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New patterns of global security

in the twenty-first century

BARRY BUZAN

The twenty-first century has already begun, writes Barry Buzan. He analyses post-Cold War, post-East–West power relations and traces the consequences of changed relationships between the great powers of the North (or ‘centre’) for states in the South (or ‘periphery’). The centre is now more dominant, he argues, and the periphery more subordinate to it than at any time since decolonization began. In that sense, Western capitalism has triumphed over both communism and Third World ideology. Among the possibilities he outlines are the development of a civilizational ‘cold war’ between North and South in the coming decades as Islam is pushed to the front rank of opposition to Western hegemony; continued militarization in the South; and, as decolonization recedes into the distant past, an assault on post-colonial boundaries there, as we saw in the Gulf crisis. Societal concerns, he writes, are likely to assume a prominence on the security agenda that they have not held since before the establishment of the modern European states system.

This is a speculative article. It tries to sketch the main features of the new pattern of global security relations that is emerging after the great transformations of 1989–90 and the first post-Cold War crisis in the Gulf. In particular, it tries to identify the likely effects of changes in what used to be called East–West relations on the security conditions and agenda of what used to be called the Third World.¹ Because its starting-point is the nature and impact of changes in the North, it does not pretend to offer a comprehensive picture of the South.²

After setting out the analytical framework, the article will identify four key changes in relationships between the major powers in the North and suggest what their consequences might be for the majority of states in the South. It goes on to examine in more detail the impact of these consequences on the security

¹ I should like to thank Pierre Lemaitre, Morten Kelstrup, H. O. Nazareth, Barbara Allen Roberson and Ole Wæver for comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² In order to look ahead in a systematic fashion and to avoid being swamped by detail, some theoretical framework is necessary. The study is based on a combination of a broadly structural realist approach and a centre–periphery model of the international system. However, it does not demand prior knowledge of these frameworks. See Barry Buzan, Charles Jones and Richard Little, *The logic of anarchy: neorealism to structural realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming in 1992); Johan Galtung, ‘A structural theory of imperialism’, *Journal of Peace Research* 8:2 (1971), pp. 81–118.

agenda of the South in terms of five sectors of security—political, military, economic, societal and environmental.

Into the twenty-first century

One immediate problem is that so many of the terms in which a discussion of this kind would normally be cast have become obsolete. It is a commonplace to observe that the term 'Third World' has lost nearly all its content.³ In the absence of a Second World now that the communist system has largely disintegrated, how can there be a Third? What now unites countries as diverse as South Korea, India, Malawi and Bahrain that they should be referred to as a distinct 'world'? Geographical labels are not much more helpful. What does 'West' mean when it includes Japan and Australia, or 'North' when it includes Albania, Romania and the Soviet Union, or 'South' when it includes Korea and excludes Australia? Although South is a better term than Third World, the best available set of terms to capture the relationships of the 1990s comes from the centre-periphery approach elaborated in the dependency literature of the 1960s and 1970s.⁴ 'Centre' here implies a globally dominant core of capitalist economies; 'periphery' a set of industrially, financially and politically weaker states operating within a set of relationships largely constructed by the centre. The more robust and developed states in the periphery form a semi-periphery, whose aspiration is membership of the core. This approach captures the key elements of hierarchy that now shape international relations, without necessitating recourse to misleading geographical images.

The ending of the Cold War has created a remarkable fluidity and openness in the whole pattern and quality of international relations. Although the events of 1989 were centred in Europe, they represent changes of such magnitude that it is appropriate to talk of the end of an era for the international system as a whole. Specifically, 1989 marked the end of the postwar period. It seems likely that historians will also come to mark it as the end of the twentieth century. The two world wars, the Cold War that followed them and the process of decolonization that accompanied all three already begin to look like a self-contained historical period. In this sense, we are already in the twenty-first century. There are quite strong indications that the new century will be like the nineteenth in having, at least among the great powers, neither a major ideological divide nor a dominating power rivalry. My question is, what security consequences this pattern of relationships among the major powers in the centre will have for the states in the periphery.

The security lens used here is a broad one. Security is taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change which they see as hostile. The bottom line of security is survival, but it

³ John Ravenhill, 'The North-South balance of power', *International Affairs* 66:4 (1990), p. 745.

⁴ See special issue on 'Dependence and dependency in the global system', *International Organization* 32:1 (1978).

also reasonably includes a substantial range of concerns about the conditions of existence. Quite where this range of concerns ceases to merit the urgency of the 'security' label (which identifies threats as significant enough to warrant emergency action and exceptional measures, including the use of force) and becomes part of the everyday uncertainties of life is one of the difficulties of the concept.

Military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states' perceptions of each other's intentions. Political security concerns the organizational stability of states, systems of government, and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Economic security concerns access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the ability of societies to reproduce their traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom within acceptable conditions for evolution. Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend. These five sectors do not operate in isolation from each other. Each defines a focal point within the security problematique, and a way of ordering priorities, but all are woven together in a strong web of linkages.⁵

During the Cold War, international security was dominated by the highly militarized and highly polarized ideological confrontation between the superpowers. This confrontation divided the industrialized North into the First World (the West) and the Second World (the Soviet bloc). Because their rivalry was intense, the danger of war was real, and political/military concerns dominated the security agenda. This political/military emphasis was transmitted into the periphery by the use of arms transfers by both superpowers as a means of exploiting already existing hostilities within the Third World as a vehicle for pursuing their own rivalry. In the opening years of the twenty-first century there are already strong signs that the security agenda among the great powers will be much less dominated, perhaps not dominated at all, by political/military issues. The Second World has disintegrated, and as the armed confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union is wound down, economic, societal and environmental issues are pushing their way into the top ranks of the international security agenda.

One major question for the states in the periphery is how their own security agenda will be affected by the new patterns of relations among the major powers. Will they share the shift away from political/military priorities towards a more non-military security agenda, or will echoes of the term 'Third World' continue to demarcate a major divide, another *world* in which things are ordered (and disordered) in ways quite different from those of the advanced industrial countries?

⁵ For a full discussion of these themes, see Barry Buzan, *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1991); see also Ken Booth, ed, *New thinking about strategy and international security* (London: Harper-Collins, 1991).

There are of course some massive continuities in the international position of the ex-Third World (now periphery) that are largely unaffected by the changes in the top ranks of the great powers. The centre-periphery approach captures much of what remains constant from the past and is a useful framework within which to consider the impact of changes in the core on the security of the periphery. The identity 'Third World' signified an oppositional stance to the West and generated the distinctive ideologies of Non-Alignment and *tiers-mondisme*. But in the centre-periphery perspective, the aspirations of the periphery are more collaborationist than confrontational. It is better to be the lowest member of the centre than the highest of the periphery.

Changes in the centre

In order to understand the security consequences of being in the periphery during the first decade of the twenty-first century, one first needs some sense of the changes at the centre. At this early stage in the new era one can with some confidence suggest four defining features for the new pattern of great-power relations.

1. *The rise of a multipolar power structure in place of the Cold War's bipolar one*

The term 'superpower' has dominated the language of power politics for so many decades that one is left floundering for words to describe the new power structure that is emerging. The precipitate economic and political decline of the Soviet Union has clearly removed it from this category, despite its still formidable military strength. The decline of the United States has been much less severe, arguably leaving it as the last superpower. But the rise of Europe, particularly the consolidation of the European Community as an economic and political entity, largely removes (and in the case of the Soviet Union inverts) the spheres of influence that were one of the key elements in the claim to superpower status.⁶ It seems time to revive the term 'great power'. If one thinks how this term was used before 1945, Russia still qualifies. So do China and India, which might be seen as the contemporary equivalents of regional great powers such as Italy, Austria-Hungary or the Ottoman Empire before 1914. Despite their political oddities, Japan and the EC are strong candidates, albeit still more obviously in the economic than in the military and political spheres. The United States is undoubtedly the greatest of the great powers. The term superpower, however, seems no longer appropriate in a multipolar world with so many independent centres of power and so few spheres of influence.

If one moves away from the strict realist (and neo-realist) conception of power as aggregated capabilities (i.e. military, economic and political strength all together),⁷ and towards the disaggregated view of power taken by those

⁶ See Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, Pierre Lemaitre, Elzbieta Tromer and Ole Wæver, *The European security order recast: scenarios for the post-Cold War era* (London: Pinter, 1990).

⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of international politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 129–31.

who think more in terms of interdependence,⁸ then global multipolarity stands out even more clearly. The military inhibitions of Japan and the political looseness of Europe count for less in relation to their standing as major poles of strength and stability in the global political economy. Although not all six great powers are within the global core, multipolarity suggests a centre that is both less rigid and less sharply divided within itself than under bipolarity. A multipolar centre will be more complex and more fluid, and may well allow for the development of militarily hesitant great powers. If military threats are low, such powers can afford—as Japan now does and as the United States did before 1941—to rest their military security on their ability to mobilize massive civil economies.

A multi-centred core offers more competing points of contact for the periphery. At the same time, the shift from two superpowers to several great powers should mean both a reduction in the intensity of global political concerns and a reduction in the resources available for sustained intervention. This in turn points to the rise of regional politics. Because the great powers are spread across several regions and do not include a dominating ideological or power rivalry within their ranks, they will project their own conflicts into the periphery much less forcefully and systematically than under the zero-sum regime of the Cold War. Because regions are less constrained by the impact of their conflicts on the global scorecard of two rival superpowers, local rivalries and antagonisms will probably have more autonomy. Local great powers such as India, China and perhaps Brazil should also find their regional influence increased.

2. A much lower degree of ideological division and rivalry

Complementing the structural looseness of the new centre is a much reduced level of ideological conflict. The twentieth century might well go down in history as the era of wars between the great powers about industrial ideology. During this short century, wars unleashed ideological rivalries and ideological rivalries unleashed wars—both ‘hot’ and ‘cold’. The first round of war, starting in 1914, gave birth to fascist and communist state challengers to the liberal capitalist West. After some uncertainty of alignment, the second round saw the Western and communist powers combining in 1941 to eliminate fascism as a serious ideological player. The third round (of cold war) saw a long period in which the military paralysis of nuclear deterrence put the emphasis on competition in arms racing, technological innovation, economic growth and societal attractiveness. This competition ended peacefully in 1989 with the comprehensive collapse of the communist challenge in the face of a decisively superior Western performance.

The defeat of fascism and communism as alternative ideologies for advanced industrial society has been so definitive that it is hard to imagine either of them

⁸ Buzan, Jones and Little, *The logic of anarchy*, section one.

reviving their challenge. Liberal capitalism, with all its well-known faults, now commands a broad consensus as the most effective and desirable form of political economy available. The difficult formula of political pluralism plus market economics has many critics, but no serious rivals. This development means that the centre is less ideologically divided within itself than it has been since the first spread of industrialization. In conjunction with the shift to multipolarity, this further reduces political and military incentives for competitive intervention into the periphery.

3. *The global dominance of a security community among the leading capitalist powers*

As the alliance structures of the Cold War dissolve into irrelevance—the Soviet ones much faster than the Western—a looming void seems to be appearing at the heart of the international security system. The declining salience of military threats among the great powers makes it unlikely that this void will be filled by new alliances, especially if the European union is viewed as a single international actor (even though it is still well short of being a single sovereign state). Indeed, the main military structure of the new era requires the viewer to put on different lenses for it to come clearly into focus, for it is inverse in form to traditional alliance structures.

The dominant feature of the post-Cold War era is a *security community* among the major centres of capitalist power. This means a group of states that do not expect, or prepare for, the use of military force in their relations with each other.⁹ This is a different and in some ways more profound quality than the collective expectation and preparation to use force against someone else that is the essence of alliance relationships. During the Cold War this security community grew up within, and in its latter days it was masked by, or disguised as, the Western alliance system. The capitalist powers had good reason to form an alliance against the communist states. But equally important is that they developed independent and increasingly dominant reasons for eliminating the use of military force in their relations with each other. The fact that they were able to expunge military rivalry from their own relations was a major factor in their ability to see off the communist challenge without a ‘hot’ war. The communist powers were conspicuously unsuccessful in establishing a similar security community within their own bloc.

The existence of this capitalist security community—in effect, Europe, North America, Japan and Australia, standing back to back—gives the Western powers an immense advantage in the global political economy. Because they do not have to compete with each other militarily, they can meet other challengers more easily, whether singly or collectively. The relative ease with which the United States was able to construct a military (and financial) coalition to take

⁹ Karl Deutsch and S. A. Burrell, *Political community and the North Atlantic area* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

on Iraq shows both the potential of such a security structure and how it might work to meet other periphery challenges to the stability of the global political economy.

The example of the Second Gulf War suggests a model of concentric circles to complement and modify the raw centre-periphery idea. In the centre circle stood the United States, which was willing to lead only if followed and to fight only if given wide support and assistance. In the second circle were others prepared to fight—some members of the centre (principally Britain and France), and others of the periphery (principally Egypt and Saudi Arabia). In the third circle were those prepared to pay but not to fight, primarily Japan and Germany. In the fourth circle were those prepared to support but not to fight or pay. This group was large, and contained those prepared to vote and speak in favour of the action, some of whom (such as Denmark) also sent symbolic military forces. It also included the Soviet Union and China as well as a mixture of centre and periphery states. The fifth circle contained those states satisfied to be neutral, neither supporting nor opposing the venture, but prepared to accept UN Security Council resolutions. Within these five circles stood the great majority of the international community, and all the major powers. In the sixth circle were those prepared to oppose, mainly verbally and by voting. This contained Cuba, Jordan, Yemen, and a number of Arab states. In the seventh circle stood those prepared to resist—Iraq.

This model does not offer a hard image of the future. It is not a permanent coalition, nor is it likely to recur. But it does suggest the general nature of security relations in a centre-dominated world, the mechanisms available, and the ability of the centre to isolate aggressors who threaten the recognized political order and the workings of the global economy.

The capitalist security community that underpinned this coalition acts as a major moderator to the new multipolar power structure. One danger of multipolarity (at least in its pre-1945, pre-nuclear manifestations) was that a shifting balance of power, driven by a plethora of antagonisms and security dilemmas, would generate unstable patterns of alliance and periodic lapses into great-power wars. But a multipolar system in which the three strongest powers are also a strong security community is something quite new, and should defuse or perhaps even eliminate most of these old hazards. In the inelegant jargon of systems theory, one could describe the new structure of power relations as multipolar in the sense that several independent great powers are in play, but unipolarized in the sense that there is a single dominant coalition governing international relations. It is the single coalition that gives force to the centre-periphery model and makes the new situation unique.

4. The strengthening of international society

This last defining feature of the new centre is the least certain of the four, but it is a plausible product of the other three. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson defined international society as:

a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.¹⁰

The distinction between system and society is central. System is the more basic and prior idea, as it is inherent in the significant interaction among states. Society can be seen as a historical response to the existence of a system. As states recognize the permanence and importance of their interdependence, they begin to work out rules for avoiding unwanted conflicts and for facilitating desired exchanges. As Bull argues, international society is thus closely associated with the idea of international order, where order means 'an arrangement of social life such that it promotes certain goals or values.'¹¹

The foundation of modern international society is the mutual recognition by states of each other's claim to sovereignty. This establishes them as legal equals and provides the foundation for diplomatic relations. The top end of contemporary international society is the whole range of institutions and regimes with which groups of states coordinate their behaviour in pursuit of common goals. Some of these institutions and regimes are already nearly universal—the United Nations, the Law of the Sea regime, the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Others, such as the European Community, have been more restricted. But the EC, though only regional in scope, has now become so deeply institutionalized that many are beginning to see it more as a single actor than as a system of states. During the Cold War the Western states established a particularly rich international societal network of institutions and regimes to facilitate the relatively open economic and societal relations that they wished to cultivate. These included the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, the GATT and the Group of Seven. As a rule, the development of *global* institutions and regimes was obstructed by the Cold War, almost the only exception being superpower cooperation in the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. With the ending of the Cold War and of the systemic dominance of the West, it does not seem unreasonable to expect the extension of the Western networks towards more universal standing. Old Marxian arguments that the capitalists were kept united only by their common fear of communism seem to have been overridden by the global scale and deep interdependence of early twenty-first-century capitalism. The eagerness of the ex-Soviet-type systems to join the club is a strong pointer towards consolidation of Western regimes, as is the dramatic upgrading of the UN Security Council as a focus for global consensus-building and legitimation seen in the Gulf crisis. If this occurs, a stronger international society, largely reflecting Western norms and values, will be a powerful element in the security environment of the periphery.

¹⁰ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The expansion of international society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 1; see also Buzan, *People, states and fear*, ch. 4.

¹¹ Hedley Bull, *The anarchical society* (London: Macmillan, 1977), ch. 1.

These four developments at the centre will reshape the way in which the centre dominates the periphery. In general, they seem likely to diminish the standing and the influence of the periphery states.

Implications for the periphery

These massive changes in security relations within the centre will have both direct and indirect effects on security within the periphery. There will of course be many continuities, especially in the locally rooted dynamics of regional security, whose patterns of amity, enmity and rivalry do not depend on input from the centre.¹² But as suggested above, many aspects of relations between centre and periphery will change. It is useful to look at these changes in terms of the five sectors of security sketched above.

1. Political security

Perhaps the most obvious political impact of the end of the Cold War is the demise of both power bipolarity and ideological rivalry as central features of the centre's penetration into the periphery. One immediate consequence of this is to lower the value of periphery countries as either ideological spoils or strategic assets in great-power rivalry. During the Cold War, Third World alignments were important symbols of success and failure in the global competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. This fact gave Third World governments a useful lever on the divided centre, though it also exposed them to unwanted intervention in their own domestic instabilities. In the unfolding order of the twenty-first century there will be little or no ideological or strategic incentive for great powers to compete for Third World allegiance. This loss of leverage will be accompanied by the loss of Non-alignment as a useful political platform for the periphery. Non-alignment was a reaction to the Cold War and provided many Third World elites with a moral and political position from which to play in the game of world politics. But with the ending of the Cold War, there is no longer a divided centre to be Non-aligned against.

Further, many periphery states have found the legitimacy of their one-party systems undermined by the collapse of communism. So long as the communist states sustained their challenge to the West, they opened up a political space for authoritarian Third World governments. The existence of a Soviet superpower made centralized state control a legitimate form of government elsewhere, and provided a handy complementarity for those Third World states eager to take up anti-Western, post-colonial postures. With the conceding by the leading communist power of the virtues of pluralism and markets, this political space has narrowed sharply. Anti-Westernism now has no great-power supporter and no convincing alternative political model. It remains an open question whether pluralism will fare any better than authoritarianism in the unstable and in many

¹² See Buzan, *People, states and fear*, ch. 5.

ways unpromising political environment of many Third World states. Theory does not tell us much about the relative virtues of democratic versus command approaches to the early stages of state-building. Experience strongly suggests that state-building is a tricky, difficult, long-term and often violent business under any circumstances—especially so for poorly placed and poorly endowed latecomers under pressure to conform to norms that have already been reached naturally by more powerful states in the international system.

A further blow to the political position of many periphery states comes from the fact that the twentieth century was also the main era of decolonization. Decolonization was a high point in the epic and on-going struggle of the rest of the world to come to terms with the intrusion of superior Western power. A more difficult period is now in prospect in which the euphoria of independence has faded and the reality of continued inferiority has reasserted itself. As the twenty-first century unfolds, with the West in a dominant position, it will become for the periphery states the post-decolonization era. For most Afro-Asian countries decolonization now lies one or two generations in the past and is therefore beyond the personal experience of a large and rapidly growing proportion of the population. As decolonization recedes into a former era, becoming old rather than recent history, the distance of many periphery governments is increased from the event that not only defined their countries but also provided them with a convenient, and sometimes justified, excuse for the many failings in their political and economic performance. As decolonization becomes remote, many governments in the periphery will find themselves increasingly labouring under the weight of their often dismal performance record, without the support of the colonial rationalizations that might once have forgiven it. They will find it increasingly difficult to evade or parry the rising contempt of both foreigners and their own citizens. Only those few that have made it into the semi-periphery, such as Taiwan and South Korea, can escape this fate.

Particularly in Africa and the Middle East, periphery states may also find it difficult to sustain the legitimacy of the colonial boundaries that have so signally failed to define viable states. The Cold War ran in parallel with the development of a strong norm cultivated in the UN that global boundaries should remain very largely fixed in their postwar, post-colonial pattern. This norm has even been reinforced by the Organization of African Unity, a body whose membership comprises states whose colonial boundaries are among the most arbitrary in the international system. As James Mayall has noted, this attempt to freeze the political map is unprecedented, and 'at least so far as the territorial division of the world is concerned, seems unlikely to be successful'.¹³ Although there is no clear link between the Cold War and the attempt to fix boundaries, the ending of the Cold War is opening up boundary questions in a rather major way. The two Germanies have been unified—eliminating a state,

¹³ James Mayall, *Nationalism and international society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 56; and Jeffrey Herbst, 'Liberalization and the African state system', paper for SSRC conference on foreign policy consequences of liberalization, San Diego, CA, Mar. 1991.

reasserting a nationalist political principle, and dissolving the most potent boundary of the Cold War. Strong revisionist pressures exist within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (and especially, but not only, Yugoslavia) either to redraw boundaries or to redefine their significance. The consolidation of the EC can also be read as an exercise in changing the significance, though not the position, of boundaries.

These changes at the centre have little direct consequence for the periphery, but their symbolic consequences may be large. It is notable that Saddam Hussein's attempt to eliminate Kuwait and more broadly to unify the Arab world was an explicit assault on the post-colonial boundaries. Arab nationalism and Islamic communalism make a heady anti-Western political brew that could wash away territorial boundaries strongly associated with the divisions and humiliations of colonization. If the territorial jigsaw can be extensively reshaped in the First and Second Worlds, it will become harder to resist the pressures to try to find more sensible and congenial territorial arrangements in the ex-Third World. It is not yet clear whether it is the norm of fixed boundaries that is under assault or only the practice in specific locations. But it is clear that this norm is vulnerable to the counter-norm of national self-determination, and that some of the restraints on boundary change have been weakened by the ending of the Cold War.

A further possible impact of changes in the centre on the political security agenda of the periphery is the pushing of Islam to the front rank of the opposition to Western hegemony. The collapse of communism as the leading anti-Western ideology seems to propel Islam into this role by default, and many exponents of Islam will embrace the task with relish. The anti-Western credentials of Islam are well established and speak to a large and mobilized political constituency. In part this can be seen as a straight clash between secular and spiritual values, albeit underpinned by an older religious antagonism between Christendom and Islam.¹⁴ In part, however, it has to be seen as a kind of civilizational resistance to the hegemony of the West. Islam is centred in the only one of the four classical areas of power and civilization that has not managed to re-establish itself as a significant world actor since the retreat of the Western empires. Both Chinese and Hindu civilizations have consolidated large and quite powerful states which give them at least an acceptable position in international society. The Middle East—which is the oldest core of civilization and which has been a major centre of international power for five millennia—remains divided, fractious and weak.

Given this combined legacy of historical frustration and ideological antagonism, Islam could become the leading carrier of anti-Western sentiment in the periphery—though it could just as easily be kept impotent by the fierceness of its own numerous internal splits and rivalries. But since the West now dominates the centre, while Islam has a large constituency in Africa and Asia, this old divide may nevertheless define a major political rift between North and South in the coming decades. If it does, one result will be a security

¹⁴ See Edward Mortimer, 'Christianity and Islam', *International Affairs* 67:1 (1991), pp. 7–13.

problem for Europe and the Soviet Union/Russia, for both share a huge territorial boundary with Islam, and in the case of the Soviet Union this boundary is inside the country. The security issues raised may or may not be military ones, but they will certainly be societal—an aspect to be explored further below.

2. Military security

Developments in the centre can easily be read as pointing to a lowering of militarization in the periphery. A less ideologically divided and more multipolar centre will have less reason to compete politically to supply arms to the periphery. The ending of the Cold War reduces the strategic salience of many military bases in the periphery, and lowers incentives to use arms supply as a way of currying ideological favour with local governments. The outcomes of domestic and even regional political rivalries within the periphery should, other things being equal, be of less interest to the great powers than previously. In the absence of ideological disputes among themselves, the great powers will have fewer reasons to see periphery states as assets, and more reasons to see them as liabilities. The ending of the Cold War thus largely turns off the political mechanism that so effectively pumped arms into the Third World all through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In places where great-power intervention in regional conflicts was very heavy (as in south-east Asia) or where the ideological construction of the Cold War strongly underpinned a local conflict (as in Southern Africa) the ending of the Cold War points to an easing of local military confrontations and a significant mediatory role for the great powers.

But this prospect raises an important question about whether the West will use its new pre-eminence to neglect the Third World, or whether it will seek to subject it to stronger collective security and regional management regimes. At the time of writing, this question is an open one. The longer-term outcome of the Gulf crisis will powerfully affect which direction is taken. If the allied intervention is eventually seen to be a success at a reasonable cost, and does not give rise to long-term chaos in the region, a precedent will have been set for a more managerial and interventionist global collective security regime. Under such conditions the sanctity of existing boundaries would be reinforced, and periphery leaderships put on notice that while broad tolerance for internal nastiness would continue, efforts to change international boundaries by force would be firmly resisted. The United Nations Security Council would become a clearing house and legitimator for a global collective security regime.

But if the outcome is messy, costly, and judged a failure, then the West may well take a more isolationist view of the periphery, putting up the shutters and leaving it more or less to its own devices. Under these conditions, local rivalries and power balances would come into play without even the restraint imposed by the global interventionism of the Cold War. The local roots of many regional rivalries, especially in South Asia and the Middle East, are so deep that the ending of the Cold War in the centre will make little difference to them.

A lowering of great-power concern and engagement would by definition give more leverage to local powers to reshape the political environment of their regions.

This scenario of neglect cannot be pushed too far. Among other things, an abiding interest in oil will keep the West engaged in the Middle East. There must also be a concern that too detached an attitude towards the periphery might eventually, perhaps even quickly, generate military threats from these countries to the centre. Both these interests were at play in the response to Saddam Hussein. Whether the centre attempts comprehensive or selective intervention in the periphery, two specific military security issues arise either way—control of the arms trade, and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime has attracted very wide support despite its inherent inequality as a small club of nuclear haves and a large one of have-nots. Inasmuch as one of the key tensions within it was the failure of the superpowers to make much progress towards their own nuclear disarmament, the ending of the Cold War and the consequent massive reductions in strategic forces should point to a strengthening of the regime. The success or failure of this regime will have a big impact both on security within the periphery and on military relations between centre and periphery. Iraq's obvious nuclear ambitions underline the salience of the issue, but at this juncture the fate of the non-proliferation regime is unclear.

Several things favour a consolidation of the regime as the Non-Proliferation Treaty approaches its 1995 renewal conference. UN organizations generally are emerging from the Cold War twilight into sunnier times. The winding down of the nuclear arms race at the centre reduces, though by no means eliminates, the tension between haves and have-nots. In Latin America, the once worried-about nuclear rivalry between Brazil and Argentina is evolving steadily towards a regional inspection regime along the lines of Euratom. In South Africa, once a key threshold state, it seems highly unlikely that the white regime either needs the reassurance of nuclear weapons any longer, or wants to take the risk of having to hand control of them over to a black-led government. Civil nuclear power remains in the doldrums, which much reduces an independent pressure for the spread of militarily significant civil technology. Even in France, which has been the most vigorous promoter of civil nuclear power, technological and economic problems are mounting alarmingly.¹⁵ If the economic complementarity between civil and military nuclear power collapses, leaving the military sector unsupported by a civil one, the costs of maintaining large-scale military nuclear power will rise.

But there are other developments that put even the existing regime into jeopardy. In South Asia, both India and Pakistan are on the brink of going public as nuclear powers, and almost no one doubts that Israel is already a nuclear-weapons state. The fiction of a closed club of five nuclear-weapons states thus cannot be maintained, but neither is it obvious how the change to

¹⁵ *The Economist*, 2 Feb. 1991, pp. 73–4.

eight can be incorporated into the regime without seeming to reward non-compliance and open the floodgates to other claims. Even more serious in some ways is the problem of what to do about violators within the regime. Libya's leader makes calls for an Arab nuclear weapon which Saddam Hussein was doing his best to fulfil. It is hard to imagine that Iran would not 'eat grass', as Pakistan did, in order to match the nuclear capability of its main regional enemy should Saddam Hussein be able to re-embark on his previous course. While Iraq is temporarily down, Algeria has become a focus of speculation as the source for an Arab bomb.¹⁶ Meanwhile North Korea soldiers on with suspicious nuclear activities while continuing to evade its legal obligation to conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. These challenges from within raise serious questions about the long-term viability of the regime in the absence of some firmer mechanisms for enforcement, either through the Security Council or unilaterally in the style of both the Israeli and Anglo-American air attacks on Iraqi nuclear facilities.

On top of these particular problems sits a more general one arising from a dispute between non-nuclear-weapons and nuclear-weapons states over moves towards a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. At the 1990 Review Conference a serious split developed on this issue, with Mexico leading demands for a strong, fixed-term commitment by the nuclear-weapons states to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and the United States and Britain arguing the need for continued underground testing. This dispute was serious enough to wreck what would otherwise have been a productive and positive final document. If pushed too far, it could have serious consequences for the renewal of the NPT in 1995.

Greater control of the conventional arms trade between the centre and the periphery is another development that might be expected from the end of the Cold War, but the likelihood is that two powerful mechanisms will continue to support a substantial flow of military capability into the periphery. The first is the arms trade, driven by an ever-increasing number of suppliers, most eager and some desperate to sell their products. In the fierce commercial competition of the post-Cold War world, arms exports will remain one of the very few industrial areas of comparative advantage for the Soviet Union and China, as well as some smaller states such as Czechoslovakia. The implications of this can already be seen in China's willingness during the 1980s to sell almost any military technology (including nuclear-capable ballistic missiles) to almost any buyer. This logic also applies in lesser degree to Britain, France and the United States. These three struggle to compete with Japan and Germany in civil manufactures, but have an easier time in the military market, where old wartime hangovers greatly restrict Japanese and German participation. All five major arms producers face shrinking domestic demand as a result of the end of the Cold War, and so need exports to sustain their military industries. In addition, several industrializing countries including Brazil, India, South Korea, Israel and South Africa increasingly have the means and the will to compete in

¹⁶ *Sunday Times*, 28 Apr. 1991.

the arms trade. Competition among suppliers, combined with strong demand pull and the sheer diversity of sources of supply, make any systematic control of the arms trade unlikely.

The second mechanism arises from the unbreakable link between industrialization and the ability to make weapons. Industrialization is spreading inexorably across the planet, and all but the most extreme Greens welcome it as an essential ingredient in the development of human civilization. But the arms industry is not separate from the civil economy: think of how the United States transformed itself from being a largely civil economy to being the arsenal of democracy in just a few years during the 1940s. In the 1990s, many of the technologies for making weapons are now old. The knowledge and skills for making poison gas and machine guns were developed more than a century ago, and even nuclear technology dates back nearly half a century. As technologies age, they become easier to acquire even for lightly industrialized countries such as Iraq.

The overlap between civil and military technology is especially obvious in the case of the nuclear and chemical industries, but also applies to engineering, vehicles, aircraft and shipbuilding. In all these industries, there is fierce competition to export both products and manufacturing plant. Any country possessing a full civil nuclear power industry has virtually everything it needs to make a nuclear bomb. Any country that can make basic industrial chemicals can also make poison gas. Any that can make fertilizer can make high explosives. Whoever can make trucks, bulldozers or airliners can make armoured cars, tanks and bombers. The concern over Iraq, Libya, Israel, Pakistan, South Africa, Brazil and other states has as much to do with their industrialization as with their direct imports of arms, and there is no way of stopping the spread of industrial-military capability into the periphery. Any attempt to do so would put the goal of arms restraint into direct opposition with that of economic development.

The combined effect of the arms trade and industrialization means that military capability *will* spread by one mechanism or the other. Attempts to block the arms trade will intensify efforts at military industrialization, as they did in South Africa, so adding to the number of arms suppliers. The industrial genie, with its military progeny, is permanently out of the bottle. As a consequence, military security will remain an elusive objective posing difficult policy choices. The ending of the Cold War should result in some diminution of the flow of arms for political motives, but there is no reason to think that it will eliminate the problem of militarization in the periphery. Any regime with access to cash will still have access to supplies of modern weapons.

3. Economic security

If economic security is about access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power, then the massive political changes of the past few years may well make little difference

to the economic security problems of the periphery. The idea of economic security is riddled with contradictions and paradoxes.¹⁷ These are indicated in the cruel truth captured by the aphorism, 'The only thing worse than being exploited is not being exploited'. To the extent that it has any clear meaning in relation to periphery countries, economic security points to the persistent structural disadvantages of late development and a position in the lower ranks of wealth and industrialization. The consequences of such weakness range from inability to sustain the basic human needs of the population (as in Sudan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Liberia), through the disruption of fluctuating and uncertain earnings from exports of primary products (as in Zambia, Peru, Nigeria), to inability to resist the policy pressures of outside institutions in return for needed supplies of capital (as in Brazil, Argentina, Tanzania). There seems no reason to expect any fundamental change in the overall problem of the periphery in occupying a weak position in a global market whose prices, trade, finance and technical evolution are all controlled from the centre.

The periphery, in other words, will remain the periphery. Some argue that its position will continue to deteriorate because of declining commodity prices, greater divergence of interest among the developing countries, successful strategies by the centre to divide and rule, the acute vulnerability of the debt crisis, and the loss of comparative advantage from cheap labour to smart automation technology in the advanced industrial countries.¹⁸

The political loosening and diffusion of power within the centre may evolve into a series of regional economic spheres centred on Europe, Japan and North America. But it is not clear that being transferred from a global periphery into a regional one would make much difference either to the structural position or to the economic security of most periphery countries. It might also be argued that economic aid will dwindle as the Cold War political motives that fuelled it subside and as Western capital turns to the redevelopment of the ex-Soviet-type systems. Western attitudes already point towards a future in which the allocation of aid and investment is conditional more on the rectitude of economic policy than on fading notions of strategic value. Against this, however, stand two new motives for aid. One is environmental and the other societal. The periphery will increasingly be able to call on the self-interest of the centre in relation to the meeting of global environmental standards. They will also be able to threaten the centre with unwanted migration unless welfare standards are maintained and development prospects kept alive. Both these levers are discussed in more detail below, and together they may well suffice to maintain or even increase the flow of economic aid.

It is not impossible to imagine that in some parts of the periphery, notably those where both imported state structures and economic development have failed totally, there may evolve a kind of de facto institutional recolonization, though some more diplomatic term will need to be found to describe it. There are many potential candidates for this in Africa, and some in South and South-

¹⁷ Buzan, *People, states and fear*, ch. 6.

¹⁸ Ravenhill, 'The North-South balance of power', pp. 731-48.

East Asia, Central America and the Caribbean. Given the waning of post-decolonization sensitivities about independence, the harsh realities of economic and political failure and the strengthening global institutions of a Western-dominated international society, a subtle return to 'managed' status for the most hopeless periphery states may well occur. There are hints of this in the international schemes for Cambodia and in the influence of IMF and World Bank 'advisers' in many places. Bangladesh, for example, depends on the IMF and foreign aid for all its development budget and some of its current consumption.¹⁹ Even if they were successful, such efforts could at best bring the worst periphery states up to the point at which they could compete in the international economy.

4. Societal security

Societal security is likely to become a much more prominent issue between centre and periphery, and within both, than it has been during the Cold War era. Societal security is about the threats and vulnerabilities that affect patterns of communal identity and culture. The two issues most prominently on its agenda at the beginning of the twenty-first century in centre-periphery relations are migration²⁰ and the clash of rival civilizational identities.

Migration threatens communal identity and culture by directly altering the ethnic, cultural religious and linguistic composition of the population. Most societies have resulted from earlier human migrations and already represent a mixture. Many welcome, up to a point, the cultural diversity that further migration brings. But beyond some point, migration becomes a question of numbers. Too great a foreign influx will threaten the ability of the existing society to reproduce itself in the old way, which can easily create a political constituency for immigration control. Uncontrolled immigration eventually swamps the existing culture. This is one way of looking at the European migrations from the sixteenth century onwards into North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. It is what Estonians and Kazaks fear about Russians, Palestinians fear about Jews (and vice versa), Baluchs about Punjabis, Assamese about Bengalis, and so on.

For the past five centuries it has been mostly migrating Europeans that have posed threats (and not just societal ones) to other peoples. A residuum of this remains in the cultural impact of mass tourism.²¹ But at the beginning of the twenty-first century incentives are rising for more permanent mass population movements in the other direction, from periphery to centre. The advanced industrial cultures of Europe and North America have low birth rates and high, often rising standards of living. Immediately to their south lie dozens of periphery countries with high birth rates and low, often falling standards of

¹⁹ *The Economist*, 2 Mar. 1991, p. 58.

²⁰ Jonas Widgren, 'International migration and regional stability', *International Affairs* 66:4 (1990), pp. 749-66; François Heisbourg, 'Population movements in post-Cold War Europe', *Survival* 33:1 (1991), pp. 31-43.

²¹ For a graphic and penetrating account of this phenomenon see Pico Iyer, *Video night in Kathmandu... and other reports from the not-so-far East* (London: Black Swan, 1989).

living. Substantial immigrant communities from the South already exist in the North. Transportation is not a significant barrier. The economic incentives for large numbers of young people to move in search of work are high, and the markets of the centre have a demand for cheap labour. As the Vietnamese boat people demonstrated, even a substantial risk of death or an unpleasant reception are weak deterrents to determined economic migrants. High incentives to migrate are sustained by the fading of hopes that political independence would bring development and prosperity. In a few places these hopes have been fulfilled, but most face a bleak future in which they seem likely to fall ever further behind the still rapidly evolving political economies of the capitalist centre. Some even face falling behind the dismal standards of their own present.

An acute migration problem between societies can hardly avoid raising barriers and tensions between them. In defending itself against unwanted human influx, a country has not only to construct legal and physical barriers to entry, but also to emphasize its differentiation from the society whose members it seeks to exclude. Questions of status and race are impossible to avoid. The treatment of migrants as a kind of criminal class creates easy ground for antagonism between the societies on both sides.

The migration problem does not exist in isolation. It occurs alongside, and mingled in with, the clash of rival civilizational identities between the West and the societies of the periphery. Here the threat travels mostly in the opposite direction, reflecting the older order of Western dominance. It is much more from the centre to the periphery than the other way around, though the existence of immigrant communities within the centre does mean that there is some real threat from periphery to centre, and a perceived threat of 'fifth column' terrorism. The clash between civilizational identities is most conspicuous between the West and Islam. As noted above, this is partly to do with secular versus religious values, partly to do with the historical rivalry between Christendom and Islam, partly to do with jealousy of Western power, partly to do with resentments over Western domination of the post-colonial political structuring of the Middle East, and partly to do with the bitterness and humiliation of the invidious comparison between the accomplishments of Islamic and Western civilization during the last two centuries.

The last point is true as between the West and all periphery societies.²² By its conspicuous economic and technological success, the West makes all others look bad (i.e. underdeveloped, or backward or poor, or disorganized or repressive, or uncivilized or primitive) and so erodes their status and legitimacy. The tremendous energy, wealth, inventiveness and organizational dynamism of the West, not to mention its crass materialism and hollow consumer culture, cannot help but penetrate deeply into weaker societies worldwide. As it does so, it both inserts alien styles, concepts, ideas and aspirations—'Coca-Colaization'—and corrupts or brings into question the validity and legitimacy of local customs and identities. In the case of Islam, this threat is compounded by

²² Theodore von Laue, *The world revolution of Westernization: the twentieth century in global perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

geographical adjacency and historical antagonism and also the overtly political role that Islam plays in the lives of its followers. Rivalry with the West is made more potent by the fact that Islam is still itself a vigorous and expanding collective identity.

In combination, migration threats and the clash of cultures make it rather easy to draw a scenario for a kind of societal cold war between the centre and at least part of the periphery, and specifically between the West and Islam, in which Europe would be in the front line. There is no certainty that this scenario will unfold, and much will depend on the performance of (and support given to) moderate governments within the Islamic world, but most of the elements necessary for it are already in place. Whatever the final outcome of the Second Gulf War, it will certainly leave behind it a vast reservoir of heated and easily mobilized anti-Western feeling among the Arab and Islamic masses. The resulting tension cannot avoid feeding into the migration issue. It will, *inter alia*, increase friction between the existing Islamic immigrant communities and their host societies and help to legitimize a tougher attitude towards immigration controls, which might otherwise be morally troubling in liberal societies.

This civilizational Cold War could feed into the massive restructuring of relations going on within the centre consequent upon the ending of the East–West Cold War. It could well help European political integration, by providing a common foreign policy issue on which a strong consensus would be easy to find. To the extent that it was seen as a security issue, it would confront the European Community with a challenge which both fell within its mandate and which it could handle without much help from the United States. If there was a general heating up of the boundary between ‘Christendom’ and Islam, it would strengthen the Europeanizing tendencies within the Soviet Union and weaken those favouring a more isolationist, Slavophile, position. A societal Cold War with Islam would serve to strengthen the European identity all round at a crucial time for the process of European union. For all these reasons and others, there may well be a substantial constituency in the West prepared not only to support a societal Cold War with Islam, but to adopt policies that encourage it.

Such a development would put Turkey into an extremely central position. Turkey is anyway the natural insulator between Europe and the Middle East, not only geographically but also culturally (non-Arab) and ideologically (Islamic, but with a strong secular state tradition). Its position on the front line of a Europe–Islam Cold War would not be without hazards, but it would fit the country’s recent traditions and give it a greatly strengthened hand to play in negotiating its relationship with the European Community. A similar kind of buffer role is available for Mexico, though between North and Latin America the issue is more purely a migration one, and much less a civilizational Cold War, than is the case between Europe and the Middle East.

I have drawn particular attention to societal security problems between centre and periphery, but it is important to note that such issues will also be very much on security agendas within the centre and within the periphery. Both the

European integration project and the breaking down of the Iron Curtain between Eastern and Western Europe will unleash considerable migration inside the continent. Within the periphery, there are already mass migrations in the Middle East and South Asia in search of work and away from conflict (both illustrated by Iraq). In Bangladesh, the Horn of Africa, and South-East Asia, mass movements are easily stimulated by famine, war and political repression. The clash of civilizational identities is just as strong on the other side of Islam, where it abuts Hindu civilization, as between Islam and the West.

5. *Environmental security*

Much of the environmental agenda falls outside the realm of security and is more appropriately seen as an economic question about how the pollution costs of industrial activity are to be counted, controlled and paid for.²³ Where environmental issues threaten to overwhelm the conditions of human existence on a large scale, as in the case of countries vulnerable to extensive inundation from modest rises in sea level, then casting such issues in security terms is appropriate. The recent flooding of Bangladesh gives a small foretaste of what could well be quite literally a rising tide of disaster. There may also be some advantage in treating as international security issues activities that may cause substantial changes in the workings of the planetary atmosphere. These might include the mass production of greenhouse gases or chemicals such as CFCs that erode the protective ozone layer, or exploitative or polluting activities that threaten to diminish the supply of oxygen to the atmosphere by killing off forests and plankton.

It seems safe to predict that this whole agenda is going to rise in importance as the density of human occupation of the planet increases. It is much harder to assess how quickly this will happen and how intense the pressures will become. If serious climatic changes begin to occur soon, this could easily become a transcendent issue. Quite a few periphery countries are vulnerable to virtual obliteration by sustained drought and desertification or by rising sea levels. Their ability to cope with such changes is small, and the mass migrations that would be triggered would quickly feed into the societal issues discussed above. Even less drastic changes that did not threaten obliteration might put such stress on weak state structures as to cause political breakdown, adding to the pressures on boundary maintenance.

Barring such dramatic developments, environmental issues look set to become a regular feature of centre-periphery dialogues and tensions. The holistic quality of the planetary environment will provide the centre with reasons for wanting to intervene in the periphery in the name of environmental security. The periphery will gain some political leverage out of this interest, and will continue to blame the industrialized centre for having created the problem in the first place. This exchange may well stay within the political framework

²³ On the risks in the idea of environmental security, see Daniel Deudney, 'The case against linking environmental degradation and national security', *Millennium* 19:3 (1990), pp. 461-76.

of interdependence, below the threshold of security. But it could also become entangled with the broader debate about development in such a way as to trigger serious conflicts of interest. As others have pointed out, environmental issues, particularly control over water supplies, look likely to generate quite a bit of local conflict within the periphery.²⁴

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It is apparent from this brief survey that the security agenda of the periphery countries in the 1990s and beyond will be significantly different from the one we have been used to since 1945. The replacement of a polarized centre by one dominated by the capitalist security community seems almost certain to weaken the position of the periphery in relation to the centre. In this sense, the West has triumphed over both communism and *tiers-mondisme*.

The changes in the centre will have a substantial impact on the periphery. They will redefine not only centre-periphery relations—in both directions—but also relations within the periphery. Some aspects of the security agenda will remain familiar, albeit with some new twists. This is most obviously likely in the economic sector, though there will also be many continuities in the military one. Environmental issues will certainly increase in importance, but whether they will become a major part of the security agenda is more questionable. The biggest changes are most likely to come in the political and societal sectors. Extensive shifts both in prevailing political norms and in the nature of international political interests seem entirely plausible. It does not seem too much to say that almost the entire range of centre-periphery political relations, from boundaries and bases to aid and alignment, is open for redefinition. Societal concerns also seem destined to rise to a position of prominence on the security agenda that they have not held since before the establishment of the modern European state system.

The change in terminology from 'Third World' to 'periphery' may look like a promotion from third rank to second, but this is only a superficial view. The deeper reality is that the centre is now more dominant, and the periphery more subordinate, than at any time since decolonization began.

²⁴ Ravenhill, 'The North-South balance of power', p. 748; *The Economist*, 16 Dec. 1989, p. 70.