

November/December 1999 collapsed amidst divisiveness, dissent, and disorganization, was still not dispelled as the Doha meetings approached. The steady escalation of violence at the venues of international conferences<sup>1</sup> was giving rise to a sense of a growing crisis of global governance. And the destruction on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 of the World Trade Center was being interpreted symbolically by some as an attack on globalization itself. In this context, the cliché that “failure was not an option” gained fresh life.

By the same token, interpreting the success at Doha from the narrower perspective of its implications for the global trading system and the system of global governance is all the more difficult. To what extent did geopolitical necessity and drafting sophistry simply paper over substantive divides amongst the developed countries, between the developed countries and the developing countries, and perhaps even amongst the developing countries? Moreover, to what extent can it be said that the tempered atmosphere at Doha represented conciliation between governments and civil society, versus the “death of dissent” (or more ominously, as some put it, its criminalization) following September 11<sup>th</sup>—or simply the deliberately chosen isolation of the venue? And in substantive terms, to what extent did Doha address the issues surrounding the growing reach of WTO rules into domestic governance and the still unrequited desire of civil society for a role in trade negotiations, trade disputes and trade policy more generally?

The discussions at the conference from which this chapter draws its title as well as its substance shed much light on these issues. To bring out what was learned as concisely and cogently as possible, we focus first on the discussion of what happened at Doha, why it happened, and what challenges it poses for governments, for those in the business sector, those in environmental, social and other NGOs, and analysts in academia and research institutions. We then briefly consider the next steps in the ongoing process of coming to grips with global

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<sup>1</sup> This escalation was set in sharp relief by the first death of a demonstrator at Genoa, July 2001, while the G7/8 meetings were being held.