

The Concept of Order in World Politics

A study of order in world politics must begin with the question: what is it? I shall indicate what I mean by order in social life generally, and proceed to consider what it means in the system of states and in world politics in general.

Order in Social Life

To say of a number of things that together they display order is, in the simplest and most general sense of the term, to say that they are related to one another according to some pattern, that their relationship is not purely haphazard but contains some discernible principle. Thus a row of books on the shelf displays order whereas a heap of books on the floor does not.

But when we speak of order as opposed to disorder in social life we have in mind not any pattern or methodical arrangement among social phenomena, but a pattern of a particular sort. For a pattern may be evident in the behaviour of men or groups in violent conflict with one another, yet this is a situation we should characterise as disorderly. Sovereign states in circumstances of war and crisis may behave in regular and methodical ways; individual men living in the conditions of fear and insecurity, described in Hobbes's account of the state of nature, may conduct themselves in conformity with some recurrent pattern, indeed Hobbes himself says that they do; but these are examples not of order in social life but of disorder.

The order which men look for in social life is not any pattern or regularity in the relations of human individuals or groups, but a pattern that leads to a particular result, an arrangement of social

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life such that it promotes certain goals or values. In this purposive or functional sense, a number of books display order when they are not merely placed in a row, but are arranged according to their author or subject so as to serve the purpose or fulfil the function of selection. It was this purposive conception of order that Augustine had in mind when he defined it as 'a good disposition of discrepant parts, each in its fittest place'.¹ This is a definition which, as we shall see, involves a number of problems, but because it presents order not as any pattern but as a particular kind of pattern, and, because it places the emphasis on ends or values, it provides a helpful starting point.

Augustine's definition at once raises the question: 'good' or 'fittest' for what? Order in this purposive sense is necessarily a relative concept: an arrangement (say, of books) that is orderly in relation to one purpose (finding a book by a particular author) may be disorderly in relation to another purpose (finding a book on a particular subject). It is for this reason that disagreement obtains as to whether or not a particular set of social arrangements embodies order, and that social and political systems that are in conflict with one another may both embody order. The social and political systems of the *ancien régime* and of Revolutionary France, or today of the Western world and the socialist countries, each embodies a 'disposition of discrepant parts' that is 'good' or 'fittest' for some different set of values or ends.

But while order in this Augustinian sense exists only in relation to given goals, certain of these goals stand out as elementary or primary, inasmuch as their fulfilment in some measure is a condition not merely of this or that sort of social life, but of social life as such. Whatever other goals they pursue, all societies recognise these goals and embody arrangements that promote them. Three such goals in particular may be mentioned. First, all societies seek to ensure that life will be in some measure secure against violence resulting in death or bodily harm. Second, all societies seek to ensure that promises, once made, will be kept, or that agreements, once undertaken, will be carried out. Third, all societies pursue the goal of ensuring that the possession of things will remain stable to some degree, and will not be subject to challenges that are constant and without limit.² By order in social life I mean a pattern of human activity that sustains elementary, primary or universal goals of social life such as these.

Because this definition is central to all of what follows in the present study, it is worth lingering over it to add some points of clarification. It is not suggested that these three basic values of all social life – sometimes called those of life, truth and property – represent an exhaustive list of the goals common to all societies, or that the term ‘order’ can be given content only in relation to them. But they are certainly to be included in any list of these basic goals, and they illustrate the idea of a basic goal.

All three goals may be said to be *elementary*: a constellation of persons or groups among whom there existed no expectation of security against violence, of the honouring of agreements or of stability of possession we should hardly call a society at all. The goals are also primary in the sense that any other goals a society may set for itself presuppose the realisation of these goals in some degree. Unless men enjoy some measure of security against the threat of death or injury at the hands of others, they are not able to devote energy or attention enough to other objects to be able to accomplish them. Unless there can be a general presumption that agreements entered into will be carried out, it is not conceivable that agreements can be entered into to facilitate human co-operation in any field. Unless the possession of objects by persons or groups can be to some degree stabilised or settled (it is not material here whether this is through private or communal ownership, or with what kind of mixture of the one and the other) then given that human beings are what they are, and given that the things human beings want to possess have only limited abundance, it is difficult to imagine stable social relations of any sort. Of course, as Hume and others have argued, the need which societies feel to stabilise possession is conditional. If men in their wants of material things were wholly egotistical, the stabilisation of possession by rules of property or ownership would be impossible – just as if men were wholly altruistic in relation to these wants, such stabilisation would be unnecessary. Equally, if there existed total scarcity of the things men wish to possess, rules of property would be impossible to make effective, and if there were total abundance of these things, rules of property would be unnecessary. But given the facts of limited human altruism and limited abundance of the things men want, the attempt to stabilise possession of these things is a primary goal of all social life. The three goals are also *universal* in the sense that all actual societies appear to take account of them.

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A further point of clarification is that in defining order in social life as a pattern of human activities, a 'disposition of discrepant parts' that sustains elementary or primary ends such as these, I am not seeking to argue that these goals should have priority over others; nor, indeed, at this point in the argument, am I seeking to endorse them as valuable or desirable at all. I do contend that unless these goals are achieved in some measure, we cannot speak of the existence of a society or of social life; that the achievement of other goals presupposes the achievement of these basic goals in some degree; and that in fact all societies seek to promote them. This does not mean, however, that when a conflict arises between these goals and others, societies either do or should always give priority to them. In fact, as in periods of war or revolution, men frequently and sometimes, it may be argued, rightly, resort to violence, dishonour agreements and violate rights of property in the pursuit of other values. As was argued in the Introduction, order is not the only value in relation to which human conduct can be shaped, nor should we assume that it is prior to other values.

It is not argued here that the elementary or primary ends of social life do or should take priority over others, nor is it being contended that these ends are mandatory at all. In particular, I do not wish to embrace the position of exponents of the doctrine of natural law that these and other elementary, primary or universal goals of social life are mandatory for all men, or that the binding force of rules of conduct upholding them is self-evident to all men. It is true that the position I have adopted here can be said to have been part of the 'empirical equivalent' of the natural-law theory, which sought to deal with the elementary or primary conditions of social existence in the idiom of a different era. Indeed, the natural-law tradition remains one of the richest sources of theoretical insight into the matters dealt with in the present study. But it is not part of my intention to revive the central tenets of natural-law thinking itself.

A point of clarification must be added about the relationship of order in social life, as I have defined it, to rules, or general imperative principles of conduct. Social order is sometimes defined in terms of obedience to rules of conduct; sometimes it is defined, more specifically, as obedience to rules of law. In fact, order in social life is very closely connected with the conformity of human behaviour to rules of conduct, if not necessarily to rules of law. In

most societies, what helps to create patterns of conduct that conform to the elementary goals of security against violence, the honouring of agreements and the stability of possession, is the existence of rules prohibiting murder and assault, rules prohibiting breach of contract, and rules of property. However, I have sought deliberately to find a definition of order in social life that excludes the conception of rules. This is because, for reasons discussed in Chapter 3, I believe order in social life can exist in principle without rules, and that it is best to treat rules as a widespread, and nearly ubiquitous, means of creating order in human society, rather than as part of the definition of order itself.

I must also set out the relationship between order in social life, as it is defined here, and social laws of a different kind: not rules, or general imperative principles of conduct, but scientific laws, or general propositions asserting a causal connection between one class of social events and another. It is sometimes said that order in social life is to do with the conformity of conduct in society to such scientific laws – or, more specifically, that conduct which is orderly is conduct which is predictable, that is, which conforms to laws that can be applied to future cases as well as to past and present ones. Once again, there does in fact exist a close connection between order in the sense in which it is defined here, and the conformity of conduct to scientific laws that afford a basis for predicting future behaviour. One of the consequences of a situation in which elementary or primary goals of social coexistence are consistently upheld is that regular patterns of behaviour become known, are formulated as general laws, and afford a basis for expectations about future behaviour. Moreover, if we ask the question why men attach value to order (and it is my contention that almost universally they do, this being as much part of the perspective of a revolutionary as of a conservative), at least part of the answer is that they value the greater predictability of human behaviour that comes as the consequence of conformity to the elementary or primary goals of coexistence. But to define order in social life in terms of scientific law and predictability is to confuse a possible consequence of social order, and reason for treating it as valuable, with the thing itself. Behaviour which is disorderly, in the sense in which the term is used here, may also conform to scientific law, and afford a basis for expectations about the future: the whole theoretical literature of the recurrent features of wars, civil

conflicts and revolutions attests to the possibility of finding conformity to scientific law in social conduct that is disorderly.

order out of disorder

International Order

By international order I mean a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society. Before spelling out in more detail what is involved in the concept of international order I shall first set the stage by indicating what I mean by states, by a system of states, and by a society of states, or international society.

The starting point of international relations is the existence of *states*, or independent political communities each of which possesses a government and asserts *sovereignty* in relation to a particular portion of the earth's surface and a particular segment of the human population. On the one hand, states assert, in relation to this territory and population, what may be called *internal sovereignty*, which means supremacy over all other authorities within that territory and population. On the other hand, they assert what may be called *external sovereignty*, by which is meant not supremacy but independence of outside authorities. The sovereignty of states, both internal and external, may be said to exist both at a normative level and at a factual level. On the one hand, states assert the right to supremacy over authorities within their territory and population and independence of authorities outside it; but, on the other hand, they also actually exercise, in varying degrees, such supremacy and independence in practice. An independent political community which merely claims a right to sovereignty (or is judged by others to have such a right), but cannot assert this right in practice, is not a state properly so-called.

The independent political communities that are states in this sense include city-states, such as those of ancient Greece or renaissance Italy, as well as modern nation-states. They include states in which government is based on dynastic principles of legitimacy, such as predominated in modern Europe up to the time of the French Revolution, as well as states in which government is based upon popular or national principles of legitimacy, such as have predominated Europe since that time. They include multinational states, such as the European empires of

the nineteenth century, as well as states of a single nationality. They include states whose territory is scattered in parts, such as the oceanic imperial states of Western Europe, as well as states whose territory is a single geographical entity.

There are, however, a great variety of independent political communities that have existed in history and yet are not states in this sense. The Germanic peoples of the Dark Ages, for example, were independent political communities, but while their rulers asserted supremacy over a population, they did not assert it over a distinct territory. The kingdoms and principalities of Western Christendom in the Middle Ages were not states: they did not possess internal sovereignty because they were not supreme over authorities within their territory and population; and at the same time they did not possess external sovereignty since they were not independent of the Pope or, in some cases, the Holy Roman Emperor. In parts of Africa, Australia and Oceania, before the European intrusion, there were independent political communities held together by ties of lineage or kinship, in which there was no such institution as government. Entities such as these fall outside the purview of 'international relations', if by this we mean (as we generally do) not the relations of nations but the relations of states in the strict sense. The relations of these independent political communities might be encompassed in a wider theory of the relations of *powers*, in which the relations of states would figure as a special case, but lie outside the domain of 'international relations' in the strict sense.³

[A system of states (or international system) is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions, to cause them to behave – at least in some measure – as parts of a whole.] Two or more states can of course exist without forming an international system in this sense: for example, the independent political communities that existed in the Americas before the voyage of Columbus did not form an international system with those that existed in Europe; the independent political communities that existed in China during the Period of Warring States (circa 481–221 B.C.) did not form an international system with those that existed in Greece and the Mediterranean at the same time.

But where states are in regular contact with one another, and where in addition there is interaction between them sufficient to

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make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other, then we may speak of their forming a system. The interactions among states may be direct – as when two states are neighbours, or competitors for the same object, or partners in the same enterprise. Or their interactions maybe indirect – the consequence of the dealings each of them has with a third party, or merely of the impact each of them makes on the system as a whole. Nepal and Bolivia are neither neighbours, nor competitors, nor partners in a common enterprise (except, perhaps, as members of the United Nations). But they affect each other through the chain of links among states in which both participate. The interactions among states by which an international system is defined may take the form of co-operation, but also of conflict, or even of neutrality or indifference with regard to one another's objectives. The interactions may be present over a whole range of activities – political, strategic, economic, social – as they are today, or only in one or two; it may be enough, as Raymond Aron's definition of an international system implies, that the independent political communities in question 'maintain regular relations with each other' and 'are all capable of being implicated in a generalised war'.⁴

Martin Wight, in classifying different kinds of states system, has distinguished what he calls an 'international states system' from a suzerain-state system'.⁵ The former is a system composed of states that are sovereign, in the sense in which the term has been defined here. The latter is a system in which one state asserts and maintains paramountcy or supremacy over the rest. The relations of the Roman Empire to its barbarian neighbours illustrate the concept of a suzerain-state system; so do the relations of Byzantium to its lesser neighbours, of the Abbasid Caliphate to surrounding lesser powers, or of Imperial China to its tributary states. In some of what Martin Wight would call 'international states systems', it has been assumed that at any one time there is bound to be a dominant or hegemonic power: the classical Greek city-state system, for example, and the later system of Hellenistic kingdoms, witnessed a perpetual contest as to which state was to be *hegemon*. What distinguishes a 'suzerain-state system' such as China-and-its-vassals from an 'international states system', in which one or another state at any one time exerts hegemonic power, is that in the former one power exerts a hegemony that is permanent and for practical

purposes unchallengeable, whereas in the latter, hegemony passes from one power to another and is constantly subject to dispute.

In terms of the approach being developed here, only what Wight calls an 'international states system' is a states system at all. Among the independent political entities constituting a 'suzerain-state system' such as China-and-its-vassals, only one state – the suzerain state itself – possesses sovereignty, and therefore one of the basic conditions of the existence of a states system, that there should be two or more sovereign states, is absent.

A second distinction made by Martin Wight is between 'primary states systems' and 'secondary states systems'.⁶ The former are composed of states, but the latter are composed of systems of states – often of suzerain-state systems. He gives as examples of a 'secondary states system' the relationship between Eastern Christendom, Western Christendom and the Abbasid Caliphate in the Middle Ages and the relationship of Egypt, the Hittites and Babylon in the Armana Age. This is a distinction which may prove a helpful one if a general historical analysis of the political structure of the world as a whole – today almost completely uncharted territory – is ever attempted. The distinction does not help us very much if, as here, we confine our attention to what are strictly systems of states. If the systems of which 'secondary states systems' are composed, each contains a multiplicity of states, then if there is contact and interaction sufficient between these states and other states, the states as a whole form a 'primary states system'. If, on the other hand, the systems concerned do *not* contain states – as Western Christendom did not, for example – then the interactions between such systems are of interest to a theory of world politics, but are not systems of states at all. In terms of our present approach we need take account only of 'primary states systems'.

The term 'international system' has been a fashionable one among recent students of international relations, principally as a consequence of the writings of Morton A. Kaplan.⁷ Kaplan's use of the term is not unlike that employed here, but what distinguishes Kaplan's work is the attempt to use the concept of a system to explain and predict international behaviour, especially by treating international systems as a particular kind of 'system of action'.⁸ Here nothing of this sort is intended, and the term is employed simply to identify a particular kind of international constellation.

It should be recognised, however, that the term ‘system of states’ had a long history, and embodied some rather different meanings, before it came to have its present one. It appears to have begun with Pufendorf, whose tract *De systematibus civitatum* was published in 1675.⁹ Pufendorf, however, was referring not to the European states system as a whole, but to particular groups of states within that system, which were sovereign yet at the same time connected so as to form one body – like the German states after the peace of Westphalia. While the term ‘system’ was applied to European states as a whole by eighteenth-century writers such as Rousseau and Nettelbladt, it was writers of the Napoleonic period, such as Gentz, Ancillon and Heeren, who were chiefly responsible for giving the term currency. At a time when the growth of French power threatened to destroy the states system and transform it into a universal empire, these writers sought to draw attention to the existence of the system, and also to show why it was worth preserving; they were not merely the analysts of the states system, but were also its apologists or protagonists. Of their works, the most important was A. H. L. Heeren’s *Handbuch der Geschichte des Europaischen Staatsystems und seiner Kolonien*, first published in 1809. The term ‘states system’ first appeared in English in the translation of this work that was published in 1834, the translator noting that it was ‘not strictly English’.¹⁰

For Heeren the states system was not simply a constellation of states having a certain degree of contact and interaction, as it is defined here. It involved much more than simply the causal connection of certain sets of variables to each other, which Kaplan takes to define a ‘system of action’.¹¹ A states system for Heeren was ‘the union of several contiguous states, resembling each other in their manners, religion and degree of social improvement, and cemented together by a reciprocity of interests’.¹² He saw a states system, in other words, as involving common interests and common values and as resting upon a common culture or civilisation. Moreover, Heeren had a sense of the fragility of the states system, the freedom of its members to act so as to maintain the system or allow it to be destroyed, as the Greek city-state system had been destroyed by Macedon, and as later the system of Hellenistic states that succeeded Alexander’s empire had in turn been destroyed by Rome. Indeed, Heeren in the ‘Preface’ to his first and second editions thought that Napoleon had in fact destroyed

the European states system, and that he was writing its epitaph. Such a conception of the states system differs basically from what is called an international system in the present study, and is closer to what I call here an international society.

A *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions. If states today form an international society (to what extent they do is the subject of the next chapter), this is because, recognising certain common interests and perhaps some common values, they regard themselves as bound by certain rules in their dealings with one another, such as that they should respect one another's claims to independence, that they should honour agreements into which they enter, and that they should be subject to certain limitations in exercising force against one another. At the same time they co-operate in the working of institutions such as the forms of procedures of international law, the machinery of diplomacy and general international organisation, and the customs and conventions of war.

An international society in this sense presupposes an international system, but an international system may exist that is not an international society. Two or more states, in other words, may be in contact with each other and interact in such a way as to be necessary factors in each other's calculations without their being conscious of common interests or values, conceiving themselves to be bound by a common set of rules, or co-operating in the working of common institutions. Turkey, China, Japan, Korea and Siam, for example, were part of the European-dominated international system before they were part of the European-dominated international society. That is to say, they were in contact with European powers, and interacted significantly with them in war and commerce, before they and the European powers came to recognise common interests or values, to regard each other as subject to the same set of rules and as co-operating in the working of common institutions. Turkey formed part of the European-dominated international system from the time of its emergence in the sixteenth century, taking part in wars and alliances as a member of the system. Yet in the first three centuries of this relationship it was

specifically denied on both sides that the European powers and Turkey possessed any common interests or values; it was held on both sides that agreements entered into with each other were not binding, and there were no common institutions, such as united the European powers, in whose working they co-operated. Turkey was not accepted by the European states as a member of international society until the Treaty of Paris of 1856, terminating the Crimean War, and perhaps did not achieve full equality of rights within international society until the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

In the same way Persia and Carthage formed part of a single international system with the classical Greek city-states, but were not part of the Greek international society. That is to say, Persia (and to a lesser extent Carthage) interacted with the Greek city-states, and was always an essential factor in the strategic equation, either as an outside threat against which the Greek city-states were ready to combine, or as a power able to intervene in the conflicts among them. But Persia was perceived by the Greeks as a barbarian power; it did not share the common values of the Greeks, expressed in the Greek language, the pan-Hellenic games or consultation of the Delphic oracle; it was not subject to the rules which required Greek city-states to limit their conflicts with one another; and it was not a participant in the *amphictyonae* in which institutional co-operation among the Greek states took place, or in the diplomatic institution of *proxenoi*.

When, as in the case of encounters between European and non-European states from the sixteenth century until the late nineteenth century, states are participants in a single international system, but not members of a single international society, there may be communication, exchanges of envoys or messengers and agreements – not only about trade but also about war, peace and alliances. But these forms of interaction do not in themselves demonstrate that there is an international society. Communication may take place, envoys may be exchanged and agreements entered into without there being a sense of common interests or values that gives such exchange substance and a prospect of permanence, without any sense that there are rules which lay down how the interaction should proceed, and without the attempt of the parties concerned to co-operate in institutions in whose survival they have a stake. When Cortes and Pizarro parleyed with the Aztec and Inca kings, when George III sent Lord Macartney to Peking, or when

Queen Victoria's representatives entered into agreements with the Maori chieftains, the Sultan of Sokoto or the Kabaka of Buganda, this was outside the framework of any shared conception of an international society of which the parties on both sides were members with like rights and duties.

Whether or not these distinguishing features of an international society are present in an international system, it is not always easy to determine: as between an international system that is clearly also an international society, and a system that is clearly not a society, there lie cases where a sense of common interests is tentative and inchoate; where the common rules perceived are vague and ill-formed, and there is doubt as to whether they are worthy of the name of rules; or where common institutions – relating to diplomatic machinery or to limitations in war – are implicit or embryonic. If we ask of modern international society the questions 'when did it begin?' or 'what were its geographical limits?' we are at once involved in difficult problems of the tracing of boundaries.

But certain international systems have quite clearly been international societies also. The chief examples are the classical Greek city-state system; the international system formed by the Hellenistic kingdoms in the period between the disintegration of Alexander's empire and the Roman conquest; the international system of China during the Period of Warring States; the states system of ancient India; and the modern states system, which arose in Europe and is now world-wide.

A common feature of these historical international societies is that they were all founded upon a common culture or civilisation, or at least on some of the elements of such a civilisation: a common language, a common epistemology and understanding of the universe, a common religion, a common ethical code, a common aesthetic or artistic tradition. It is reasonable to suppose that where such elements of a common civilisation underlie an international society, they facilitate its working in two ways. On the one hand, they may make for easier communication and closer awareness and understanding between one state and another, and thus facilitate the definition of common rules and the evolution of common institutions. On the other hand, they may reinforce the sense of common interests that impels states to accept common rules and institutions with a sense of common values. This is a question to which we shall return when, later in this study, we consider the

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contention that the global international society of the twentieth century, unlike the Christian international society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or the European international society of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is without any such common culture or civilisation (see Chapter 13).

Having elaborated our conception of states, of a system of states, and of a society of states, we may return to the proposition with which this section began: that by [international order is meant a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains those goals of the society of states that are elementary, primary or universal. What goals, then, are these?

First, there is the goal of preservation of the system and society of states itself. Whatever the divisions among them, modern states have been united in the belief that they are the principal actors in world politics and the chief bearers of rights and duties within it. The society of states has sought to ensure that it will remain the prevailing form of universal political organisation, in fact and in right. Challenges to the continued existence of the society of states have sometimes come from a particular dominant state – the Habsburg Empire, the France of Louis XIV, the France of Napoleon, Hitler's Germany, perhaps post-1945 America – which seemed capable of overthrowing the system and society of states and transforming it into a universal empire. Challenges have also been delivered by actors other than states which threaten to deprive states of their position as the principal actors in world politics, or the principal bearers of rights and duties within it. 'Supra-state' actors such as, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor, or, in the twentieth century, the United Nations (one thinks especially of its role as a violent actor in the 1960–1 Congo crisis) present such a threat. 'Sub-state' actors which operate in world politics from within a particular state, or 'trans-state' actors which are groups cutting across the boundaries of states, may also challenge the privileged position of states in world politics, or their right to enjoy it; in the history of modern international society the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary manifestations of human solidarity engendered by the Reformation, the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution are principal examples.

Second, there is the goal of maintaining the independence or external sovereignty of individual states. From the perspective of

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any particular state what it chiefly hopes to gain from participation in the society of states is recognition of its independence of outside authority, and in particular of its supreme jurisdiction over its subjects and territory. The chief price it has to pay for this is recognition of like rights to independence and sovereignty on the part of other states.

International society has in fact treated preservation of the independence of particular states as a goal that is subordinate to preservation of the society of states itself; this reflects the predominant role played in shaping international society by the great powers, which view themselves as its custodians (see Chapter 9). Thus international society has often allowed the independence of individual states to be extinguished, as in the great process of partition and absorption of small powers by greater ones, in the name of principles such as 'compensation' and the 'balance of power' that produced a steady decline in the number of states in Europe from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 until the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In the same way, international society, at least in the perspective of the great powers which see themselves as its guardians, treats the independence of particular states as subordinate to the preservation of the system as a whole when it tolerates or encourages limitation of the sovereignty or independence of small states through such devices as spheres-of-influence agreements, or agreements to create buffer or neutralised states.

Third, there is the goal of peace. By this is meant not the goal of establishing universal and permanent peace, such as has been the dream of irenists or theorists of peace, and stands in contrast to actual historical experience: this is not a goal which the society of states can be said to have pursued in any serious way. Rather what is meant is the maintenance of peace in the sense of the absence of war among member states of international society as the normal condition of their relationship, to be breached only in special circumstances and according to principles that are generally accepted.

Peace in this sense has been viewed by international society as a goal subordinate to that of the preservation of the states system itself, for which it has been widely held that it can be right to wage war; and as subordinate also to preservation of the sovereignty or independence of individual states, which have insisted on the right to wage war in self-defence, and to protect other rights also. The

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establishment of a stable system.

But doesn't the system need to be
stable before it can create norms?

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subordinate status of peace in relation to these other goals is reflected in the phrase 'peace and security', which occurs in the United Nations Charter. Security in international politics means no more than safety, either objective safety, safety which actually exists, or subjective safety, that which is felt or experienced. What states seek to make secure or safe is not merely peace, but their independence and the continued existence of the society of states itself which that independence requires; and for these objectives, as we have noted, they are ready to resort to war and the threat of war. The coupling of the two terms together in the Charter reflects the judgement that the requirements of security may conflict with those of peace, and that in this event the latter will not necessarily take priority.

Fourth, it should be noted that among the elementary or primary goals of the society of states are those which, at the beginning of this chapter, were said to be the common goals of all social life: limitation of violence resulting in death or bodily harm, the keeping of promises and the stabilisation of possession by rules of property.

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The goal of limitation of violence is represented in international society in a number of ways. States co-operate in international society so as to maintain their monopoly of violence, and deny the right to employ it to other groups. States also accept limitations on their own right to use violence; at a minimum they accept that they shall not kill one another's envoys or messengers, since this would make communication impossible. Beyond this, they accept that war should be waged only for a 'just' cause, or a cause the justice of which can be argued in terms of common rules. They have also constantly proclaimed adherence to rules requiring that wars be fought within certain limits, the *temperamenta belli*.

The goal of the keeping of promises is represented in the principle *pacta sunt servanda*. Among states as among individuals, co-operation can take place only on the basis of agreements, and agreements can fulfil their function in social life only on the basis of a presumption that once entered into they will be upheld. International society adjusts itself to the pressures for change that make for the breaking of treaties, and at the same time salvages the principle itself, through the doctrine of *rebus sic stantibus*.

The goal of stability of possession is reflected in international society not only by the recognition by states of one another's property, but more fundamentally in the compact of mutual

recognition of sovereignty, in which states accept one another's spheres of jurisdiction: indeed, the idea of the sovereignty of the state derived historically from the idea that certain territories and peoples were the property or patrimony of the ruler.

The above are among the elementary or primary goals of modern international society, and of other international societies. It is not suggested here that this list is exhaustive, nor that it could not be formulated in some other way. Nor is it any part of my thesis that these goals should be accepted as a valid basis for action, as legislating right conduct in international relations. It should also be said that at this stage in the argument we are concerned only with what may be called the 'statics' of international order and not with its 'dynamics'; we are concerned only to spell out what is involved in the idea of international order, not to trace how it is embodied in historical institutions subject to change.

CONSTANTS
and building
blocks

World Order

order depends upon composition of components

By world order I mean those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of social life among mankind as a whole. International order is order among states; but states are simply groupings of men, and men may be grouped in such a way that they do not form states at all. Moreover, where they are grouped into states, they are grouped in other ways also. Underlying the questions we raise about order among states there are deeper questions, of more enduring importance, about order in the great society of all mankind.

Throughout human history before the nineteenth century there was no single political system that spanned the world as a whole. The great society of all mankind, to which allusions were made by exponents of canon law or natural law, was a notional society that existed in the sight of God or in the light of the principles of natural law: no actual political system corresponded to it. Before the latter half of the nineteenth century world order was simply the sum of the various political systems that brought order to particular parts of the world.

However, since the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century there has arisen for the first time a single political system that is genuinely global. Order on a global scale has ceased to be

simply the sum of the various political systems that produce order on a local scale; it is also the product of what may be called a world political system. Order in the world – say, in 1900 – was still the sum of the order provided within European and American states and their overseas dependencies, within the Ottoman empire, the Chinese and Japanese empires, within the Khanates and Sultanates that preserved an independent existence from the Sahara to Central Asia, within primitive African and Oceanic political systems not yet destroyed by the European impact – but it was also the consequence of a political system, linking them all, that operated all over the world.

The first global political system has taken the form of a global system of states. What is chiefly responsible for the emergence of a degree of interaction among political systems in all the continents of the world, sufficient to make it possible for us to speak of a world political system, has been the expansion of the European states system all over the globe, and its transformation into a states system of global dimension. In the first phase of this process the European states expanded and incorporated or dominated the rest of the world, beginning with the Portuguese voyages of discovery in the fifteenth century and ending with the partition of Africa in the nineteenth. In the second phase, overlapping with the first in point of time, the areas of the world thus incorporated or dominated broke loose from European control, and took their places as member states of international society, beginning with the American Revolution and ending with the African and Asian anti-colonial revolution of our own times. It is true that the intermeshing of the various parts of the world was not simply the work of states; private individuals and groups played their part as explorers, traders, migrants, missionaries and mercenaries, and the expansion of the states system was part of a wider spread of social and economic exchange. However, the political structure to which these developments gave rise was one simply of a global system and society of states.

But while the world political system that exists at present takes the form of a system of states, or takes principally this form (we shall contend later that a world political system is emerging of which the system of states is only part), world order could in principle be achieved by other forms of universal political organisation, and a standing question is whether world order

might not better be served by such other forms. Other forms of universal political organisation have existed in the past on a less than global scale; in the broad sweep of human history, indeed, the form of the states system has been the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that new forms of universal political organisation may be created in the future that do not resemble those that have existed in the past. In Part 3 of this study we shall consider the questions whether the present states system is giving place to some other form of universal political organisation, and whether world order would be best served if it did give place to some such other form.

Here we need only stress that in this study world order entails something different from international order. Order among mankind as a whole is something wider than order among states; something more fundamental and primordial than it; and also, I should argue, something morally prior to it.

World order is wider than international order because to give an account of it we have to deal not only with order among states but also with order on a domestic or municipal scale, provided within particular states, and with order within the wider world political system of which the states system is only part.

World order is more fundamental and primordial than international order because the ultimate units of the great society of all mankind are not states (or nations, tribes, empires, classes or parties) but individual human beings, which are permanent and indestructible in a sense in which groupings of them of this or that sort are not. This is the moment for international relations, but the question of world order arises whatever the political or social structure of the globe.

World order, finally, is morally prior to international order. To take this view is to broach the question of the value of world order and its place in the hierarchy of human values, which I have so far avoided, but which I discuss in Chapter 4. It is necessary to state at this point, however, that if any value attaches to order in world politics, it is order among all mankind which we must treat as being of primary value, not order within the society of states. If international order does have value, this can only be because it is instrumental to the goal of order in human society as a whole.