The defence was made that the WTO was the appropriate arena for the work that had to be done and that the record of the G8 countries should be judged after Hong Kong, not after Gleneagles.

The Ministerial has since come and gone, still with no deal struck and no certainty at all that one can be agreed before US 'trade promotion authority' (better known as 'fast track') runs out in June 2007. But a new deadline of the end of April 2006 has been set, by which time Geneva-based talks are supposed to have settled upon broad modalities in all of the main negotiating areas. Even in that eventuality it will be difficult to push through a full agreement in the available time and it may be that expectations will again have to be lowered or the round dragged out into the medium-term future.⁴³ It is, however, the case that the basic shape of the kind of deal that the G8 countries would probably like to see agreed did at last begin to be

42 For good accounts of trade negotiations under the WTO, see Rorden Wilkinson, *Multilateralism and the World Trade Organization: The architecture and extension of international trade regulation* (London: Routledge, 2000); Amrita Narlikar, *International trade and developing countries: Bargaining coalitions in the GATT and the WTO* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Amrita Narlikar and Rorden Wilkinson, 'Collapse at the WTO: A Cancún post-mortem', *Third World Quarterly* 25(3) 2004, pp. 447–60.

43 See Rorden Wilkinson, 'The WTO in Hong Kong: What it really means for the Doha Development Agenda', *New Political Economy* 11(2) 2006.

revealed at Hong Kong. Contrary to all the promises made, dating back to Doha and repeated many times thereafter, including at Gleneagles, this would not be a 'development' round, at least in the sense in which that phrase has always been understood, namely, a round that was meant to offer significant redress for at least some of the many disadvantageous features that the non-G8 countries had unwisely signed up to as part of the previous Uruguay Round. By contrast, the emerging prospectus will, *if* ultimately agreed, generate once again a thoroughly unbalanced outcome that would do little for the actual development prospects of the majority of the WTO's member countries loosely gathered within what is now called the G110—namely, the G20, led by Brazil, India and China; the G33, concerned above all to promote concessions on trade in special products; and the G90, itself a coalition of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Africa Group and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

How and why can this have happened? The answer is that the G8 countries, in particular those belonging to the EU, negotiated at Hong Kong in a very tough-minded way on behalf of their own economic interests. It is true that an end date of 2013 was agreed for export subsidies and their equivalents, but this was later than everybody else other than the EU wanted, addresses subsidies that will in any case largely be eliminated by then and excludes many other forms of rich-country farm support that generates 'dumping' of excess production on world agricultural markets to the crippling disadvantage of other less wealthy countries. In exchange for this apparent concession, the G110 countries gave in on key liberalisation issues in relation to services and non-agricultural market access (NAMA); accepted that cotton would be treated as part of the wider agricultural negotiations, rather than as a special case needing urgent action to end US domestic subsidies; acquiesced in a tame offering of 'duty-free, quota-free' access to rich country markets for LDCs on an unspecific so-called 'lasting basis' and for only 97 per cent of products, thereby allowing key 'sensitive' products with export potential for LDCs still to be excluded; and won only the establishment of a WTO task force to help build supply-side capacity to enable poor countries to take advantage of trading opportunities, when and

where they exist ('aid for trade').⁴⁴ Interestingly, these last three aspects of the agreement (cotton, market access for LDCs and 'aid for trade') had originally been conceptualised as the core elements of a 'development package' that would serve to balance the round. As we have seen, the precise terms of the concessions did not even come close to meeting such expectations.⁴⁵ The G110 countries appear to have gone along with all of this, at least at Hong Kong, for a variety of reasons—partly the continuing impact of the kinds of rough bargaining tactics witnessed in previous WTO Ministerials,⁴⁶ partly the fear of being blamed for the collapse of the talks, partly the belief that they had got something they wanted somewhere in the package and partly too the fact that on the last day at Hong Kong G20 representatives moved to press the case for signing the proposed Ministerial Declaration. This last point is advanced only tentatively because detailed research on this has yet to be done. But it is striking that it is Brazil which has taken the lead since December 2005 in calling for a special summit of G8 and G20 countries to press forward the implicit Hong Kong deal.⁴⁷ In sum, it may well be that enough of a compromise can eventually be reached between the competing development strategies of these two blocs, even though it would inevitably sell short the interests of most other WTO member countries.

By comparison, then, with finance, trade appears to be a diplomatic arena in which conventional inter-state political bargaining is the characteristic feature. To that extent, the power relations at work are somewhat less stark and the G8 countries do not control all aspects of the process. The traditional postwar control of trade rounds exercised by the US and the EU countries,

44 For the precise wording of all of these agreements, see Doha Work Programme Ministerial Declaration, adopted on 18 December 2005, WT/MIN(O5)/DEC, Hong Kong, <www.wto.org>.

45 See Martin Khor, 'WTO ministerial outcome imbalanced against developing countries: Brief analysis of the WTO's Sixth Ministerial Conference', Third World Network, 20 December 2005, <www.twinside.org.sg/title2/twninfo339.htm>.

46 See Fatoumata Jawara and Aileen Kwa, *Behind the scenes at the WTO: The real world of international trade negotiations* (London: Zed, 2003).

47 See the reported remarks of Brazilian President Lula da Silva and Foreign Minister Celso Amorim at a summit meeting of the leaders of the Progressive Governance Network held near Pretoria in South Africa in mid February 2006. Blair was also present at the talks. *Business Day* (Johannesburg), 13 February 2006.

with perhaps a sideways glance at Japan and Canada, has been replaced by acceptance on their part of the need to take seriously, and ultimately draw in, the G20 coalition, led by Brazil, India and China. Other groupings too have fought their corner with greater skill and resolve than has been seen in previous international trade talks. That said, stark disparities remain, with many small and/or poorer countries struggling to make any impact at all within the WTO's infamous 'green rooms'. At the end of the day, and regardless of what they say in public about 'development', all the major players—G8 and G20 alike—press their core national developmental interests very hard in private.

Environment

The background to the discussion of climate change that took place at Gleneagles was the question of what steps—if indeed there were to be any—would follow Kyoto as further responses to the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in the earth's atmosphere. The Protocol itself had at last come into being as a legal entity in February 2005, but committed signatory countries to precise targets only for the period up to 2012. It was also clear beyond doubt by this stage that the US would not add its signature.⁴⁸ Blair's strategy, which was to shift the whole debate about climate change on to the next stage in its history, initially ran into considerable difficulties. In the preliminary discussions between the various 'sherpas' in the months before Gleneagles his representatives encountered nothing but opposition to the idea of a new and wider dialogue—from 'the U.S. and Russia because they feared pressure for new limits on emissions, Japan and Canada because it could undermine the Kyoto process, and the Europeans because it could institutionalise the G8'.⁴⁹ Right until the last moment, the debate over the wording of the G8 statement was contentious, but the linking of the issue to energy helped

48 For good studies, see M. Grubb, with C. Vrolijk and D. Brack, *The Kyoto Protocol: A guide and assessment* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999); P. G. Harris, ed., *Climate change and American foreign policy* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000); and James Meadowcroft, 'Next steps: A climate change briefing paper', a report of the Transatlantic Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre of the European University Institute, Florence, 2002.

49 Nicholas Bayne, 'Overcoming evil with good: Impressions of the Gleneagles summit, 6–8 July 2005', 18 July 2005, <www.g8.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2005gleneagles/bayne2005-0718.html>.

bring Russia on board and in the end the US moved just enough too for the statement reported earlier to be agreed. Blair's gamble in bringing the climate change issue into the G8 process could be said to have worked thus far.

In fact, it may with hindsight be seen as an influential moment in the global politics of climate change. The first meeting of energy and environmental ministers under the proposed post-Gleneagles dialogue ('the G8 plus 5', as it is being described) took place on schedule in London in November 2005 with ministers present from all G8 countries, as well as Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, and was addressed by Blair himself.⁵⁰ Much more importantly, and contrary to many expectations, the UN Climate Change Conference held in Montreal over the period 28 November–10 December 2005 succeeded in reaching agreement on a number of important future steps. The meeting served both as the 11th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 11) and the 1st meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 1). In practice, the agendas of the two gatherings interweaved and the outcomes can only be understood as part of a package. In the words of the summit's chair, Canada's Environmental Minister, Stéphane Dion, the challenges facing delegates embraced 'implementation, improvement and innovation'.⁵¹ Under the first heading, the so-called 'Kyoto rule-book' was adopted, setting in place the many highly complicated and technical aspects of the actual working of the Protocol; under the second, a number of useful reforms were made to the Clean Development Mechanism which allows investments in non-Annex 1 countries ('developing countries') to contribute to the meeting of their Kyoto targets by older industrialised countries; whilst under the third heading a pair of decisions cleverly opened up two tracks to consider next steps: one under the Protocol, setting up 'an open-ended ad hoc working group' to initiate immediately consideration of further commitments beyond 2012, and the other under the UNFCCC, promoting a 'dialogue, without

50 'PM reflects on "blunt truth" of climate change', speech by the Prime Minister Tony Blair to the London G8 climate change conference, 1 November 2005, <www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page8437.asp>.

51 Bettina Wittneben, Wolfgang Sterk, Hermann E. Ott and Bernd Brouns, 'In from the cold: The Climate Conference in Montreal breathes new life into the Kyoto Protocol', Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, Wuppertal, no date, <www.wupperinst.org/download/COP11MOP1-report.pdf>.

prejudice to any future negotiations, commitments, process, framework or mandate under the Convention, to exchange experiences and analyse strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action to address climate change'.⁵²

The EU, Japan and Canada were the main countries promoting this parallel process as the best means of engaging both the US *and* other big emitters like China and India. The big shift at Montreal was the greater willingness of a number of non-Annex 1 countries to discuss contributions they could make. For example, countries as diverse as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica all put forward positive proposals.⁵³ Consequently, the US administration was isolated in the meeting to a quite unprecedented degree, Saudi Arabia in the end standing as its only ally. At one point the US delegation tried to undermine the talks by actually walking out, but at the very last moment it chose not to block future discussions. It certainly came under a lot of pressure from American environmental NGOs, mayors and business associations present in the corridors at Montreal, from the urgings of Senators in Washington and from a surprise speech delivered to delegates on the final day by Bill Clinton in which he said directly that Bush was 'flat wrong' to claim that reducing greenhouse gas emissions would damage the US economy but also that the rest of the world should try to 'work with' the US on the issue.⁵⁴ It may be too that European, African, Asian and Latin American delegates were emboldened and encouraged to push that bit harder for a deal because of the extent of the isolation of the US. In sum, it has to be conceded that climate change politics has been moved to its next stage and a direction of travel set, much as Blair set out to achieve before Gleneagles. The direction is controversial because many environmentalists think that the price of

52 For the precise terms of these two key decisions, see *Decision CMP.1: Consideration of commitments for subsequent periods for Parties included in Annex 1 to the Convention under Article 3, paragraph 9, of the Kyoto Protocol*, and *Decision CP.11: Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention*, <www.unfccc.org>.

53 See the Pew Center report on COP11 and COP/MOP1, <www.pewclimate.org/what_s_being_done/in_the_world/cop11/index.cfm>.

54 Charles Hanley, 'Clinton says Bush is "flat wrong" on Kyoto', Associated Press release, 9 December 2005, <abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory?id=1390534>.

involving the US will be to move away from governments setting precise targets to cut gas emissions towards reliance on technological fixes and 'market-based opportunities', the latter phrase being explicitly used in the decision of COP 11 to initiate a wider dialogue. This remains to be seen: what is clear is that the 'G8 plus 5' has become the key grouping with which these different approaches will be fought out, and that is a change of significance in the global politics of development.

The environment, at first sight, can seem as if it is an arena of development diplomacy that is redolent of the old 'North-South' battles of the 1970s. It is different in that talks take place under the auspices of the UN: indeed, the UNFCCC explicitly refers in its text to the twin categories of 'developed' and 'developing' countries. Despite this, in practice, at Montreal as earlier, the key bargaining took place between coalitions and groupings which cut across this divide. What is apparent is that the G8 countries cannot force their interests upon other countries in this arena of development as effectively as they can do in finance and still, to some degree at least, in trade. They are required to ask them to take action in favour of the environment: no agreement means no response, which is thus a defeat for the countries that want to see environmental controls imposed. It is certainly striking that the G8 forum scarcely discussed climate change until Gleneagles, and very important that it is now on its agenda.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion can be relatively brief because the overall argument should by now have emerged clearly enough. The Gleneagles agenda, which was undoubtedly assembled with a good deal of political skill by Blair and Brown, could never have worked to 'make poverty history', because such an achievement was simply not within the compass of the G8 to deliver, more or less regardless of what decisions the leaders might conceivably have taken. They could not even have been expected to bring about 'the end of the beginning of ending poverty',⁵⁵ the ironic title given by the renegade former chief economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, to his reflection on the summit in implicit mockery of Blair's

55 Joseph E. Stiglitz, 'The end of the beginning of ending poverty', statement to Project Syndicate, July 2005, <www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/bwi-wto/g7-8/2005/07endpoverty.htm>.

comment in his post-Gleneagles press conference that the meeting was ‘a beginning, not an end’. The global politics of development is not animated any longer—if indeed it ever was—by what the ‘North’ is willing to do for the ‘South’. It is an altogether harsher political environment within which all the countries of the world—literally all 191 of them—pursue as effectively as they can their chosen country strategies of development in the financial, trade and environmental international policy arenas. They operate amidst a complex pattern of structural inequalities in relation to the material capabilities they bring to these arenas, their access to and command of the dominant ideas which shape the main policy debates and their influence over the major global institutions that seek to govern different aspects of the making of development policy. We can accordingly detect another complex pattern of agential inequalities in the three major arenas of development diplomacy, some more recent manifestations of which have been analysed here. In the extended version of this argument published last year I suggested that we should actually talk more properly of the existence of a ‘global politics of unequal development’,⁵⁶ and I reiterate that claim here, even though there is not the space to argue it at length.

What can be seen, even from the limited accounts of events and meetings before, during and after Gleneagles presented here, is that the particular politics of unequal development generated varies from arena to arena. The G8 countries undoubtedly enjoy substantial dominance of global financial politics. But they are rivals in some aspects of trade policy and have also to concede ground to other powerful trading countries. Moreover, on environmental issues such as climate change they remain significantly divided as to approach and have yet to work out a convincing and effective way of managing affairs, even in their own interests. The politics of all of this is complex, as ever. Nevertheless, this is where analysis and discussion of the agenda of meetings like Gleneagles should focus. We should not just bemoan the failings of Gleneagles and the absence of a ‘development’ dimension from global political decision-making. Nor, of course, should we be puzzled by it. After all, why would one assume for a moment that

56 Payne, *Global politics of unequal development*, pp. 231–47.

powerful countries that gain hugely from patterns of unequal development will be likely to give up voluntarily the short-term benefits that this brings to their peoples? We should instead seek to take forward and deepen the mode of analysis of the international relations of development proposed in this working paper. The reality is that Blair and Brown's Gleneagles agenda has come to confront the global politics of unequal development, and can only be worked out within it.

