

## Globalisation As Violence <sup>1</sup>

**Michael Mann**

Professor of Sociology,  
University of California, Los Angeles.

### Introduction

The term 'globalisation' refers to the extension of social relations over the globe. This has been proceeding for centuries, its pace recently quickening. But what kind of process is this? Most view it as moving us into a single global society. They usually focus on the economy. Capitalism, they say, is everywhere breaking through the boundaries of states and localities to create a global economy and therefore a global society. Some focus more narrowly on a revolution in the technology of communications or on global consumer markets. They say we are living in a global 'network society', an 'Internet society' or a 'McWorld'. There are also cultural and political versions, of a "transnational civil society" and of a 'new world order'. These visions all see globalisation as essentially integrating the world.

These visions have a low tolerance of difference and division, which they view as foreign to globalisation. How else can we explain their eagerness to claim that the nation-state is being transcended, eroded, or undermined? Why have so many theorists of globalisation saddled themselves with this suspect argument. For is not the universalisation of the nation-state also part of globalisation? There are now some 200 nation-states and 'soft geopolitics' (ie generally peaceful negotiations about the economy, the environment etc.) between them are intensifying. This makes globalisation not only transnational (breaking through the boundaries of states), but also inter-national (concerning the relations between states). Globalisation does not sweep away national, regional or other local differences, but it partially operates *through* them. So globalisation is not unitary but multiple; it concerns states; and it inevitably generates conflict. This conflict is mostly rather mild, but sometimes it is extremely violent.

These visions are also unreasonably optimistic. There is little that is really bad or violent about globalisation. It is seen as essentially, in the long-run, benign: modernity, economic development and democracy are being carried to the world. Competition is always acknowledged, conflict sometimes, violence almost never. Even anti-globalisers rarely look deep under the carpet. If the worst that they can find is child labour or sweatshops for women workers, then globalisation cannot be too bad, since the women and the children certainly prefer being exploited by capitalism to being left out of capitalism.<sup>2</sup> Globalisation does contain far worse than this. But to understand it, we must utter a word that has always been central to globalisation, but which has become unfashionable - *imperialism*.<sup>3</sup> But today's imperialism differs greatly from imperialism of the past. It combines massive US military imperialism with a little Northern-cum-American economic imperialism, and it is backed by more ideological consensus, especially in the North of the world. But it contains virtually no political imperialism, no desire or ability to actually rule foreign lands, no formal Empire. In some ways, the unevenness of this imperialism lessens global violence, but in other ways it intensifies it. This imperialism is particularly ill-suited to provide genuine world order. Neither

---

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this essay was given as a lecture at the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, September 24, 2001, and published under the title 'Globalisation and September 11' in *New Left Review*, Second Series, No. 12, Nov/Dec 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, some anti-globalisers do find worse: the violent expropriation of the land of indigenous peoples by local states in alliance with global corporations. These spark off a few of the 'black holes' of violence I discuss later.

<sup>3</sup> 'World systems' theorists come closest to this analysis. Arrighi and Silver (1999), for example, see order in the world system as conferred by 'hegemonic Powers' (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, now the US). But I find this too simple a view. The US is certainly a military hegemon. As we will see, however, its ability to impose world order is rather limited.

the events of September 11, nor the reactions to it, can be understood without grasping this. But I will place these conflicts within the broader context of *all* the major forms of global conflict, including those that produce little violence. This breadth allows us to see that globalisation is very varied, and to see the two places where it is really violent – what I shall call 'black holes' contained within the South, threatening only their own neighbourhoods, and 'the wars between the North and the South', which are more directly the product of imperialism.

Globalisation is not singular but multiple; it integrates, it exploits, and it disintegrates; and it generates peace, regulated conflict, and war alike. Of course, I am not the first to connect globalisation to conflict. Some have identified a 'new world disorder'. They contrast the order of the North of the world with the disorder of the South. And they explain Southern disorder as a 'backlash' from the 'traditional periphery' against Northern global modernity. This is the essence of Benjamin Barber's "Jihad versus McWorld" (1992), of Thomas Friedmann's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000) and of Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996). All of them see the North as embodying rationality, progress, the future, while the South clings to 'tradition' or nurtures unreason. Northern politicians like George Bush, Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi voice cruder versions of this, declaring conflict to be the clash of good against evil, or of higher against lower civilisations. Resistance to Northern globalisation and civilisation is seen as reactionary, violent and primitive, whereas our own actions are declared as being rational and generally benign. It is sobering to realise that these were also the views of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialists: we British, French or Russians (and occasionally Americans) were bringing civilisation to benighted backward parts of the world, and (unfortunately) we had to overcome the resistance of the primitive natives in order to achieve social progress (although they added the now unacceptable notion that this was a struggle between higher and lower races).

But all these views are false. It is true that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century disorder does characterise some of the South and that order characterises almost all the North. Yet the disjunction results partly from Northern imperialism itself and partly from failed attempts by Southern states to modernise along Northern lines. These are not reactions against modernity and globalisation, they are attempts to join them while changing their terms – just as anti-colonial struggles sought to do during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the two volumes of my work, *The Sources of Social Power* (1986, 1993), I argued that human beings set up four main types of power organisations in society: ideological (or cultural if you prefer), economic, military and political. Thus globalisation consists of the expansion of ideological, economic, military and political networks of interaction, by this means diffusing distinctive forms of integration and disintegration across the globe. The multiple nature of globalisation was very evident in its earlier phases. It was obviously imperialist. But this included global capitalist expansion, military conquest of most of the world, imperial political rule and dominating Western ideologies: Christianity, individualism and racism, with secularisation, liberalism, socialism and democracy added later. These multiple aspects of imperialism were often contradictory. I give two examples.

First, European racism undermined European imperialism's ability to integrate its conquered peoples into enduring Empires. Two millennia previously North Africans had become Romans, contributing to the longevity of the Empire. But in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Africans did not become British. Excluded as racial inferiors, they kicked out their British overlords as soon as they had the opportunity. These colonial revolts sought to achieve capitalism, nation-states, democracy and most of the other attributes of modernity. Indeed, they mobilised European ideologies like liberalism and democratic socialism to help them do it. No-one today would call their revolts *reactions* against globalisation or modernity. They sought to forge their own modernity.

Second, the imperial states were highly militaristic, bringing world wars. These initially disrupted globalisation but then redirected and even enhanced it. Think how the Napoleonic Wars enhanced the global power of Britain and the Asian Power of Russia, or of how World War II generated the first global hegemon, the United States. World War II also pacified what became known as the 'North', and this was the main base on which recent economic globalisations have occurred. In the past, therefore, globalisation was multiple, contradictory and violent, with all four sources of social power entwining to determine its trajectory and its conflicts. Let us look at them today.

## **Economic Power Relations: Global Capitalism**

Capitalism is now more transnational, more global than ever before, especially in the fields of financial flows, direct foreign investment and communications technology. Capitalism continues to seek profits on markets wherever these are found, regardless of national, regional, religious or other boundaries. Capitalism *could* be seamlessly global, but is it? Not yet, because it still contains three main types of divide. These generate different levels of conflict.

(a) The most severe conflicts flow from the uneven process of economic development now affecting the South of the world. We may distinguish three different zones within the South – *integrated, exploited and ostracised*. Parts of the South are being quite successfully integrated into the international economy. But the margins of this zone of development experience economic imperialism, which creates exploitation and so conflict, some of it violent. And outside of these relatively favoured zones remain the poorest parts of the South which are neither integrated nor exploited. They are avoided, ostracised by international capitalism, creating greater violence.

After 1945 waves of the integration brought in Southern Europe, Japan and the 'Little Tiger' economies of East Asia, changing a privileged 'West' into a privileged 'North'. A further wave began in the late 1980s and this could involve the majority of the South's population, since it includes the two most populous countries, China and India. China alone absorbs well over half of the Northern investment now going to the South. The third wave is therefore primarily Asian, though it also includes the more Westerly of the East European economies (the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary), plus South and Central American countries like Chile and Mexico. Thus, since the mid 1980s, the gap between the North and about one-third of Southern countries has narrowed in terms of the ratio of trade to GDP and of GDP per capita. Given the enormous populations and the great regional disparities of some of these countries, it is too soon to talk of them being fully integrated into a global economy, but there are now grounds for more optimism than characterised development economics a few years ago.<sup>4</sup> There are some grounds for hope that a globally-integrated economy, after various fits and starts, might eventually embrace much of the South.

At the same time, however, the process of development for many countries of the South has involved mechanisms of unequal exchange, indicating imperialistic elements. There has been a secular downward trend in the price of raw materials as compared to finished goods. Most of the South unfortunately depends heavily on raw materials, and extracts them with relatively lower-end technologies. Since the North specialises in high-end technology, the gap in technology and wealth widens between it and countries dependent on exporting raw materials. More directly imperialistic have been the effects of interest rates and debt ratios. In the 1970s low interest rates in the North encouraged Southern countries to borrow heavily to finance economic development. Then Northern interest rates shot up, generating a massive Southern debt crisis in the 1980s. The North began to call in the debts, with the aid of international interventions to solve the insolvency of Northern banks and the debt crisis of depressed Southern economies. These interventions involve 'structural adjustment programs' imposed by the IMF, World Bank and banking consortia, and embodied the 'Washington Consensus', ie neo-liberalism. So they require as a condition of loans major cut-backs in Southern state expenditures, welfare programs, labour market regulation and tariffs. Their net economic effect has sometimes been positive, sometimes not, but almost always they widen inequalities. In 2002, for example, Argentina suffered the devastating consequences of such programs, but this is only the most recent in a long line of cases.<sup>5</sup>

Attracting foreign investment is a necessary part of economic development, but being in debt to the North can be very bad news. This is often perceived in the South (sometimes correctly) as constituting

---

<sup>4</sup> Contrast the optimism of Dollar & Kraay, 2001 (from whom these figures are taken), with the earlier, more pessimistic North-South contrasts of Hoogvelt, 1997). Petrella (1996: 80) had also noted the highly discouraging long-term trend. Between 1850 and 1950 trade between North and South had comprised about 30% of world trade, and North-South investment had been about 50% of the global total. Then both figures began to decline, reaching below 20% by the early 1980s, even though these figures included Japan and the 'Little Tiger' countries of East Asia in the 'South.' The earlier *New Left Review* version of this paper shared more of this pessimism than this version does.

<sup>5</sup> All these cases are complex, and neither their successes nor their failures can be simply attributed to neo-liberal structural reforms. In Argentina, for example, recent failure appears to have been the joint outcome of neo-liberal privatisation measures which led to buying up enterprises and then asset-stripping them by Northern corporations and of more 'statist' heavy borrowing by both the national and provincial governments.

economic imperialism and exploitation. Indeed, such programs cannot be imposed so brutally on Northern countries. The US is the leading imperial actor here, partly because the institutions of the IMF etc. reflect an earlier era in which the American economy was more dominant than it is today. But other Northern countries are also implicated – Spanish banks are heavily involved in Argentina, for example. Clearly, however, the US will be seen as the major villain. Who is likely to demonstrate against Spanish imperialism? All of this generates serious conflict.

But there is a fate far worse than economic exploitation. It is economic ostracism. The gap in per capita income between the North and the remaining two-thirds of Southern countries continues to widen, and in these countries the ratios of foreign investment and international trade to GDP continue to decline. Sub-Saharan Africa has almost dropped out of the international economy and some Middle Eastern and South American countries continue to retreat economically. Sub-Saharan Africa and much of the Middle East would particularly welcome more capitalist exploitation! They are in deep trouble, would welcome sweatshops, but at present constitute breeding-grounds for social unrest and violence.

This is a mixed economic pattern diffusing unevenly across the world. Sometimes it diffuses unevenly in single countries. The fault-line between North and South passes within China, India and Russia. It separates South American neighbours like Chile and Argentina, and Eastern European neighbours like Hungary and Romania; in the Middle East it separates major oil producers from the rest. Of course, the world has never seen an evenly-diffused process of global development. Some areas have shot forward, others creep forward or stagnate, a few regress. The North creeps outward while a North/South divide remains, generating considerable but very uneven unrest.

(b) Much lesser conflict results from the fact that the world economy remains divided by nation-states, providing almost all the political regulation which economies require. About 80% of the world's production is still traded within national boundaries. Only the European Union has greatly lowered its member states' economic boundaries, though vigorous national economic planning is in decline in the North and South alike. Socialism's decline seems terminal, and the trend remains toward less protectionism, and a more open world economy. But though nation-states remain important economic actors, in the North their conflicts are regulated peacefully by inter-national economic institutions of integration.

Within the South things are more complex. Since the economic power of most Southern countries relative to the North is declining, their states' ability to resist Northern economic imperialism is lessening. In fact, many Southern regimes are staffed with 'realists' and neo-liberal 'Chicago boys' arguing that their government must do whatever it takes to attract foreign capital and trade, abandoning whatever protections and regulations were previously in place. Southern elites are rarely able to unite to resist their Northern imperial masters. This displaces serious economic conflict away from being between North and South to between political factions within each nation-state. Realists and Chicago boys are challenged by centrists, populists and leftists plus corrupt patron-client networks whose control of the state is threatened by the more positive side of neo-liberal measures. Such internal conflicts are now weakening the cohesion of many Southern societies and states, further reducing their capacity to resist. If economic development is not achieved, then the collaborating elites become dangerously exposed to attacks identifying them as tools of foreign imperialists. But this conflict, sometimes quite violent, is turned inward. It does not spark wars between the North and the South – though we see later that they sometimes do contribute to them. And so we in the North need take little note of them, except to ask self-righteously 'why can they not get their house in order?'

(c) Some differences in economic policy also remain inside the North, and these are the least serious of all. There is a mild tendency toward 'trilateralism', the emergence of distinct trading blocs centred on the US, Japan/ East Asia and the European Union. This generates conflict, especially over tariff levels. There are also different types of political economy practiced within various regions. Esping-Andersen (1990), Huber and Stephens (2001) and others have identified three Western ones: liberal or Anglo-Saxon; corporatist, conservative Catholic or 'Rhenish'; and social democratic or Nordic. Liberals are currently the most powerful of the three, since they are led by the United States imposing the neo-liberal Washington Consensus on much of the world. But the US economy (unlike the US military) is not hegemonic over its Northern rivals, only the first among equals. Thus the continental European countries are free to continue their corporatist or social democratic ways, with larger welfare states, distinct policies regarding women's equality and distinct ways

of coping with fiscal pressures now on welfare states. The differences are very evident in patterns of income distribution. Income inequality has widened considerably since 1980, in the five liberal countries (the US, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), just a little in the corporatist countries, and not at all in the social democratic ones (see the data in Mann & Riley, unpublished).<sup>6</sup> In addition, Japan and the East Asian 'Little Tigers' have their own brands of statist capitalism. And if China, India or Russia do 'join the North', this will only widen the differences in political cultures and political economies. These differences indicate that the North is not being seamlessly integrated nor simply dominated by US imperialism. The conflicts they induce are low level ones, likely to be solved by peaceful inter-national negotiations. They are very unlikely to worsen to a state of war.

So capitalism is globalising, but with an expanding Northern face. This overall drift remains mediated by national and macro-regional differences, but most conflicts are generally resolved peacefully through inter-national institutions. More destabilising, as we shall see, are the conflicts arising in the South from the effects of economic imperialism and ostracism. But even these are insufficient to cause much violence at a global level, for most are deflected into struggles within Southern countries themselves. Economic forces do not in themselves generate war.

### **Military Power Relations: American Imperialism**

It is obviously different with the military. The most dramatic recent changes in the world have been in military power relations. For the first time in the entire history of humanity, war has become absolutely irrational as a means of pursuing human goals, at least among the greatest Powers. That is not yet so among lesser Powers, who may still go to war without obliterating each other or the entire globe. But in time, it will be true for them too, as they acquire nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of immense destructive power. Since human beings are not rational, war may not be entirely obsolete. But there have been profound effects in the North where US military hegemony means it is almost entirely pacified. War between the Europeans, or between them and the US, or between either of them and Japan, has become almost unthinkable. The collapse of the Soviet Union deepened US military hegemony.

The US now spends as much on defence as the next twelve Powers combined, which dwarfs Britain's 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism, under which the strength of the Royal Navy (not the army) was kept at the size of the next two largest navies combined. The North accepts US military dominance as necessary for its own defence, and most Northern states are allies of the US. This is a degree and form of military hegemony unprecedented in history, for it rests on consensus in the North. Along with the technological revolution in communications, this pacification was the main cause of the recent surge in globalisation. The North is becoming integrated as a single military system, as its many states huddle together under the American umbrella.

We should not assume that consensus spreads to the South, although two factors favour it. First, the UN is an assembly of states, and states have common interests. They favour staying in control of their territories and so tend to oppose invasion or dismemberment of other member states – for it might happen to them next. They will not support any territorial imperialism, formal Empire. And on similar grounds they will oppose 'terrorism'. –though not 'state terrorism' (which many of them practice). So if the US seeks to form a coalition against terrorists or 'rogue states' invading others (like Iraq), it will find very widespread support (at least at the rhetorical level), including in the South. This happened in the Gulf War.

Second, US military imperialism remains unchallengeable and this induces cooperation through fear. No-one wishes to oppose such might. US high-tech weaponry, especially laser-guided missiles dropped from a great height, inflict heavy casualties with very few American losses. Only the US has an extraordinary global reach, with re-fuelling facilities, staging posts and forward troops spread across the world. Though large permanent bases overseas declined greatly after the end of the Cold War (especially in Europe), smaller operational deployments increased. Even before September 11, over 60,000 US troops were likely to be

---

<sup>6</sup> It had been earlier objected that Australia and New Zealand did not fit well into the liberal group. However, these pressures are driving them toward their fellow-liberals (New Zealand rather more than Australia). Those countries in which labour movements had made major compromises with liberalism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century prove to be those with the least capacity to resist neo-liberalism at its end.

conducting operations and exercises in about 100 different countries at any one time. Nine more countries have been added since September 11 (Los Angeles Times, Jan 6, 2002). Let me stress that this is with the consent of the governments concerned, who derive both military and economic benefits from the arrangements. It is also with the tacit consent of the UN, to whom the US offers the only real global strike force (on its own terms, of course). But not all of these states have the consent of their people.

The US is poised to strike any potential enemy anywhere.<sup>7</sup> This is the first military World Empire. No state would rationally seek war with the US, and few could survive it. It is safer not to oppose US demands. Note that this is **American**, not Northern, military hegemony. It is not at the service of Northern economic imperialism, for example. It is only at the service of interests defined by American governments. This is true military imperialism, the ability to strike at and devastate almost any country across the world which is identified as threatening US interests. So not many do.

Nonetheless, even in this context there remain sources of Southern resistance to US military imperialism. There are four major regional Powers, all in the South, whom the US has neither the stomach nor the capacity to coerce. Though they seek economic benefits from agreements with the US and its client inter-national institutions, they do not accept American leadership. China and Russia remain the obvious examples, though the US also has little influence over India and Pakistan, who also now have nuclear weapons. These cases are all very different. There are no serious disputes with Russia, and the US has largely ignored Russia's local difficulties in Chechnya. The US has no serious disputes with India or Pakistan, though their dispute with each other is potentially more than a local threat. All these states also have a common interest in re-defining some of their local enemies as 'Islamic fundamentalists', which definition supposedly legitimises their repression. In Chechnya this pressure is actually turning an essentially secular separatist movement into a more Islamic one. But there is a major dispute with China over Taiwan. Here the US desperately hopes that China will not pursue re-unification aggressively, since US governments have some kind of commitment to a military defence of Taiwan for which they have no stomach. We have to hope that these are rational Powers, preferring peace to war, concerned to regulate their relations with each other. We hope they can work out their conflicts by inter-national negotiation, involving intermittent tension, bluster and troop movements perhaps, but stopping short of war. This type of divide brings risk of serious disintegration, though perhaps of rather low probability. But these conflicts could blow globalisation right out of the water. Some would be wars of the North against the South.

There are also non-state sources of resistance. During the last decades American military dominance over the South has been weakening in two rather peculiar ways. Internal pacification has undermined its own militarism, its stomach for a fight, its ability to take losses among its own citizen-soldiers. US citizens are now too valuable to lose. The funeral of each one lost has become a sacred national ritual. In the Lebanon and Somalia US forces fled precipitously when, respectively, 200 and 20 of its soldiers were unexpectedly killed. Both flights were publicly derided by Osama bin Laden, who declared that in both cases the victors were 'poor, unarmed people whose only weapon is the belief in Allah the almighty' (in his 1997 CNN interview). In recent years the US has been willing to bomb from a safe height, but has avoided infantry combat, except in the Gulf War in open desert with oil at stake. US ground troops have only been used in Afghanistan to pinpoint targets for high-level bombing. It remains doubtful whether American public opinion is prepared to accept American losses. US imperialism is not political. To its credit, the US does not want to rule Afghanistan, or any other foreign country. It is even reluctant to commit ground forces at all. This makes it a novel imperialism, high on the ability to devastate, low on the ability to provide order.

Such problems have been intensified by the rise of the 'weapons of the weak'. These are symbolised by the turning of a Russian inventor, Mikhail Kalashnikov, into a household name. His Kalashnikov AK-47 is a simplified, mass-produced hand-held automatic rifle. It has been followed by shoulder-held surface-to-air and anti-tank missiles which are now ironically undermining Russian military might. A single Chechen fighter cradling a \$200 anti-tank missile launcher can pop up out of a cellar behind a million dollars worth of Russian tank and destroy it, provided that the Russian infantrymen supposedly guarding the tank do not wish to expose themselves to the risk of death. But it seems that Russia has also experienced some

---

<sup>7</sup> Such expanded breadth obviously weakens depth. At the end of 2001 the US military abandoned its commitment to be able to massively strike two different regions at the same time. Of course, the moment at which one such strike is being launched is probably not the moment at which a second state will dare oppose the US. Saddam Hussein has been as quiet as a mouse during late 2001.

pacification and demilitarisation. Russian infantrymen sensibly lag a little behind when the tanks advance. Of course, the guerilla also has access to a global industry, arms smuggling, through which globalisation fragments and kills the people of the world.

September 11 revealed more spectacular weapons of the weak. Nineteen terrorists armed with knives and civilian airliners killed about 3,000 people<sup>8</sup> and demolished the twin towers of the World Trade Centre and one of the Pentagon's five sides. Since these are the twin symbols of US economic and military imperialism, the terrorists themselves believed their target was American imperialism<sup>9</sup>. This atrocity, we should realise, also continues another trend in 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare: a growing tendency to target civilians as the enemy. Even if airliners will not be so vulnerable to capture in the future, we are now conscious of other vulnerabilities, to biological and chemical weapons, to our water supply and power stations. It turns out that Northern citizens are not fully and safely pacified. It is likely that Southern dissident movements and refugee camps will continue to generate these militants. The weapons they need to create mayhem are now minimal and freely available on global markets. Small arms, Semtech, mobile phones, the internet, pilot and other forms of training are purchasable at low market prices through the world. As is often noted, one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter, but the powers of both have increased. Even bringing supposed 'rogue states' like Libya or Iraq to heel may make little difference. They are barely needed any longer, provided that suicide volunteers are forthcoming. I shall deal with the subject of ideological power later.

While the military capacity of the United States to devastate Southern states is historically unprecedented, its ability to rule or provide order in the South may be less than that of 19<sup>th</sup> century Empires. Those Empires possessed the concentrated fire-power able to defeat almost all native forces. They could mount punitive expeditions capable of seizing native capitals. They were prepared to take losses, even of their own citizens, unlike the US today, for the lives of soldiers were not then considered sacred. They then turned to political power to persuade some local native leaders to rule as their clients. If that still did not provide order, they would rule it themselves, as a colony. Yet their soldiers and civil servants would be mainly native. At that time it was easy to divide the natives and find many who would identify their interests with the Empire. Bombing from a safe height is not an adequate modern substitute, since it cannot easily effect regime changes. The rise of ethnic and religious nationalism means that in most Southern countries it is very difficult to find loyal local clients, still less local soldiers or civil servants. A few highly tribalised countries, like Afghanistan, may be the only exceptions. True, economic power can help. Though it may produce disorder, structural adjustment programs constitute an effective indirect form of imperialism, constraining the actions of Southern regimes.

Thus a dual military world emerges, labelled by some 'Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil' (eg Singer & Wildavsky, 1993). A largely pacified North exists alongside armed turmoil elsewhere. Turmoil characterises only parts of the South, and we will see later that it takes two distinct forms, only one of which is turned against the North. Most people conclude, however, that US military imperialism, no matter how formidable, cannot secure order across the South. Indeed, it may precipitate disaster.

## **Political Power Relations: The Universal Nation-State**

Many believe that the nation-state is being undermined by the globalisation process. I have argued elsewhere that they are wrong (Mann, 1997) and will not repeat my arguments here. There is now a large literature on the continuing role of nation-states. Although the autonomous sovereignty of the individual state may be somewhat declining in the economic realm, far more regulation is now provided through negotiated compromises between states, in what is called 'soft geopolitics'. Moreover, everyone wants a nation-state. There are now some 200 of them sitting together in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Geopolitics structure the UN, for only the Great Powers sit permanently on its executive body, the Security Council, and neither this nor the General Assembly can achieve much without the United States. So, once again,

---

<sup>8</sup> The estimate as reported in *The New York Times* of January 6, 2002, is 3,119 (plus the 19 terrorists themselves).

<sup>9</sup> We do not know the target of the plane that failed, though most assume it was either the White House or the Capitol Building. To the terrorists, the former might have represented the military Commander in Chief, but the latter seems a symbol of American democracy. Bin Laden had already issued a *fatwa* authorising American (and allied) civilians as potential targets.

globalisation is inter-national and geopolitical, as well as transnational. Though European Powers are ceding some of their powers to quasi-federal Euro institutions, this model is not spreading elsewhere. Keynesian economic planning may be declining, but looming environmental crises will probably bring new forms of planning. Global warming, polluted air, water shortages, fuel exhaustion require co-ordinated actions between states. They are the only agencies with authoritative regulatory powers over territories and air-space. Either states collectively negotiate and plan, or our great-grandchildren perish. Diplomacy concerning economic development and environmental agreements will hopefully avert water and air wars in the future.

If soft geopolitics is predominantly peaceful, then it might even encourage the diffusion of a single global political culture, less riven by serious conflict, as Meyer (1999) and others have argued. Governments everywhere have the same cabinet officers, sponsor the same tripartite education system, develop the same central banks, the same regulatory agencies, the same national parks. There is no fascism, no socialism, no powerful monarchies, no confederal Empires. They all claim to be democratic nation-states and they all seek capitalist economic growth. States remain, but the degree of convergence between them might develop a high level of integration at the global level. This would be a single **inter-national** world order. And it is increasingly emerging –in the North, and in certain favoured parts of the South.

For much of the South the nation-state remains an ideal, not reality. As an ideal it derives from the more benign ideological side of imperialism: the diffusion of Western political ideals of liberalism, socialism, nationalism and secularism. These were mobilised to achieve three projects: a single nation emerging out of multi-ethnicity, democracy and economic development. These goals dominated attempts at modernisation, first within the West, then over most of the globe. Success is however elusive. Two of these ideals, the nation-state and democracy, have also often proved contradictory. In multi-ethnic or multi-religious environments, the ideal of 'rule by the people' has increasingly meant domination by one ethnic/religious group over others, followed by resistance, civil war and ethnic cleansing. This was the past of many Northern countries and it is the present of many Southern ones. It is essentially a modern problem, generated by the global diffusion of the modern ideal of 'rule by the people' in which 'the people' means the *ethnos* as well as the *demos*. Ethnic cleansing is the dark side of democracy, as I have argued elsewhere (Mann, 2000). Ethnic and religious wars increased fairly steadily during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (though some detect slackening in the late 1990s). The political fault-lines of modernity are being globalised.

For the most part such ethnic conflict does not now involve the North. Most of it is fought against 'sub-imperial' Powers within the South, as peripheral peoples demand rights from the Indonesian or Chinese or Indian 'imperial' states. Since the North is reluctant to get involved, these become 'black holes' of ethnic conflict, ostracised by the North, sucking in only their neighbourhoods. And as we saw, although all states aspire to economic development, capitalist ostracism ensures that parts of the South lag economically further behind the North. This is especially galling since global media and consumerism dangle a fantasy life of economic plenty in front of most of the world's population. Developmental failure weakens the legitimacy of governments and increases conflict within many Southern countries. Ethnic/religious conflict and economic failure combine as fuels igniting the 'zones of turmoil'. They yield desperate extremists, roving teenage paramilitaries, civil wars and anarchy. In the poorest countries paramilitaries offer the best-paid and most stable employment. They create turbulence within states and conflict between neighbouring states. These zones of turmoil are scattered rather unevenly across the South, concentrated among the poorest countries and those most suited to guerilla warfare, but generated by mainly local conditions. A few are exacerbated by three types of Northern intervention in Southern nation-states.

(a) Declining terms of trade and debt crises followed by neo-liberal restructuring may give local economic resentments a broader, more global resonance. As I have noted above, however, in these instances discontented locals may be unsure as to who to blame, the North or their own political leaders?

(b) Northerners prop up Southern states for their own geopolitical purposes, arming them against their local enemies and their domestic dissidents. If these states become more unpopular among their citizens, discontent may be turned against the Northern Powers too, whose arms meanwhile are being used for domestic repression.

(c) Northerners may take sides in local ethnic/religious conflicts and help repress one side. There the discontented have an even clearer sense of a Northern enemy, and weapons of the weak enable the

discontented to attack their perceived enemy.

US policy in the Middle East exacerbates the situation there on all three grounds. The US provides massive military aid to authoritarian Muslim states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It provides much less economic aid, but its hand is seen in every IMF or World Bank restructuring. It sent in massive forces to prevent Saddam Hussein from acquiring Kuwait, but then played its own geopolitics by leaving him intact as a counterweight to Islamicist Iran. Later it bombed and sanctioned Iraq, causing hundreds of thousands of infant mortalities (according to UN estimates). Above all, the US props up Israel, coloniser and oppressor of the Palestinians. These are *indirect* forms of political imperialism only. The US props up client regimes but cannot directly control them. All these interventions are greatly resented across the Muslim/ Arab world and were specifically denounced by Islamic fundamentalists and Bin Laden, helping to generate the extreme response of September 11.

But I would stress that this is the extreme case. No other zone of turmoil sees all three interventions, and some see virtually none. Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalism has surged but is focused on local enemies, not global imperialism. The US is not visibly contributing to the oppression of Hindus or Buddhists and so it is not attacked by them. Sub-Saharan Africa mainly suffers from ostracism, not imperialism. Its conflicts are turned inward in civil wars and wars against neighbours, not against Northern imperialism. Conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region, for example, may reach desperate levels, involving genocide in Rwanda, large-scale killing in Burundi and the Congo, and serious economic regress in the whole region. But we blame the Great Powers and the UN Security Council for **not** intervening in Rwanda. This region offers little threat to the rest of the world and the North is not interested in political control of it. The North still gets copper, diamonds and rare metals from the Congo, though local and regional warlords and smugglers now take a bigger cut of the profits. Political globalisation may include a number of such 'black holes', but these do not suck in the rest of the globe. It is different where turmoil involves anti-imperialist ideologies.

### **Ideological Power Relations: Ethno-Nationalism, Anti-Imperialism**

Ideological power is wielded by those who offer meaning systems which make plausible sense of the world we live in. If globalisation was proceeding toward a single, seamless, world society, it would generate a single cultural community comprising convergence in norms, meaning systems and ritual practices. Indeed, trends in the realms of consumer culture, liberal humanism and the English language have encouraged some to argue that a new global culture or a new transnational civil society is emerging. Let us briefly consider these pacific visions.

The most successful globalisation is of cheap cultural consumption goods: clothing styles, drinks, fast food, popular music, TV and movies. The cheapest products are available to almost all the world's population, including teenagers with low incomes, generating a global youth culture. Though adapted according to local conditions, this is subverting many local norms and rituals governing such important social spheres as marriage practices, parent-child relations and the submission of women. This is probably the most important integrating effect of globalisation since it carries capitalist consumption globally through very cheap products into peoples' intimate lives. But it tends to produce more homogenisation in the micro-sphere of everyday life and style than in macro-areas like politics. Serbian paramilitaries in the Yugoslav wars sported leather jackets and sunglasses, declaring their role models to be Rambo and Mad Max. They then engaged in blood-letting against similar Croat and Albanian groups. Consumer capitalist culture does not lead to war or peace but makes profits out of both.

The second cultural diffusion is of liberal humanism, through liberal and social democratic political movements, through the United Nations, through countless NGOs, and through the concept of 'basic human rights'. This is sometimes called an emerging 'global civil society'. But it often has a decidedly secular, Northern and even an American tone and so is somewhat contested. Many Southerners, especially in Asia, counter that economic subsistence and social security should take priority over liberal conceptions of rights. The arrogance of Western feminism in proposing individualist and labour-market-centred views of women's liberation is also denounced in many places. But this liberal humanism is of broader appeal than either Northern neo-liberalism or American military power, and its appeal is likely to grow since it can critique exploitation and repression committed by Northern and Southern regimes alike. Yet it is at present undercut by American imperialism and Southern religious revivals. The US policy of bombing starving Afghans in the name of democracy is hardly likely to increase trust in Northern democracy! I come to 'fundamentalism'

in a moment.

The third cultural diffusion, the English language, is even thinner. English is advancing as the medium of public communication in the most modern sectors of most countries. Many do business and speak in conferences in English, but they do not tell jokes or make love in English. Nor do their social movements mobilise in English, either peacefully or in battle.

Against these ideological currents we must also set much more divisive ones. These increasingly concern ethnicity and religion. Ethno-nationalism and religious resistance movements are surfacing across much of the South. As I noted, ethno-nationalism destabilises countries, making them less attractive to Northern investors and traders, reinforcing ostracising imperialism, deepening local 'black holes'. Ethno-nationalism intensifies through the global diffusion of democratic aspirations. It is a part of global modernisation, not a peripheral reaction against it. Yet it results in ideological fragmentation, as many ethno-nationalist movements claim their own uniqueness, their own rights against some local Southern sub-imperialism. There have recently been five across Indonesia alone (Aceh, East Timor, West Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, and various Christian parts of the core islands). That is the story across most zones of turmoil, and it offers no threat to the North.

But broader ideologies can offer more global resistance. This was the traditional role of socialism in the South, interpreting colonial and post-colonial oppression in terms of capitalist imperialism. But socialist influences have been waning. They remain quite strong in Latin America and India among movements like the Colombian FARC, the Sendero Luminoso of Peru, the Mexican Zapatistas and the Naxalites of India, though these are all localised. 'Third World Socialism' has become more an ideology of black holes than of global change. It has probably declined most in the Middle East. Across those areas of the South where development has failed to materialise, its decline has been matched by the decline of most other Western ideologies, especially liberalism and secularism. Colonial liberation movements and the first post-colonial elites considered themselves secular and liberal or socialist nationalists, though their appeal faded as they failed to achieve their goals.

Over the post-1945 period religious revivals have come to replace many socialist movements as self-proclaimed resisters of imperialism. We have become obsessed with Islam. But across South Asia Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist, and in Israel Jewish fundamentalism has arisen, all of them forms of resistance against local secularised regimes which are identified with domination by the North. The revival began in the last days of colonialism, and was aimed mostly at the British or French or Dutch imperialists and their local clients. Once these Powers left, the main enemy everywhere was local secularism – political elites who had abandoned the essentially religious nature of the community and embraced 'Northern' secular versions of socialism, liberalism and nationalism. So for the first time these movements began to challenge Northern ideologies and Northern globalisation. The local struggle remains primary in Sri Lanka and India. But elsewhere the assertion of American military imperialism (plus perceptions of economic imperialism), brought in the US as the second enemy in the 'fundamentalist' perception of struggle: the religious community is now seen as fighting against local secular or conservative elites in the service of American imperialism.

The main thrust of such movements has been within Islam. Samuel Huntington (1996) has rightly emphasised the religious fault-line emerging between Islam and other religions across one large swathe of two continents, Africa and Asia. Muslims form at least one of the contending sides in about half the world's main armed conflicts, though they form only a fifth of the world's population. Yet Huntington does not provide a convincing explanation for this. Muslims provide one of the sides in some of the ethno-nationalist 'black holes' scattered through the South. But they are also decidedly over-represented in the broader conflicts of globalisation. Five of the seven states currently listed by the US State Department as supporting terrorism are Muslim. Why?

Insofar as there are causes within Islam itself, these are less doctrinal than social and historical. Muslim movements have long been able to nourish resistance against foreign, and especially Christian, imperialism. Though the decline of Muslim states began some centuries ago, the Ottoman Empire shared with China and Japan the distinction of never having been conquered by the West. Muslim forces in the Caucasus have also been the most effective rebels against Russian (and Soviet) imperialism. Even in the inter-war period, after the Ottoman Empire shrank into the Turkish Republic, substantial parts of the Arab world retained a degree of autonomy from the Western Powers. Movements in Iraq, Pakistan and Egypt now nourished visions of a new Islamic Caliphate arising to throw off the imperialist yoke, and this was the origins of modern Islamic fundamentalism. In the last few decades Muslim, and especially Arab, power further declined, some states becoming clients of the US, few achieving much for their citizens. In his videotaped

statement of October 7 Osama Bin Laden, declared that over 80 years (ie since the granting of a mandate over the Gulf to Britain) Islam had been 'tasting ... humiliation and disgrace, its sons killed and their blood spilled, its sanctities desecrated'. Yet Muslim memories remain of much greater historical strength, independence and resistance.

Islam also nourished 'warrior sects' which conquered cities and states defined as corrupt and authoritarian to re-establish the 'fundamentals' of Mohamed's teachings. The cycle of conflict between warrior tribes and settled city-states was first identified by the Muslim sociologist Ibn Khaldun in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Many point to the Wahhabis as a recent version of such a warrior sect, detecting their hand in September 11. Yet today most Wahhabis have settled down into comfortable domination of the Saudi and other Gulf states, just as Ibn Khaldun would have predicted. This makes them vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy from the new fundamentalists.

A few so-called fundamentalists are now reviving this warrior tradition. (They themselves do not use the term 'fundamentalist', preferring 'Islamicist'). Indeed, 'fundamentalism' in the Protestant sense of a return to the traditional fundamental texts and beliefs is only appropriate to the most local and conservative strand among these groups. They demand the imposition of Sharia law on their local community. These groups hate foreign influences in their own region, but they tend to remain uninterested in broader issues, including 'imperialism'. Most Islamicists interested in the broader world, however, do embrace modernity. They wish to develop distinctly Islamic ways of coping with technology, mass education, social welfare, changes in family life etc. The entity of the nation-state divides them, since they recognise it as modern reality, while the Islamic community itself is transnational. The movement is divided into nationalist and transnational factions. Contrary to popular myth, most Islamicists do want to modernise, though in a distinctly Islamic way. Not the Taliban, of course, who are rural Pashtun reactionaries that resist any modernising tendencies derived from cities, communists and other Afghan ethnic groups. In the matter of women's rights it is difficult to regard most Islamicism as anything other than reactionary. Yet in Bin Laden's case, this is specifically a reaction to what he sees as imperialism. He said in 1998 'The [Gulf state] rulers have been deprived of their manhood.' 'The West,' he repeated, intends 'to deprive us of our manhood. Imperialism does not only exploit us, it emasculates us.' Islamicists are as varied as most major socio-political movements.

Some of them are distinctly violent. They additionally emphasise *qital*, 'combat' against the enemies of Islam, within the broader injunction of *jihad*, meaning 'struggle/striving in the name of Allah' (which does not necessarily imply violence). I therefore label these people '*combat fundamentalists*', those who materially or ideologically assist and support armed struggle in the name of Islam. There are also comparable but smaller movements among Hindu nationalists in India (in fact some are a part of the ruling BJP's broad family of movements) and Buddhists in Sri Lanka (though Tamil extremists so far remain secular). All manage to find among their holy texts some phrases appearing to endorse such combat (so do Christian fundamentalists). The Islamic movements focus on the Koran's repeated injunctions to resist oppression – 'for oppression is even worse than killing' (2:191), so 'fight against them until there is no more oppression and all worship is devoted to Allah alone' (2: 193). It is their oppression that helps them define some rulers in the Muslim world as 'no longer Muslim', thus setting aside the normal Koranic injunction against overthrowing a Muslim ruler. Clearly, when both Muslim and Infidel oppressors seem entwined in a secular and materialist embrace, the resonance of the call to arms is even greater.

Of course, Islam is as varied as Christianity. In the past there were long periods when Christian aggression far exceeded Muslim. But most Christian states then secularized. They still conducted aggression, but not in the name of God, although George Bush once slipped into labelling his 'war against terrorism' as a 'crusade', and the most potent American tank is also named the Crusader! In contrast, across much of the Islamic world, the tide turned against the secularists in the post-1945 period. The main reason for the difference is that during the period in which Christians have ruled the world, they *have* oppressed Muslims. Combat fundamentalism offers an explanation of real social conditions, real imperialism, and a plausible (if very high-risk) strategy for remedying them.

But to explain combat fundamentalism we must also examine its enemies, which Huntington does not do. The first one is imperialism, which fundamentalism strongly denounces. Such fundamentalism also resonates most strongly where Southern poverty meets Northern imperialism. In Islam this is especially marked in Palestine. Israel is seen as being a part of the North, and it is backed up by the Northern Superpower. The Palestinians are the quintessential poor and dispossessed Southerners, still being pushed off their lands, who are killed by US-made tanks, aeroplanes, helicopters and missiles when they resist.

Muslims correctly identify Israel as the only settler-colony state permitted to remain in the world. But Chechnya also bears some traces of such a division, colonised and exploited by Russians, backed by a highly militaristic state. Other countries in the Middle East are caught in an economic vice between low growth and population explosion, part of which they attribute to imperialism. In these cases local ethnic-religious solidarities and conflicts are reinforced and made more globally resonant by resistance to Northern infidel imperialism. The economic aspects of this conflict lie somewhat concealed, for they figure little in fundamentalist discourse, which actually denounces all materialism as foreign. But were Muslim countries to experience economic development and redistribution, who can doubt that this would undercut combat fundamentalism?

The second enemy is *within* Islam. As among Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians, conflict ranges Islamicist against both seculars and conservatives. Since the Muslim seculars and conservatives are often backed by the US, they can be plausibly attacked as authoritarian oppressors *and* lackeys of the imperialist oppressors. Bin Laden's short videotaped statement of October 7, 2001, referred three times to the oppressed Palestinians and once to the removal of 'the army of infidels', from 'the land of Mohamed' (ie American forces should be removed from Saudi Arabia). Two of the three holiest sites of Islam are in Saudi Arabia and can be (loosely) said to be occupied by the US, while the third is in Jerusalem, which is under Israeli control. It is not difficult to mobilise a religious sense of exploitation in these circumstances. Bin Laden's previous rhetoric (unlike that of many other fundamentalists) had focused much less on the Palestinians, much more on Saudi Arabia. This is partly opportunism, though only in recent years has the combat fundamentalism of Hamas come to rival the secular PLO among the Palestinians, giving Bin Laden potential allies in that struggle.<sup>10</sup> Of course, most Muslims in these countries simply wish the conflict would end. They may not love their rulers, but nor do they hate Americans. Even among the fundamentalists, there are few who wish to fight, still less to die. A few is however enough for this particular war.

Once in power, Islamicist regimes tend to establish harsh religious dictatorships, whose popular appeal we have difficulty understanding. We should remember that while operating as opposition movements, they are populists, calling on the people as a whole to rebel, firstly against colonial rulers, then later against post-colonial ones. They advocate what the Pakistani Madoudi, the leading Sunni Islamicist theorist, termed 'theo-democracy'. This is not a theocratic state, but self-rule by the *umma*, the whole religious community, in obedience to the dictates of the Koran. As populists they can mobilise resistance to authoritarian and corrupt Muslim states, whether secular ones like Egypt, or conservative religious ones like Saudi Arabia. Their pressure then forces secular and semi-democratic regimes toward more authoritarianism (as in Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Turkey). It has also persuaded more Muslims to define their enemies in religious terms (as in Israel or Kashmir or Chechnya), giving the local struggle a more global cosmology. According to Bin Laden, the struggle ranges the Muslim against the infidel, Good against Evil, God against Satan. This view is quite resonant, especially able to recruit young, educated dissidents in authoritarian states and young refugees displaced by conflicts right across the Muslim world. Despite its poverty, the Muslim countries have an 80% literacy rate, and some of their educational resources, from universities at the top to the madrasa schools at the bottom, are tinged by fundamentalism. These 'core constituencies' are not particularly large, rarely generating the resources to seize control of a state. But their capacity to disrupt and re-group is considerable, since they enjoy the sympathy of much of the poor and the middle class of the Muslim world.

Combating such ideologies would require a two-pronged policy, of attacking terrorism and attacking the causes of terrorism. So far, the US and its allies have embraced only the first, launching the traditional terror tactic of all historic Empires, *exemplary military repression*. The repression is intended not only to kill the existing terrorists, but also to serve as an 'example' to instil fear in all others who may think of joining or emulating them. Will it work? It will kill some and doubtless it will deter many others. Many Pakistani Islamicists streamed back from Afghanistan with their tails between their legs. But it does not seem likely that this will eliminate the threat of combat fundamentalism in Islam, or indeed in any of these religions. Indeed, it may well only fuel the fires, since it seems to actually confirm their cosmology. The US has bombed the poorest country on earth, killing perhaps several thousand of its civilians, plus an unknown

---

<sup>10</sup> Tactical considerations are also revealed by combat fundamentalists who exploit the Palestinian issue, despite their antipathy to the secular PLO, while refraining from attacking hated secular regimes which happen to oppose the US, like Iraq or Libya.

number of Taliban soldiers who never imagined that they were the enemies of the US. It has bombed Kashmiri, Chechen and other Muslim militants who presumably entertained no prior hatred of the US at all (they hated Indians, Russians and others instead). It has bombed prisoners who had their hands bound behind their backs at the time. It has transported prisoners to a military base in Cuba that is inaccessible to civilians, declaring them 'unlawful combatants' outside the reach of the Geneva Convention.<sup>11</sup> How will the pictures of all this play across the Muslim world? Extremely badly. In this context, educated dissidents and refugee camps will continue to provide angry young men (and perhaps angry young women) willing to risk their lives for such a powerful cosmology. As we have seen repeatedly in car- and body-bombs, in the assassinations of secular leaders like Sadat and no less than three Gandhis, and (most terribly) on September 11, among these will be a few who will deliberately choose combat suicide. This has become the ultimate weapon of the weak against the powerful of this earth. Whether they will be ever able to repeat a coup as horrific as they did on September 11 depends on finding technical means as unexpected as that one. But Northerners in general now have to fear that possibility. This has become war between the North and the South.

This was by no means inevitable. That combat fundamentalism's enemy is the US and its allies resulted mainly from the unintended consequences of three US policies: toward communism, Israel and oil. These are the three main areas in which the US has added some indirect political imperialism to its normal military imperialism. It seeks its own geopolitical ends through propping up client states. This was much more common during the Cold War when the US entered major wars in Korea and Vietnam and intervened politically as well as militarily in Latin America and around all the fringes of the communist bloc. In this phase its first important Middle Eastern intervention was in Iran. At that time the US was often rightly seen as an anti-colonial Power. Yet the CIA-sponsored coup in Iran in 1953 revealed the US tendency to label centre-left dissidents as 'communists'. The US then backed the increasingly corrupt and authoritarian regime of the Shah of Iran, against communism, not Islamicism –whose revolutionary powers in overthrowing the Shah took the US and everyone else by surprise.

The second and third unintended consequences, from Israel and oil, are the ones that matter more today. The legacy of the Holocaust, the increasing political influence of American Jews, and (later) Cold War alignments were the main pressures leading the US to back Israel and its dispossession of the Palestinians. Nothing changed when the Israeli Jews moved to become less victims than oppressors in the region. The US continues to provide massive military and economic aid to Israel, its exact extent lies deliberately concealed amid many complex budgets. In the televised foreign policy debate between the two US Presidential candidates in 2000, both Gore and Bush mentioned only one "ally" by name – Israel. Following September 11, US bias was exploited by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to launch a massive attack on the Palestinian Authority, apparently free from US restraint. This client state is unruly.

But in seeking a solution to this cancerous dispute, the US also backed states which had become moderates vis-a-vis Israel, like Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The US gives \$1.2 billion aid annually to Egypt, three-quarters of which is military. Military aid helps these regimes repress internal dissent, while the lesser economic aid (sometimes tied to neo-liberal restructuring) could not outweigh the effects of capitalist ostracism to achieve economic development or domestic legitimacy. But since there is no direct American political imperialism, these states cannot be controlled. Americans are helpless to stop popular discontent against these regimes rising up and being turned against themselves, as in Israel/ Palestine. Again, we see the inability of American imperialism to actually secure order.

But it was oil which led to the massive increase in US military imperialism across the region. The US became increasingly dependent on Gulf oil from the 1970s as its oil consumption grew and its own national reserves declined. The Reagan administration first set up a Central Command (CENTCOM) to counter possible Soviet aggression in the Gulf. During the 1980s CENTCOM expanded to 3000,000 **[need to check this figure]** military personnel able to use bases in 19 countries from Kenya to Pakistan. The Gulf War was fought using these facilities, plus large ports in Saudi Arabia. Then the US added 8,000 military personnel in Saudi Arabia itself, plus others in the remaining Gulf Sheikdoms. The Middle East is now permeated by American military operations, and the US has another major unruly client state, Saudi Arabia. In order to stay in power this one is extremely unruly, since it gives very large covert financial aid to the

---

<sup>11</sup> US Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld declared that the US will "for the most part, treat them in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the Geneva Conventions, to the extent they are appropriate." (*New York Times*, January 12, 2002). These are the words of a military imperialist declaring he will apply international law only when it suits him.

combat fundamentalists!

So the war between Islamic fundamentalism and US imperialism is not a necessary one. Though it is deep-rooted in US foreign policy, it could be undercut by four measures: a more even-handed approach to Israel/Palestine, less military and more economic aid to Arab regimes, a more progressive international development regime, with redistribution and growth its twin goals, and a new energy policy. The last would curiously involve a more neo-liberal policy. The present policy is to secure oil supplies militarily by allying with states possessing oil. The new one would be to make market-based calculations that, whatever the regimes across the Gulf, they will want to sell their oil. Such policy changes would reduce both major conflicts, that between the Muslim and the Christian world, and between fundamentalists and others within the Muslim world. Such a geopolitical re-orientation is a very tall order, though even partial restructuring might be enough to undercut the enemy's base of support. There would still be Islamicists, but their conception of *jihad* would be less combative and less directed against the US. But there are currently no signs whatever that the US intends any foreign policy restructuring to deal with the causes of terrorism.

So ideological globalisation remains uneven and somewhat unpredictable. It includes thin layers of a potentially common transnational culture, ideological fragmentation across parts of the South, and broader confrontations across major religious fault-lines in which a few 'combat fundamentalists' are exploiting the new weapons of the weak. Buddhists, Hindus (in India and Sri Lanka), plus some peasant revolutionaries all provide a few suicide bombers, the ultimate weapon of the weak. But only Islamic combat fundamentalists hurl themselves not only against their local secular enemies, but also against the North, and its 'Great Satan', the imperial United States. This particular struggle is now generating serious violence across large slices of the world. This could be stemmed by changed policies from the US. But the US seems locked into a policy of exemplary military repression which, far from achieving order, actually increases disorder.

### **Conclusion: Multiple Conflicts, Ethnic Black Holes, the War of the North and South**

Globalisation is occurring in multiple, uneven and contradictory forms. Its global penetration has both transnational and inter-national elements that have integrated the North and are extending its geographic scope. Few of the world's divisions, and virtually none in the North, generate armed combat. They generate only tensions, resolved by peaceful negotiation between converging nation-states. But order in the South is weakened by a more militarily-focused imperialism than existed in earlier globalising periods. This results in a fault-line between the North and many Southern countries, caused by capitalist ostracism, worsened by Northern neo-liberalism, and made more violent by US military imperialism and repression – sometimes stiffened by indirect political imperialism. It is challenged by new anti-imperialist ideologies and new 'weapons of the weak'. At the extreme, across the Middle East, this has generated a war between the North and the South.

In analysing all this, we must see American imperialism, and the new ideologies and weapons, as being as much a part of globalisation as the dollar, the Internet or McDonalds. Using the term loosely (in a non-religious sense), 'Jihad' comes from the North as well as from the South. Southern reactions adapt Northern militarism, Northern weapons and Northern ideologies to local needs. Some of these trends destabilise only at a local or regional level, generating zones of turmoil and black holes of desperate ethnic violence and instability, usually aimed against Southern "sub-imperialism", ostracised by the rest of the world. But one fault-line cuts a more systematically disintegrating swathe across continents. The resistance to American and Northern imperialism launched by combat fundamentalism will remain until its appeal is undercut by cutting away the sense of exploitation on which it thrives.

This perspective reveals four new challenges presented by globalisation.

(1) The complex relations between transnational and inter-national aspects of globalisation challenges us to produce (in the North and South alike) new forms of political economy, new blends of states and markets, new forms of collective regulation – especially in the arena of the global environment. Failure to do this would bring ultimate disaster, even possible extinction, though not primarily from violence and war.

(2) A new international economic regime is required to cope with the extraordinarily uneven prospects for economic development across the South. This must seek to overcome the tendencies of international capitalism to ostracise the poorer countries of the world, as well as to correct the excesses of neo-liberal imperialism. Failure to achieve this will widen global inequalities and intensify conflict in the South,

although most of this might not be aimed against the North.

(3) A new international political regime should assist the establishment of democracy in multi-ethnic environments. If necessary, this must be capable of exerting pressure on sub-imperial Southern states to stop encouraging terrorism by launching state terrorism against minorities. Failure to do this will only worsen some of the world's 'black holes', which again do not threaten the North.

(4) Political imperialism is not a feature of American dominance, and this is all to the good. Yet the new military imperialism of the US is both unacceptably violent and incapable of achieving a genuine world order. The US does itself no good by providing military support to so many weak and unpopular regimes. Attacking terrorism is ineffective without also attacking the causes of terrorism. Eventually perhaps a two-track American policy might merge with more multi-lateral forms of international intervention. Failure to generate this could produce very serious consequences for the US and for the North as a whole, once terrorists get their hands on effective biological or chemical weapons. Eventually, they will. This is the challenge of a war between the North and the South that mortally threatens the people of both.

Since we are a long way from responding to any of these challenges, we are not at present moving toward a singular and peaceful global society. Northern capitalism integrates unevenly, dominates and ostracises across the world. The power of the military hegemon, the United States, is devastating but too blunt an instrument to achieve a new world order. Political power remains primarily wielded by independent nation-states, which have varying degrees of legitimacy and stability. Diverse ideologies express all these power relations, some benign, others rather violent. Such complexity is not new to human societies. Globalisation merely changes its scale. Like all forms of social organisation globalisation brings both peace and war, order and chaos, and will do so for a good while longer yet.

## Bibliography

- Giovanni Arrighi & Beverly Silver *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Benjamin Barber "Jihad vs. McWorld", *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1992.
- Ian Clark *Globalization and Fragmentation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- David Dollar & Art Kraay "Trade, Growth, and Poverty", unpublished paper, World Bank Development Research Group, March 2001.
- Gosta Esping-Andersen *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990
- Thomas L. Friedman *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000.
- Ankie Hoogvelt *Globalisation and the Postcolonial World*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997.
- Evelyne Huber & John Stephens, *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Samuel Huntington *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Orders*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996
- Michael Mann *The Sources of Social Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2 vols, 1986 & 1993.
- "Has Globalization Ended the Rise and Rise of the Nation-State?" *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol 4, 1997, pp 472-96.
- "Explaining modern ethnic cleansing: the macro-level", in Montserrat Guibernau & John Hutchinson (eds), *Nationalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
- Michael Mann & Dylan Riley "Global Inequality", unpublished paper, UCLA Dept. Of Sociology.
- John Meyer "The changing cultural content of the nation-state: a world society perspective" in George Steinmetz (ed) *State/ Culture*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Ricardo Petrella "Globalization and internationalization: the dynamics of the emerging world order", in Robert Boyer & Daniel Drache, *States Against Markets. The Limits of Globalization*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Singer M. & Wildavsky A. 1993 *The Real World Order. Zones of Peace / Zones of Turmoil*. Chatham, N.J: Chatham House, 1993.