

Welcome to this week's presentation and conversation
hosted by the
Canadian Association for the Club of Rome,
a Club dedicated to intelligent debate and action on global issues.

Whither Accountability? So What?

Our speaker today is Dr. David Harries, a nuclear engineer, former senior military officer, consultant on personal and corporate security, and advisor and professor in heavy engineering, national development, humanitarian aid, post-conflict and post-disaster response and recovery, and in executive development in strategic foresight. He is a Principal of the Security and Sustainability Guide, a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, Foresight Lead at Ideconnector.net, and Associate/former Chair (2013-17) of Canadian Pugwash. Accountability has become a crisis of its own. Dr. Harries will describe the major reasons and examine whether Accountability deserves the attention it gets in relation to elements of the polycrisis, such as climate change, conflict, and human displacement. At the very least, its role in the polycrisis needs to be understood.

The presentation will be followed by a conversation, questions, and observations from the participants.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



Website: canadiancor.com
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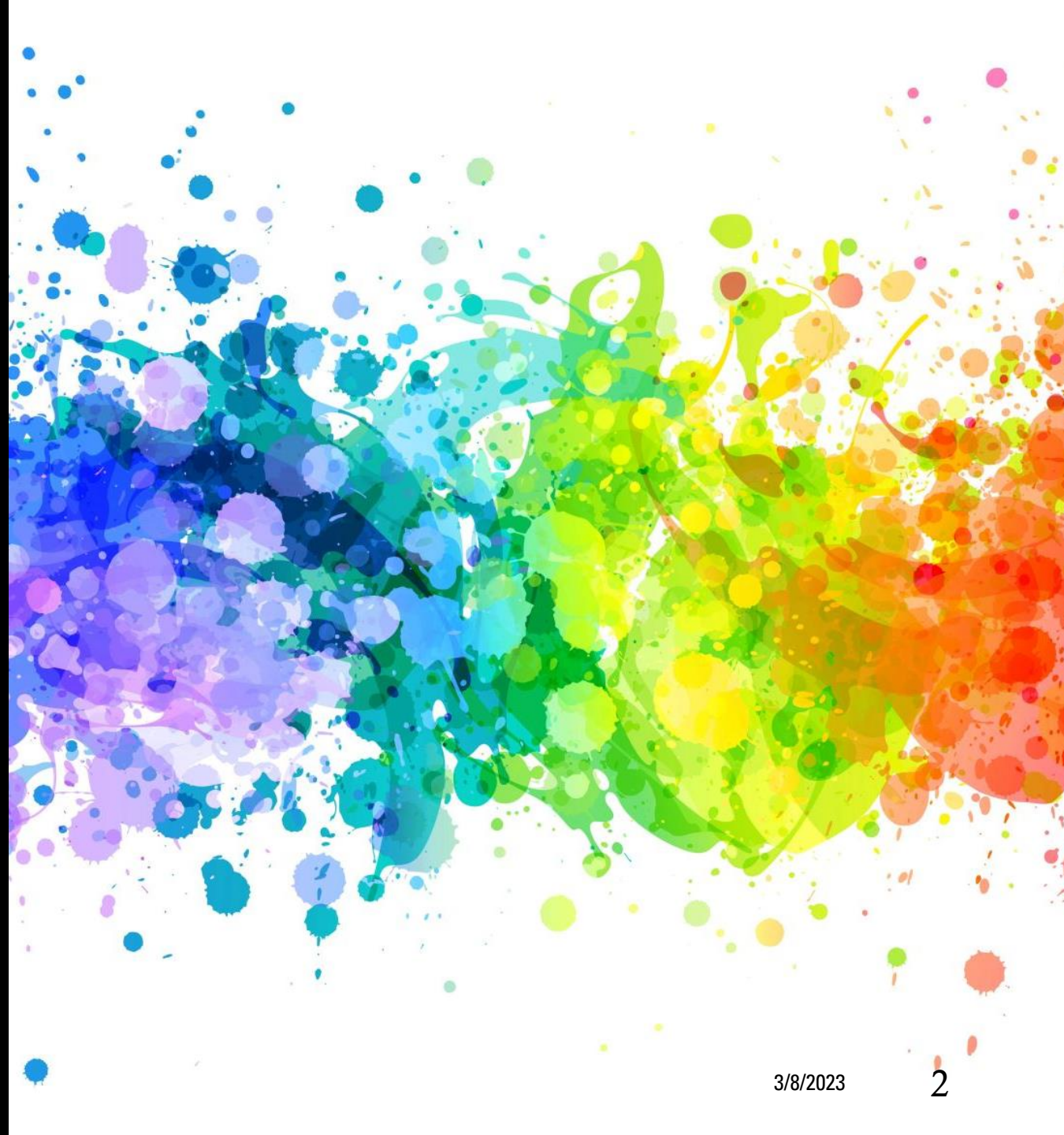
WHITHER ACCOUNTABILITY?

SO *WHAT?*

David Harries

Fellow, World Academy of Art and Science

CACOR 8 March 2023



BACKGROUND... early SEPTEMBER 2022

Over only a few days,

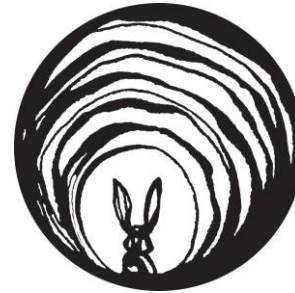
....*several* reputable sources reported on *a variety* of major subjects and situations by implying, or noting, or bemoaning, or complaining about, or assigning blame for – or *denying* – a lack of timely, honest and therefore constructive **Accountability**...

....that, to me, seemed to be steepening humanity's slide into a plausible 'hell in a handbasket'.

MY PREMISE - late SEPTEMBER 2022

The state of 'Accountability' globally – more explicitly, the almost total absence of its timely and therefore effective practice – is a serious – even existential - global threat.

BUT researching an article based on this premise....



.....very quickly 'taught' me that Accountability is in full flower*; manifesting everything from the very best to the very worst that humanity is capable of, and frequently demonstrating how poorly we have prepared even for what we knew was coming.

* *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*

OPINION....MARCH 2023

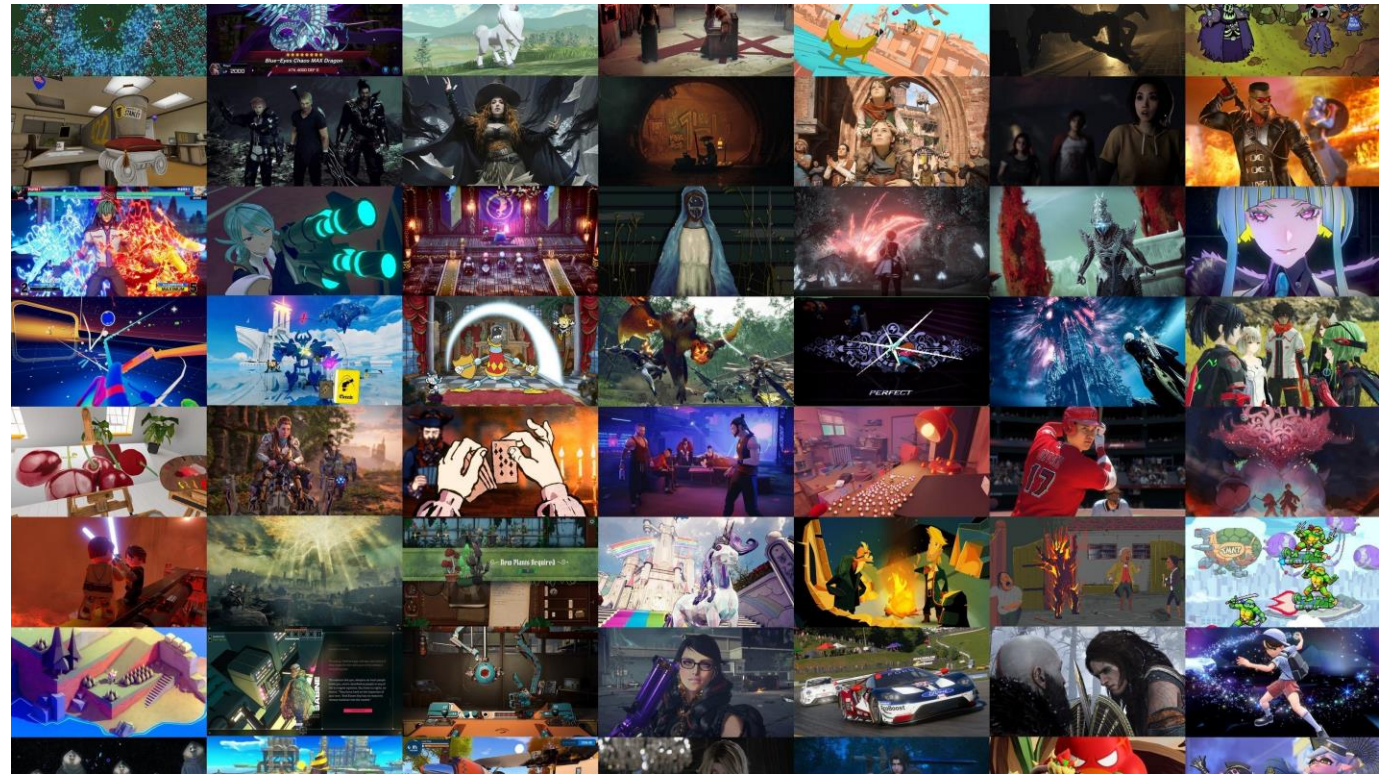
Global Accountability GAMES

political, economic, financial, legal,
technological, moral, environmental,
ethical, medical, cultural, military and
religious, sporting, entertainment

implicit or explicit

monitored, special or routine, and
voluntary, imposed or enforced

address action taken; promised or not,
or not taken, by design or default



RULES OF THE GAMES

A few exist

All are flexible, elastic, evolving, incomplete

Many are ignore-able

None set a game length

Absence of standard for WINNING OR LOSING



Game Rules

- Consider these questions:
 - How do players learn the rules?
 - How are the rules enforced?
 - What kinds of rules work best in certain situations?
 - Are there patterns to rule sets? What can we learn from these patterns?

GAMES ARE DETERMINED BY

- Human nature...from the well-meaning and democratic to the cruel and dictatorial

And

- Structuresmandates' relevance and effectiveness

And

- Processes.... in use



HUMAN NATURE

- Governing metric is COST versus BENEFIT

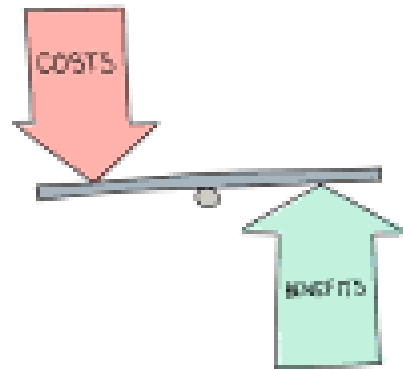
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- BENEFITS of ACCOUNTABILITY – are invariably (far) fewer and less tangible than COSTs
- COSTS of ACCOUNTABILITY - are minimized if they can not be avoided. Methods include:

Silence or disappear critics (journalists). Non-Disclosure Agreements. Establish an enquiry/commission/consultation/survey with the findings scheduled far enough in the future to be ignored. Hire PR services that will ‘whitewash’ reality. Do not answer questions. Be unseen. Pretend accountability. Change the subject (easy in these days of 7/24 news and social media and polarization), Never admit fault or error and believe it. Exchange prisoners. Double down on lies. Blame underlings and fire them. Blunt all accusations with the ‘sovereignty’ rule- Interference is not allowed in the internal affairs of another state. Too difficult. Too busy today on more urgent things. The global legal vacuum for Accountability. Will deal with it “in the coming (days, weeks, month, years)”. Obtain a pardon before being arrested/charged/convicted. Appeal a conviction, forever. Seek/buy amnesty from accountability. Eschew of due diligence. ignore the issue, remain silent, obfuscation, divert attention, present ‘alternate facts’, lie.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ESTIMATING THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ALTERNATIVES THAT SATISFY TRANSACTIONS, ACTIVITIES OR FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS.



EVERYDAYCONCEPTS.IO

GABRIEL KREMER

STRUCTURES

Kyoto Accord

>COP28

UN

SC

Religion

Roman Catholic Church

Courts

ICC (individuals) ICJ (states)

UNGA

SDGs

Global Compact

ten Principles

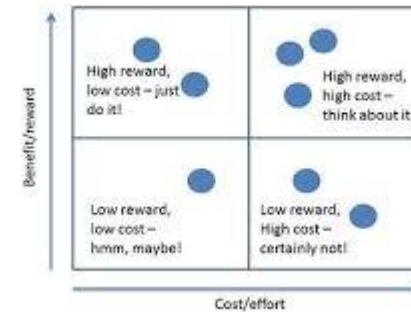
The word **ACCOUNTABILITY** never appears

PROCESSES

- VETOUN P5, UN ICJ
- Sanctionprevention + protection + punishment (rarely all enforced)
- Consensusall agree (NATO)
.....all agree, but not on all parts (EC)
- Dispersalof authority and responsibility (Canadian federal procurement)
.....of voting modalities; unanimity, majority, qualified (ASEAN)
- Deflectionwhataboutery, whataboutism (universally exploited)
- Justicetakes time; may be impossible even when structures exist (ICC 123 (US, Russia, China, India))

Accountability obstructed or delayed is Accountability denied, and worse

SO WHAT? SO FAR



1. The Accountability Games are part and parcel of the polycrisis, directly reinforcing existing obstacles and introducing new ones to durable collective action on urgent issues.
2. The absence of references to Accountability in mandates, almost all of which do assign Responsibilities and Authorities in their field, concerns me. *Is Accountability 'defenceless'?*
3. Is it possible to imagine the appearance of a widely-enough accepted list of Principles of Accountability, given the variety of the games and their transdisciplinary complexity?

Draft Deduction

The more one understands the ways and means of the Accountability Games, the more likely one will be better able to respond to and recover from *their* polycrisis.



But, before *tomorrow*.....

Fanciful Context for ACCOUNTABILITY's Future

1. A Journal: Studies in Non-Accountability (N-A)
2. A UN USG for Accountability
3. A international NGO for Protests of N-A
4. Accountability is a HR