

Intro

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I believe in competition and free market capitalism. Oppose mercantilism, as did Adam Smith. Neo-liberalism has resulted in mercantilism: big companies make the rules.

Why? Natural monopolies in ICTs due to network effects and economies of scale (e.g. Facebook). This must be corrected, see:

<http://www.boundary2.org/2018/10/richard-hill-too-big-to-be-review-of-wu-the-curse-of-bigness-antitrust-in-the-new-gilded-age/>

Also, markets don't work if there are externalities or information asymmetry. Both are common in ICTs. Security is great example, see:

<https://future.internetsociety.org/2016/index.html>

Finally, we need to consider not just efficiency, but also equity and resilience (see COVID responses).

So there is a role for governments.

What has this got to do with Wolfgang?

Wolfgang says AND I AGREE:

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“If there are conflicts between the general public interests and private profit interests, it needs a stronger involvement of parliaments to discuss and find balanced solutions.” Indeed. Parminder and I and others have been saying that for years. Welcome to the club. See:

<https://justnetcoalition.org/delhi-declaration>

<https://justnetcoalition.org/digital-justice-manifesto>

<https://itforchange.net/digital-new-deal/>

“To delegate responsibilities for managing hate speech and fake news to private companies is not a sustainable solution.” Indeed, see above.

It is also important to stress the disastrous effects of the Internet on conventional media and democracy, see:

<http://boundary2.org/2015/04/08/the-internet-vs-democracy/>

“Another open and critical issue where private and public interests could collide is the future of digital currencies.” Indeed, see:

<http://newsclick.in/review-politics-bitcoin-software-right-wing-extremism>

Good analysis of national approaches.

Wolfgang says, and I PARTLY agree:

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“In cyberspace, Europe wants to be a "Norm-Maker," not a "Norm-Taker." Maybe, but as Wolfgang says “it remains to be seen how much material substance is behind the conceptual plans.” I think it’s a pipe dream. Up to now, they have kow-towed to the US. Let’s see what happens. Remember, when judging a politician, look at their actions, not their words.

“A strong new transatlantic partnership with the US – based on common values – and a good relationship with China – based on common interests”. Relations should always be based on common interests. The issue with China is that certain interests are not common, notably free speech, government influence on markets. The commonality of values with respect to the US has been greatly overestimated in the post-war period, because of the huge differences with respect to fascism/Nazism and Communism. In reality, many European values differ from US values: free speech, welfare state, government influence on markets, lack of imperial ambitions.

Good analysis of human rights issues, but fails to underline the continuing US (and others’) violation of the right to privacy under the rubric of fighting terrorism.

Good analysis of technology, except that nothing is likely to happen in ITU. The more realistic threat, if any, is that Huawei will develop its own thing and it will be adopted, as was the case for Internet routing by Cisco in the very early days.

“The large digital platforms will become the subject of stronger regulation.” That’s a SOLL. I hope it becomes an IST. But to make it an IST we have to stop the WTO (and other trade-related negotiations) and point out that the multistakeholder approach is not delivering what we want.

Wolfgang says, and I beg to DIFFER:

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“The multistakeholder approach, introduced by the WSIS in 2005, is and remains the ‘golden path’ for progress in managing digital and cyber issues globally.” No, it isn’t, as an increasing body of literature shows. Multistakeholderism has been around for a long time and has only delivered its expected benefits in a few areas where the situation is win-win. See the Annex of this:

<http://www.apig.ch/CWG-Internet%202017-2ter.pdf>

At present, it is being used by business to increase their already excessive influence on matters of public policy. See:

<https://www.msi-integrity.org/not-fit-for-purpose/>

“In 1998, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreed on a so-called ‘eCommerce Moratorium,’ which allowed a free flow of data across borders.” No, they agreed to a moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, whatever that is. It made sense back in 1998, it makes no sense now, see:

<https://unctad.org/news/should-digitally-delivered-products-be-exempted-customs-duties>

Japan’s Data Free Flow with trust relates to an entirely different issue: free flow of data, which is distinct from the customs duty issue.

“The EU is undoubtedly a supporter of a non-fragmented Internet.” No – see GDPR

EU wants “free flow of data”. No – see GDPR.

According to Van Leyden China is “a systemic rival”. Why? They don’t want to export their social and economic system. They resist adopting ours. But our desire to export ours is a relic of colonialism. China is not a rival merely because they want to be able to choose their own political system.

“It is now up to the Biden-Administration to re-frame US- cyber policy for the 2020s”. We already know that that will be: a rehash of the Clinton/Obama policies that got us into the current mess, namely unfettered domination by a few companies run by men.

“One key question is how Biden will handle the digital trade war with China.” Same as Trump in substance, but softer in form, e.g. iron hand in velvet glove.

“How will Biden manage the digital trade negotiations in the WTO?” Worse than Trump. Trump was killing WTO, Biden will try to revive it as an instrument of US imperialism. And Biden will push the Big Tech agenda, which is evil, see:

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/burcukilic/big-tech-is-pushing-for-a-new-kind-of-free-trade>

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/digitaliberties/renata-avila-burcu-kilic/new-digital-trade-agenda-are-we-giving-away-internet>

“Killer robots are already waiting on the horizon.” Depending on how you define them, they have been there for a long time: homing anti-aircraft missiles, homing torpedos, mines, close-in weapon systems, etc. But they are all limited in space and time.