

The paradox of globalisation

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:34 am

Paul Polman, the chief executive of Unilever, [is reported by the Guardian](#) to have made this comment at a company meeting yesterday:

The financial markets have become totally interdependent, technology is adding to that, and the effects of climate change mean [that] one country's actions can affect another country. The world has become so interdependent at a time that political systems are moving away from each other to some extent.

I [have already written](#) about disruptive events in political economy this morning and here is the essence of one summarised in a couple of sentences.

Globalisation requires political stability and, to be candid, support. It is not now clear that support will be forthcoming. The resulting tension has all the making of a disruptive event within it. How will that be resolved and to whose advantage is the question.

And I admit I do not know the answer.

What I do know is that this is the paradox that was always inherent in the trend towards globalisation now beginning to be writ large for all to see. And the resulting stresses will be huge.