
Training Government Ministers for a Globalised World

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Abstract

In a speech to Chatham House in March 2012, Parag Khanna of the New America Foundation reasoned that “many random events, or seemingly random events, are in fact unified by one theme called globalisation and that as we become truly global in the 21st century it will present many new challenges for us.” In this speech I want to consider the complexity of globalisation and how it relates to one of the most fundamental tasks facing civilized societies: that of bringing in to being government ministers cognizant of the issues facing their societies and having the tools to deliver results.

The globalised world is one where issues of geopolitics, sustainability, poverty, child labour, terrorism, renewable energy and water are not only intertwined, but where the cords between them are more taught than at any previous time in human history. The proposition facing societies the world over is how to give government ministers – those key figures who legislate and regulate the structures in which all decisions are taken, and who motivate those who participate within them – the necessary support to assist them with the complexity of the global and local challenges they will face.

The present experience is characterized by unevenness, where government ministers in developing countries are less equipped than their counterparts in the developed world to meet these challenges, both in relation to knowledge and to resources. However the lesson of the globalisation of international relations, economics, technology and culture is that deficiencies in one area will quickly filter through to the rest of the system. In this one globe it is necessary to adopt a global engagement. Furthering the ideas presented in a recently published book on the development of a ministerial mindset, this paper examines the lessons to be applied in dealing with the existing and emerging features of globalisation.
