

“In a globalised world, it is increasingly difficult for government rule effectively.” Discuss.

By Long Xuan (16S55)

With advancements in transport and telecommunication, the world has become more integrated and globalised. Even without stepping out of our doorsteps, we are able to shop for foreign goods, chat with friends in another country, and obtain the latest news from abroad. Though a globalised world has brought convenience to our lives, governments are facing increasing challenges in terms of national security, social harmony, and integrated economies. As globalisation brings about freer movement of people, goods, and ideas, I believe that it is more difficult for governments to exercise their political power and bring order to their countries.

First of all, one of the primary roles of the government is to ensure a high standard of living for its citizens. This is achieved by maintaining growth in the economy, and protecting the economy from fluctuations in the international market. In the globalised world today, governments not only need to allocate resources and manpower efficiently in order to improve productivity within a country, but more importantly, they are required to protect the country from external downturns of the economy. For example, Singapore is a very small and open economy, with international trade comprising a major component of its Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Though the country benefits from the world's integrated economy and its people have obtained a high standard of living, the Singapore government is constantly watching out for any fluctuations in the world economy, because economic slowdown or recession in its trading partners will severely impact Singapore's economy immediately. With an increasingly globalised world, Singapore will be more vulnerable to the external economic environment. Hence, the government not only needs to train its people to be more employable, but also increase reserves to buffer against any crisis. In the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, the collapse of various banking institutions in the United States affected Singapore's economy adversely. There was a decline in demand for Singapore's goods, and as a result, many Singaporeans lost their jobs. In response to this, the Singapore government encouraged local entrepreneurs to start small-medium companies to bring new jobs and explore new economic opportunities locally. However, all these efforts are still dependent on the response of the global market, considering the small size of Singapore's population. Furthermore, with a globalised economy, many developed countries are challenged by lower costs of production in some developing countries such as Bangladesh and China. Hence, governments in today's world need to constantly identify global economic trends and find innovative ways to drive the economy, while providing buffer for potential crises.

Secondly, the national security of a country is challenged when foreigners are able to enter the country more easily. In the past, when the number of people travelling in and out of the country is small, governments had the luxury of carefully reviewing the background of each applicant and checking for any potential threats they might bring to the country. In the globalised world, where millions of people pass through borders for business and leisure, much more advanced data management technology and manpower are required for governments to identify terrorists or criminals in the overwhelming crowd. Coupled with the rise of terrorism in the Middle East, governments are facing more difficulties in ensuring national security. For example, despite the improved surveillance after the Charlie Hebdo

attack in France, terrorists still found their way into the continent, and conducted a terrorist attack at a subway station near the Headquarters of the European Union in Brussels. This attack bears testament to the fact that governments need to step up surveillance to a much higher degree, to face the threats of terrorism in a globalised world. In the process of expanded surveillance, governments also need to find a balance between tightening border controls and encouraging foreign trade and investment, as foreign businessmen may find it less convenient to conduct trade with the country.

In addition to external security threats, globalisation may also endanger domestic social stability and racial harmony. As foreign ideologies become more readily available on the Internet, some people may be influenced by extreme religious ideologies and subscribe to fundamentalism. As the individuals become self-radicalised, they undermine the trust among members of the society. For example, a self-radicalised student set off a bomb at a marathon race in Boston a few years ago, fueling Islamophobic sentiments and marginalising Muslims in American society. With the development of the Internet, governments may find it much more challenging to protect their citizens from violent and skewed ideologies.

On the flip side, globalisation has encouraged international cooperation in solving environmental issues. Governments from different countries come together more frequently to discuss solutions for global problems, such as global warming and pollution. For example, many countries signed the Paris Agreement, agreeing to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Since the nature of many environmental and social problems today is transnational in nature, global corporation is a prerequisite in solving these issues.

In conclusion, I believe that globalisation has indeed brought about many new challenges for governments to deal with, in order to maintain stability and meet the aspirations of the citizens in the country.

Comments:

Well balanced argument with apt examples. However, a broader scope would have made it more comprehensive. You sort of ran out of steam towards the end. Good use of grammar.