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The Fate of the State Revisited

Martin van Creveld

The State, which during the three and a half centuries since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) has been the most important and the most characteristic of all modern institutions, appears to be declining or dying. In many places, existing states are either combining into larger communities or falling apart; in many places, organizations that are not states are challenging them by means fair or foul. On the international level, we seem to be moving away form a system of separate, sovereign, legally equal, states towards less distinct, more hierarchical, and in many ways more complex political structures. Inside their borders, it seems that many states will soon no longer be able to protect the political, military, economic, social and cultural life of their citizens. These developments are likely to lead to upheavals as profound as those that took humanity out of the middle ages and into the modern world. Whether the direction of change is desirable, as some hope, or undesirable, as others fear, remains to be seen.

Keywords states; decline of state-on-state War; globalization; breakdown of public order; private security firms; state transformation

In this article, the state of the state will be discussed under five headings. Part I looks at the state's declining ability to fight other states. Part II examines the effects of modern technology, economics and the media, and briefly the process known as "globalization". Part III outlines the rise, and ongoing fall, of the welfare state. Part IV focuses on the state's ability to maintain public order in the face of various disruptive forces seeking to disrupt or overthrow it. Finally, Part V is an attempt to tie all the threads together and see where we are heading.

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The Waning of Major War

The principal function of the state, like that of all previous forms of government, has always been to fight other states, whether defensively, in an attempt to protect its interests, or offensively, in order to extend them. Usually a state that was unable to do this was doomed to disappear. The best it could hope for was to lead a sort of shadowy existence under the protection of some other, more powerful, state. For example, "Congress Poland" did so during most of the nineteenth century and Afghanistan and Iraq, occupied by foreign troops, do so even as these lines are being written.

Conversely, right from the beginning, the need to fight other states has always played a critical role in the development of the state's most important institutions.[1] This includes the government bureaucracy, originally created in order to levy taxes for the purpose of waging war; the note-issuing state bank, an early 18th-century invention specifically designed to help pay for Britain's military efforts during the wars against Louis XIV; and of course the regular armed forces themselves. In most states, the latter continued to take up the lion's share of expenditure until well into the 19th century.[2]

Driven largely by the need to fight other states, the power of the state expanded from 1700 on. The number of bureaucrats—the term is an 18th-century neologism—increased as did the amount of statistical information they gathered and generated. These "improvements" allowed the most advanced governments to greatly augment the share of GDP they extracted. Meanwhile, developing technology drove war, and war, the development of technology. International competition intensified until, during the last decades of the 19th century, it reached the point where much the world had been turned into an armed camp. Each of the so-called great powers of the time was looking anxiously over its shoulder at all the rest to see which one was the most threatening and which one, being less so for the moment, could be drawn into an alliance.

Most of all, the reforms instituted by the French Revolution led to the nationalization of the masses. With that, there took place a drastic change of the state in the popular consciousness. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and many of their 18th-century successors saw the state simply as an instrument for maintaining public order and permitting a civilized life. To quote a rhyme by Alexander Pope: "Over government fools contest/What is best administered is best". Now it became an end unto itself, an earthly god in whose honors monuments were erected, festivals celebrated, and monuments composed and sung.[3] It was a vengeful God who, according to his greatest prophet Georg

1. Porter, B. D. (1994) *War and the Rise of the State*, Free Press, New York.

2. For some figures see Flora, P. et al. (eds) (1983) *State, Economy and Society in Western Europe, 1875–1975*, St. James Press, London, vol. 1, part iv, p. 441; also Kennedy, P. (1987) *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Vintage, New York, p. 153.

3. See Mosse, G. L. (1975) *The Nationalization of the Masses*, Howard Fertig, New York; also Weber, E. (1976) *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Friedrich Hegel,[4] fed on blood and periodically demanded the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands if not millions—for their own highest good, needless to say. Seen from the perspective of our own "post heroic" period,[5] nothing in the history of the modern state is more astonishing than the willingness, occasionally even eagerness, of people to fight for it and lay down their lives for it.

The climax of these developments was reached during the years of total warfare between 1914 and 1945. Acting in the name of the need to protect or extend something known as the national interest, the most important states of the time conscripted their populations and fought each other on an unprecedented scale and with an unprecedented ferocity. Nor was it merely a question of soldiers killing each other in the field. At the grand strategic level, both 1914–18 and 1939–45 were conducted by attrition. This gave the belligerents time to mobilize not only troops but civilians (including women and children) as well as put them to work in the fields and factories behind the front. Under the direction of such figures as Walter Rathenau in Germany, David Lloyd George in Britain, Georges Clemenceau in France, and Bernard Baruch in the United States, the state assumed control over finance, raw materials, production, transportation, labor (including professional qualifications and wages), and even daily calorie intake of their citizens. Though most of these controls were demolished after 1918, the blueprints remained in the drawers. This, in turn, enabled them to be re-instituted even more effectively, and much more quickly, in World War II.

Thanks to the unprecedented mobilization of demographic, economic, industrial, technological, and scientific resources, the two world wars together, and each one separately, dwarfed the conflicts that had taken place in the past. More important to our purpose, mobilization warfare accelerated—if it did not create—technological progress.[6] All through World War II in particular, tens of thousands of scientists and technicians engaged in research and development, producing devices that ranged from radar to computers and from jet engines to ballistic missiles. The climax, reached after years of labor and at enormous expense, arrived on 6 August 1945 when the first atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima, killing an estimated 75,000 people.

At first, nuclear weapons seemed to put unprecedented military power in the hands of the state; after a few years, though, it began to be realized that this was not exactly the case. So powerful were the weapons in question that, instead of serving war as all their predecessors had done, they threatened to put an end to it.[7] As the number of weapons available world-wide increased and their power

4. See Smith, S. B. (1983) 'Hegel's Views on War, the State and International Relations', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 77, pp. 624–632.

5. See Luttwak, E. N. (1995) 'Towards Post-heroic Warfare', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June.

6. See, for an account by one of the men in charge, Bush, V. (1949) *Modern Arms and Free Men*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

7. Among the first to perceive that nuclear weapons would limit war was Brodie, B. (1946) *The Absolute Weapon*, Ayer Company Publishers, New Haven. The best discussion of nuclear doctrine from 1945 to the Reagan years remains Friedman, L. (1981) *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

grew from 20,000 kilotons in 1945 to as much as 58 megatons in 1961, wherever they made their appearance large-scale interstate war came to a halt. The first to feel the impact were the two Superpowers, i.e. the US and the USSR. Then it was the turn of their close allies in NATO and the Warsaw Pact, respectively; then of the USSR and China; then of China and India; then of India and Pakistan; then of Israel and its Arab neighbors; and now, it seems, of the two Koreas as well. One by one they acquired the most powerful weapons of all. One by one, they found themselves with their horns locked and unable to fight each other as many of them used to and, perhaps, would have liked to.[8]

This does not mean there have been no attempts to make the world safe for war by breaking the nuclear deadlock. Focusing on the largest, richest, and technologically most advanced state of all, American attempts to find a way to defend against nuclear weapons have been ongoing at least since the mid 1950s. They led through the Nike Zeus missile—planned to achieve its purpose by exploding a megaton-size warhead high above the asset it was intended to "defend"—through the Spartan and Sentinel of the 1960s all the way to President Reagan's "Star Wars" speech of 1983; and from then on to the present Bush administration's National Missile Defense, or NMD.[9] Over the years, the sum spent on these programs has probably exceeded $100 billion and is still growing. Yet even a partial defense against nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, let alone the cheaper and easier to build cruise missiles, is as far away today as it was fifty years ago; the situation of other countries is much worse still.

As a result, without a single exception, what large-scale interstate wars have taken place since 1945 have been waged either between or against third- and fourth rate military powers. The Korean War, which originally was simply a civil war between the two parts of a country split in half; the five (or six, depending on the way one counts) Arab–Israeli Wars; the three Indian–Pakistani Wars; the Chinese–Indian War; the Chinese–Vietnamese War; the Falklands War, so small that it is often referred to as a mere campaign; the Iran–Iraq War; the First Gulf War, the Afghanistan War, and the Second Gulf War—all these and many others served to illustrate the point. To put it in another way, since 1945 no two powerful states, meaning such as were armed with nuclear weapons or even strongly suspected of having them, have fought each other. By some accounts, they did not even get close to doing so.[10]

Even more striking than the marginalization of the belligerents was the declining scale on which war was waged. Though the world's population has more than tripled since 1945, and though its ability to produce goods and services has increased many times over, both the size of the armed forces and the number of

8. For the way nuclear weapons limited interstate war, first between major powers and then, increasingly, among the rest, see van Creveld, M. (1993) *Nuclear Proliferation and the Future of Conflict*, Free Press, New York.

9. See Mantle, P. J. (2004) *The Missile Defense Equation*, AIAA, Washington, DC.

10. Bundy, M. (1988) *Danger and Survival; The Political History of Nuclear Weapons*, Random House, New York, p. 616.

the major weapon systems that they produce now amount to only a small fraction of what they were sixty years ago. For example, the forces mobilized by the coalition for the First Gulf War were just one fifth the size of those deployed by Germany for its invasion of Russia in 1941, and those used against Saddam in 2003 were only one fifth of those. In most places around the world the shrinking process is still under way. Nor, in the face of the potential for a nuclear holocaust, is there much chance of the mass forces of World Wars I and II being rebuilt in any kind of future that may be foreseen.

The Rise and Fall of the Welfare State

As the state, that power-hungry beast *par excellence*, lost its ability to fight its neighbors, it turned its attention inward. It lies in the nature of a bureaucratic construct that it should seek to control and regulate everything. Doing so, it created the welfare state.

The beginning of this story may be found in the period between 1789 and 1830. First came the French Revolution, which, exported by force of arms across the width and breadth of Europe, broke up the ancient feudal, ecclesiastical, and professional institutions; by atomizing society, it put the state in a much stronger position than ever before.[11] Next came the industrial revolution. Having started in Britain during the 1760s, it brought with it economic freedom, unbridled capitalism (including its worst manifestations—a total lack of planning, widespread poverty, and inhumane exploitation of man by man), and the invisible hand. The influence of figures such as Adam Smith and Friedrich List caused one nation after another to dismantle internal and external economic controls and switch to free trade. With the Manchester School firmly in control, during the first half of the century the motto was *laissez faire*.

After 1850 or so the prevailing mood began to change, at first very slowly and then faster and faster. One reason for this was a number of inquiries, some of them official, others by well known persons of the time, into the often shocking conditions in which working people lived.[12] Another was the military competition mentioned in the previous section; as the most important states became increasingly dependent on mass armies consisting of conscripts and reservists, their rulers felt they could not longer afford to neglect the population that provided those armies to quite the same extent as they had done before. Finally there was the steady, if often stormy, movement towards democratization and the rise in many countries of left-wing, socialist, parties. The former made it necessary, in the words of one British parliamentarian, "to educate our masters". The latter attracted a growing number of voters and threatened violent revolution unless something was done to improve the masses' lot.

11. See Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

12. The most famous inquiry of all was Engels, F. (1991) *The Condition of the Working Class in England* [1844], Electric Book Company, London.

Be the exact reasons what they may, the first Factory Acts were passed in Britain during the 1840s over howls of protest by the owners and their spokesmen. The laws' purpose was to put limits on working hours—initially those of women and children, later those of men as well—and institute at least some health and safety controls. Imitated by many countries, originally the new laws only applied to a few industries considered particularly dangerous, such as metal-working and mining. Later in the century they were extended to others such as textile and metalworking plants. Among the last sectors to be reached were agriculture, domestic service—which, until World War II, continued to employ large numbers of people—and small-scale light industry, particularly in the form of sweatshops. These started to be affected, to the extent that they were affected at all, only during the early years of the 20th century.

Once the state had begun to supervise the conditions of labor—including the establishment of labor exchanges, another early twentieth-century development—it soon sought to do the same for education and public health. The pioneer in the former field was Prussia. Following beginnings made during the reign of Frederick the Great, something like universal, although as yet not free, elementary education was achieved in the years after 1815. This feat turned Prussia into a much-imitated model and caused educators from all over the world to flock to see how it was done.[13] In the rest of Europe the real push was provided by the war of 1870–71.[14] The French in particular looked for an explanation for their defeat; unable to agree on one, in the end they pointed a finger at the schoolmaster and his students. By the early 20th century the "utopian vision", to speak with the British Fabian socialist writer Beatrice Webb, of universal elementary education had been achieved in all the most advanced countries.

Advances in public health were made necessary by urban growth and were initially decentralized. In Britain, Germany, and to a growing extent the United States as well, laws were enacted that entrusted the task of providing better sanitation and better disease control to local authorities and municipalities. Taking over from the church and private charitable organizations, these bodies also began providing at least some hospitals for the indigenous ill, the mentally disturbed, and the like. In the most advanced countries, ministries of health were established during the first two decades after 1900 with the task of supervising those countries' entire health systems, including both medical practice and training, In addition, many of them also provided various programs, such as inoculation and pre-natal care, which were compulsory, free, of both.

13. For the rise of the public education system in Germany see Schluenes, K. A. (1989) *Schooling and Society; The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria, 1750–1900*, Berg Publishers, Oxford. For an international perspective on its role in building the modern state, Flora, P. (1972) 'Die Bildungsenwicklung im Prozess der Staaten und Nationsbildung', in *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. P. C. Ludz, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen.

14. Kazmias, A. M. (1966) *Politics, Society and Secondary Education in England*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, p. 107 ff.

Like state-run education, state-run welfare was originally a German invention.[15] The 1880s found Bismarck worried about the progress of the Social Democratic Party. Even as he passed laws against them through the Reichstag, he also instituted something known as "The Revolution from Above", including the world's first state-run schemes for unemployment, accident, sickness and old age insurance. Between 1890 and 1914 his example was followed by others through much of Western Europe and Scandinavia. Neither reform or repression, however, were able to stop the march of socialism which appeared to increase its strength year by year. Seen from this point of view, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was anything but an anomaly. Instead, it was an attempt to grab one particularly backward country by the neck, force it to march in the direction others were moving as well, institute universal welfare at a single stroke, and doing so, extend state control to the point where civil society itself almost ceased to exist. Only the United States, with its strong traditions of free enterprise and rugged individualism, resisted the trend and, as a result, found itself trailing far behind. In the land of the dollar it took the Great Depression and 13 million unemployed to make first the New Deal and then social security possible during the 1930s.[16]

Still, what really made the modern welfare state was World War II. As they had already done during World War I, governments took responsibility for running countless aspects of their citizens' lives, including, in theory, the number of inches of hot water they were allowed to put in their tubs. This time, though, they did so with no intention of giving up their power after the conflict had ended. In one developed country after another, extensive health programs covering the entire population—as under the British National Health System which served as the model for many others—were established. To this were added a vast variety of ancillary programs, such as free meals for schoolchildren and the elderly, assistance for the handicapped, cheap public housing, vocational training and retraining, and of course education. The latter often led to free education up to, and in some instances including, the university level.

Accelerating a development that had started during the last years of the 16th century, these developments led to a further huge increase in the number of bureaucrats per head of population and per square mile of territory. For example, in the United States in 1972, one in thirteen people worked for the government; in other developed countries, they were more numerous still. By the end of the 1950s, the number of ministries, which during the state's formative years in the 18th centuries had usually stood at four, had risen to something nearer 20 in most countries. To the minister of justice, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of war, and the minister of the treasury were added, not necessarily in this order, ministers for interior affairs, police, agriculture, transportation, communications,

15. See Flora, P. and Heidenheimer, A. J. (eds) (1981) *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick; Bruce, M. (1974) *The coming of the welfare state*, Schocken, London; and Berkowitz, E. & McQuaid, K. (1988) *Creating the Welfare State: The Political Economy of Twentieth-Century Reform*, Praeger Publishers, Lawrence.

16. See Badger, A. J. (2002) *The New Deal: The Depression Years*, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago.

education, health, labor, welfare, trade and industry, aviation, energy, and tourism. Some countries believed they absolutely had to have a ministry for the infrastructure, whatever that meant. Others claimed they could not do without one for sport and leisure, whereas during the 1980s many cabinets also came to include portfolios for ecological matters, youth, and women's affairs.

To pay for these programs and these ministries, it was necessary to raise taxes—especially direct ones—until, in countries such as Britain and Sweden, marginal rates of income tax could reach 90 percent and more. Yet taxation was but part of the solution. The nationalization of industry, particularly large-scale industry, had been a key demand made by socialist parties ever since Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. The way ahead had been shown by the USSR, which following the Revolution of 1917 took over all important means of production. Elsewhere, Britain in 1926 created the Electricity Board; next, France during the premiership of Leon Blum (1936–37) nationalized its arms industry. Though socialists and communists have filled libraries in an attempt to show that Nazi Germany was the creation of capitalism, in fact its commitment to free enterprise and a market economy was ambivalent at best. By the end of World War II, the German State controlled about 60 percent of the entire economy or, at any rate, what was left of it.

Outside the USSR, the exact identity of the nationalized industries varied considerably. Often they included mass transportation, such as sea, air, and rail; telecommunications, such as telephone and telegraph; energy in the form of electricity and gas, banking, insurance, mining (particularly for coal and, later, oil), and critical branches of manufacturing such as steel, shipbuilding, aviation, and military equipment. Side by side with this went the creation of more and more welfare programs—until almost everybody was receiving some kind of indirect government subsidy (such as free education) and a great many were receiving direct subsidies (e.g. for bringing children into the world) as well. Even in the United States, always a latecomer in such matters, "big government" made its debut during the 1950s. In the 1960s, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations declared "war on poverty", which enabled them to set up, and preside over, a vast expansion of various government programs.[17]

Initially it was hoped to finance the services out of the profits of industry which, having been nationalized, would be made to work for the community at large rather than for their shareholders alone. These hopes, however, were disappointed. In democratic countries, and also in quite a number of non-democratic ones in the "developing" parts of the world, the more government gave, the more people expected from it. Often the success of the welfare state, as in creating conditions that permitted life expectancy to increase by leaps and bounds from the 1960s on and enabling single mothers to survive, also led to even more expenditure; for

17. For the creation of the American welfare state see Freeman, R. A. (1975) *The Growth of American Government; A Morphology of the Welfare State*, Hoover Institute Press, Stanford; also Gilbert, N. & Gilbert, B. (1989) *The Enabling State; Modern Welfare Capitalism in America*, Oxford University Press, New York.

example, in the form of funds targeting old people (who need far more than their share of medical care) and by causing the number of divorces to skyrocket.[18] Nor did the nationalized industries themselves fulfill the hopes that were hung on them. Having been created, before long many of them, run by political appointees on electoral principles rather than following business lines, had become grossly under-capitalized and overstaffed, incurred enormous losses, demanded vast subsidies, and hung like chains round the state's neck.[19] Since politicians were reluctant to meet the deficit by taxation, the outcome was inflation.[20] Finally, by that time, any naïve Weberian belief in the virtues of civil servants[21] had been lost by those who were forced to come into daily contact with them. Instead, they were seen as capricious, secretive, arbitrary, and, as often as not, incompetent too.

By the late 1970s, politicians such as Ronald Reagan ("get government off our backs") in the US and Margaret Thatcher in Britain ("stand on your own feet") were shouting at the top of their lungs, demanding that the welfare state be cut. They found backers in the form of supply-side (the so-called "Monetarist") school of economics whose headquarters was in Chicago and whose prophet, second only to the great Adam Smith himself, was Milton Friedman.[22] All through the 1980s the movement back to 19th-century economics gathered momentum. At the end of the decade it was given a tremendous boost by the collapse of the USSR. For seventy years, Communism had provided an alternative model in which the state, for all its manifold and perceived shortcomings, claimed to have eliminated the worst forms of poverty and promised security from the cradle to the grave. Now the system's sudden demise left the former East Block almost literally naked and their respective civil societies poorer than they had ever been. Not only did *laissez faire* capitalism re-emerge as the only way towards the future, but it no longer felt obliged to apologize for its seamier sides, such as gross inequality, ever-present insecurity for both employers and employees, and the colossal waste resulting from unbridled competition, unplanned development, and the business cycle. To the contrary, many of the advocates of the new economics regarded those features as useful tools towards the all important goals, low inflation and steady economic growth. One author even gained fame by claiming that, since the best possible relationship between states and their citizens had now been discovered in the form of some kind of liberal democracy, history itself was at an end.[23]

18. See, for the crisis of the welfare state, Logue, J. (1985) 'Will Success Spoil the Welfare State?', *Dissent*, Winter; and Leaman, C. (1980) *The Collapse of Welfare Reform; Political Institutions, Policy and the Poor in Britain and the US*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

19. For one country's experience with this kind of thing see Cohen, K. R. (1973) *British Nationalization 1945–1973*, Macmillan, London.

20. See, for some figures, Scammell, W. M. (1983) *The International Economy Since 1945*, Macmillan, London, p. 216.

21. Weber, M. (ed) (1976) *Economy and Society* [1923], G. Roth, New York, p. 481ff.

22. See Hammond, J. D. (ed) (1999) *The Legacy of Milton Friedman*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.

23. Fukuyama, F. (1991) *The End of History*, Avon Books, New York.

As of the early years of the twenty-first century, not even those countries that were loudest in their praise of capitalism had made significant progress in reducing their bureaucracies, much less in cutting taxes as a percentage of GDP. On the other hand, in virtually all countries some of the juicier morsels of the economy—air transport (almost all West European countries), telecommunications (ditto, plus Australia), postal services (Germany, New Zealand), coal (to the extent that there were buyers), oil, gas, banking, and insurance (to the extent that they had been nationalized in the first place) had been sold off. Nor did privatization stop at the sectors which, depending on the country in question, had been nationalized between about 1920 and 1975. In many cases privatization was even being applied to roads—as may yet become the case in Germany[24]—to prisons, and to every kind of service needed by the military from transport to laundry and from maintenance to cooking. Other parts of the economy were deregulated, enabling "healthy competition" to resume in theory but, in practice, often leading to bad maintenance as well as higher consumer prices.

Needless to say, these processes did not advance *pari passu* in all parts of the world. Here and there it was even possible to find countries trying to go in the opposite direction, as Bolivia, nationalizing its oil industry, did. In any case, compared to the socialist or semi-socialist economies of the early 1970s, there has taken place sea-change so vast as to constitute a revolutionary departure. Whether, in the long run, it will also better serve the needs of society remains to be seen.

The State and Globalization

Meanwhile, and often going almost unnoticed, technology had also performed an about-face. The rise of the state is inseparable from that of modern technology.[25] Print, roads, railroads, telecommunications and typewriters—to say nothing of weapons and weapon systems—were among the most important means that enabled the state to increase its power. Separately and in combination, they made possible the establishment and operations of the armed forces, the collection of revenue, the transmission of laws and decrees, and the gathering of information; all in amounts, at speeds, and over distances that had previously been undreamed-of. Conversely, those areas which for one reason or another have failed to establish powerful states are also usually the ones which lag behind in the generation and application of technology of every kind.

From the beginning, though, much post-1800 technology generated by the industrial revolution bore a Janus face. On the one hand, it enabled governments to cast the net of sovereignty farther, and more tightly, than before, helping them control everything within their borders. On the other, it tended to transcend those

24. See *Frankfurter Algemeine Zeitung*, January 26, 2006, p. 41.

25. See, above all, Tilly, C. (1992) *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990–1992*, Blackwell, Oxford.

borders, crossing them and turning them into obstacles to dominance. This was because, unlike its predecessors, much modern technology can only operate when, and to the extent that, it is grouped into systems. A plow, a hammer, a musket, even a steam engine or a ship, can do its job even in the absence of others of its kind; if numerous plows are used side by side, or many ships joined into a fleet, each one can still perform its function independently of the rest. Not so an individual railway train, or telegraph apparatus, or a telephone, or a fax machine, or a computer, each of which on its own is useless. The number of such technologies is growing day by day. With them, what matters is above all the *network* of tracks, or wires, or switchboards, which connects each unit with countless others of its kind. Even more critical is the central directing hand that, laying down schedules and sorting out routes and priorities, enables them to communicate with each other at will, in an orderly manner, and without mutual interference.

In theory, each state was, and still is, free to exercise its sovereignty and build its own networks to its own standards while ignoring those of its neighbors and refusing to integrate with them—something which, as the history of railways shows, actually did happen in the beginning. In practice, they could only do so at tremendous cost. The plight of North Korea is a perfect case in point. There, a xenophobic government has imposed isolation on its citizens, forcing them to become self sufficient in all important respects; by so doing, it prevented them from making use of whatever comparative advantages they may have. The price was inability to maximize the benefits of precisely those technologies that have developed most rapidly since 1945, i.e. communication (including data-processing) and transportation. The precise cost of isolation varies with circumstances and the size of the country in question. However, even in the case of the largest ones, it is still substantial—not for nothing has the US, as the country with the largest economy of all, been switching over to the metric system.

To avoid this cost, states had to gain access to international networks, which in turn forced them to grant foreigners access to their own. Furthermore, they also found it necessary to join the international bodies whose task was to regulate the technologies in question on behalf of all. The first such bodies made their appearance around the middle of the nineteenth century. Previously there had often been bilateral and multilateral alliances, some of which were intended to be permanent; however, the International Telegraph Union represented something else entirely. Its foundation, which took place in 1865, marked the first time when states created an organization in which they themselves were members but which at the same time had a legal personality of its own as well as a permanent staff and a permanent headquarters at which it could be reached. Within its own limited field, the organization was authorized to make decisions that were binding on states. It is true that no mechanism for enforcing those decisions was provided either at the time or later. But then one reason for this is precisely that, as experience has shown, in view of the very considerable disadvantages that resulted from remaining aloof, this organization as well as many similar ones could function tolerably well even without such a mechanism.

Serving as a model for others to come, the ITU was followed by the International Postal Union (1874)[26] and the International Bureau of Weights and Standards (1875). A landmark of sorts was reached in 1884 when geographical space was standardized by making Greenwich into the prime meridian; previously Krakow, Uraniborg, Copenhagen, Ter-Goes, Pisa, Augsburg, Isla del Fuego (in the Cape Verde Islands), Rome, Ulm, Tuebingen, Bologna, Rouen, St. Petersburg, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Munich, Brussels, Rio de Janeiro, Amsterdam, Christiana, Lisbon Pultowa, Cadiz, Madrid, Warsaw, Paris and Stockholm had all competed for the honor.[27] The number of inter-governmental organizations reached 123 in 1951, 280 in 1972, and 395 in 1984.[28] They cover almost every conceivable field of human activity, from the regulation of air transport—the International Air Transport Association, IATA, was probably the only organization which counts more member-states than did the United Nations itself—through the conservation of wildlife all the way to the establishment of measures and standards and the disposal of hazardous materials.

By origin, the UN was simply a coalition of states established in order to fight Germany and Japan in World War II. Since then, becoming permanent, it has tended to take over many other international organizations and put them under a single roof. Like other international organizations it has developed its own legal personality, well-established identity, and bureaucratic mechanism. The latter is by no means identical with that of individual member states whose interests it serves, if at all, only to a very limited extent; witness the constant bickering between the UN and the US as the strongest single member. In many ways, its position resembles that of the medieval papacy; *vox populi, vox dei* (the voice of the people is like the voice of God), as the saying goes.

If only because the UN is capable of offering a forum for a state's opponents to voice its grievances, to oppose it usually means incurring substantial costs in terms of public opinion. Being subject to UN sanctions can also be expensive—as is shown by the fact that, within a year of the ones against South Africa being lifted, the country's foreign trade leaped by no less than thirty eight percent.[29] Furthermore, the Security Council, acting as a sort of global executive, has become increasingly willing to invoke Chapter VII of the U.N Charter and use force to police such states as either upset the international order or engaged in "intolerable" acts against their own populations; points in case being, besides Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and, most recently, Afghanistan.

Equally important, states have begun to join together into blocks whose territory is lager than that of individual members. To date, the best known and most successful of these blocks is the European Union; an organization which like no

26. For its history see Zacher, M. W. (1995) *Governing Global Networks: International Regimes for Transportation and Communication*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995, p. 182 ff.

27. Schaeffer, R. K. (1982) 'The Standardization of Time and Place', *Ascent and Decline in the World System*, ed. Edward Friedman, Sage, London, pp. 71, 79.

28. Held, D. (1988) 'Farewell Nation State', *Marxism Today*, December, p. 15.

29. *World Link*, March–April 1994, p. 99.

other provides a tangible expression of the fact that the economic relationships generated by modern technology are on too large a scale to be effectively dealt with by individual countries. As originally conceived in 1953, the European Common Market had just six members and constituted no more than a free trade zone for coal and steel. Later the agreements were extended to other products as well, and common tariffs *vis a vis* the rest of the world were established.[30] Driven partly by the need to achieve economies of scale and partly by other factors, the Union expanded, until it has become the unit with the third largest number of people (after China and India) and the largest GNP on earth. Over the years it has developed its own legislative, its own High Court, and its own Executive.

Whether the Union will ever become a unified state is doubtful. Yet since 1963, when Community Law was declared to be directly binding on the member states,[31] it certainly made its influence felt on day to day life. Often this happens in entirely unexpected ways: as when the European Court ruled that the Government of Ireland could not prevent its citizens from traveling abroad to have an abortion or when the European Commission fined the British steel industry to the tune of 100,000,000 pounds sterling (1994). By allowing the citizens of member states to move, live and work freely—in some cases, also to have equal access to the social services offered by fellow members—the Union has gone a considerable way towards creating a common citizenship. In 1979, it was provided with a permanent source of revenue in the form of one percent of value-added tax receipts that is paid to it by each of the member states. Since then the Union has become the first non-state organization in modern history to issue a currency of its own, one which has taken the place of those of most member states.

The Union's economic success has encouraged states in other parts of the world to create similar organizations. Though none of them has progressed nearly as far as their model in creating common institutions and imposing a common law, multilateral arrangements aimed at encouraging trade, setting up a common economic front *vis a vis* the rest of the world, and dealing with ecological problems now number in the dozen. To list some of the most important ones only, 1959 saw the establishment of EFTA (European Free Trade Association) all of whose members later joined the European Union. In 1960, this was followed by LAFTA (the Latin American Free Trade Association, which incorporates Mexico and all Latin American countries except Guyana) as well as CACM (the Central American Common Market). UDEAC (Union Douaniere et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale, with Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Congo, and Gabon as its members) was founded in 1966, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations, made up of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore) in the next year. An Andean Common Market, (ACM), with Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela as its members has existed since 1969 and was later

30. For the early history of the EEC see Milward, A. S. (1984) *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–1951*, Methuen, London; also Haas, E. B. (1968) *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces*, 1950–1957, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

31. See Stirk, P. M. R. (1996) *A History of European Integration since 1914*, Pinter, London, p. 169.

followed by MERCOSUR which includes Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. In 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWACS) was founded by Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea–Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta. In 1994, the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by the US, Canada, and Mexico showed that not even the largest and most productive economy in history can exist in isolation.

As the doubling, between 1965 and 1990, of the percentage of world product which was exported suggests,[32] often manufacturing and trading organizations represented in different states were better positioned to use the opportunities provided than were states themselves. Unlike the latter, multinational corporations did not have citizens to protect, welfare payments to make, frontiers to cover, or sovereign territory to worry about. Free of these responsibilities and limitations, they were able to seize economic opportunities wherever they presented themselves, as soon as they presented themselves, and for no longer as they presented themselves. They could do so either on their own, by setting up branch offices, or else by forging alliances with their foreign counterparts. The methods used included common research and development; a division of labor in manufacturing; shared access to distribution and service networks; the acquisition of each other's stock; as well as mergers of the kind that took place in May 1998 when German-based Daimler Benz married American-based Chrysler.

Finally, the unprecedented development of electronic information services seems to mark another step in the retreat of the state.[33] Probably at no time in history has any state been able to exercise complete control over the thoughts of all its citizens; to the credit of the more liberally-minded among them, it must be added that they did not even try. While the invention of print in the fifteenth century greatly increased the amount of information and reduced the cost at which it could be disseminated, the ability to move that information across international frontiers remained limited by the need to physically transport paper (or set up printing presses) as well as language barriers. The latter in particular were important. Their existence meant that, small diplomatic and commercial elites only excepted, information of every kind tended to be distributed very much on a country by country, people by people, basis.

In any event, the first of these problems was solved by the introduction of public radio broadcasting during the 1920s. The advent of television, which relies on pictures instead of words, to a large extent eliminated the second. During the 1980s, cable and satellite TV, as well as videotape, became widely available. Soon it began providing near-instant coverage of events on a global scale; a decade later the advent of internet, which enabled individuals to communicate with each other instantaneously, at all places, at all times, and regardless of distance and

32. World Bank (1992) *World Development*, World Bank, Baltimore, p. 235.

33. See Wriston, W. (1992) The *Twilight of Sovereignty: How the Information Revolution is Transforming our World*, Scribner, New York.

time of day, presented an even greater revolution. Individual states were forced to relax their control over information in favor of people and organizations everywhere which were not sovereign, did not have territory, and were not states. As a result, even the most powerful governments now tend to make policy very much with the so-called "CNN factor" in mind.[34] Others are doing what they can to keep the media out—an effort which, as the fate of the former USSR suggests, will almost certainly fail in the long run.

As of the last years of the twentieth century, the obstacles to "globalization" remain formidable. They include not just the kind of nationalism and xenophobia found in many parts of the developing world in particular; but also the type of regional organization which, so far from opening countries up to world trade, tends to build blocks of them that are relatively closed to it. Still, the impact of globalism and regionalism on individual states is similar.[35] The more important any state, the more likely it is to participate in a very large number of international organizations, be they global, regional, or merely technical. By so doing, it gives up parts of its sovereignty in return for a say in its neighbors' affairs; meanwhile, compared to the period 1945–75, the state's control over both their economies and their citizens' thoughts has undoubtedly declined. Other things being equal, states which join the process and make the best of it are likely to prosper. Whereas those which, whether for religious or ideological or other reasons, refuse to do so have fallen behind and, to all appearances, are doomed to continue falling behind.

The Threat to Internal Order

As governments surrender or lose their hold over many aspects of the media, the economy, and technology, and as public ownership as well as welfare programs stagnate or retreat in almost every country from Sweden to New Zealand, one of the principal functions still remaining to the state is to protect its integrity against terrorism and similar forms of violence in- and outside its borders. Thus the question to be asked is, to what extent it has been successful in this task; is it being mastered, or is it not?

Perhaps the best way to approach the problem is this. From the middle of the seventeenth century until 1914, the armed forces of "civilized" governments—primarily those of Europe, but later joined by North American and Japanese ones—proved themselves more than a match for other political entities and their societies. Over time, this advantage tended to grow: until, at Omdurman in 1896, a handful of British Maxim Guns wiped out entire columns of dervishes as if by magic. These victories permitted the "civilized" states to expand until they

34. See Wriston, W. (1993) 'The Twilight of Sovereignty', *The Flethcer Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 117–130; Hodge, Jr., J. F. (1994) 'Media Pervasiveness', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 4, pp. 136–145.

35. Cf. Svetlicic, M. (1996) 'Challenges of Globalization and Regionalisation in the World Economy', *Global Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 207–223.

controlled almost the entire world. At peak, only three or four non-occidental countries escaped the domination which was often imposed on them by very small parties of foreigners from across the sea.

Since then, the change that has taken place is momentous. Starting in 1941, the year in which the Germans invaded Yugoslavia but, for all their ruthlessness, were unable to control it, countless "advanced" states have seen their armed forces suffer defeat at the hands of under-equipped, ill-trained, ill-organized, often even ill-clad and underfed and illiterate, freedom fighters or guerrillas or terrorists; briefly, by men—and, not seldom, women—who were short on everything except high courage and the determination to endure and persist in the face of police operations, counterinsurgency operations, peacekeeping operations, and whatever other types of operations that were dreamt up by their masters. The list of those who tried, and failed, in the face of such opponents is a long and dishonorable one. The British in Palestine, Malaysia, Kenya, Cyprus and Aden; the French in Indo-China and Algeria; the Americans in Vietnam and Iraq, the Soviets in Afghanistan and Chechnya, the Israelis in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip are some notable examples.

As these examples show, from 1945 on the vast majority of the larger guerrilla and terrorist campaigns in particular were waged in Third World countries; in other words, places where people were either trying to form states of their own or, on the contrary, where existing states had failed to assert their own monopoly over violence. Still it would not be true to say that the developed countries have remained immune to terrorism or that, in them, the problem does not exist. From Germany through France and Italy to Spain and Britain all the way to Japan and Spain, many of them have witnessed at least some terrorist acts take place on their national territories. Not seldom the attacks were deadly as dozens and even hundreds were killed or wounded; in the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, almost 3,000 lost their lives in a single day.

How, in the face of these attacks, have the armed forces at the disposal of the state fared? That the most powerful weapons available to them, including specifically the heavy ones which account for the bulk of their budgets, are entirely useless against these and similar movements scarcely requires pointing out. What is needed are intelligence services, police forces, and riot-control forces, all of them operating both in- and out of uniform.[36] And in fact, since the onset of modern terrorism during the late sixties and early seventies, there is scarcely any advanced country which has not attempted to strengthen the "forces of order". Among the most common measures are the expansion of intelligence organizations and their coordination with each other; the establishment of special anti-terrorist squads trained in hostage-rescue operations and the like; the development and acquisition of a vast array of improved radio communications, foolproof identity cards, closed circuit television cameras, metal detectors, X-ray machines, night vision devices, listening devices, automatic bomb-disposal devices, and, most recently, machines

36. See Daeniker, G. (1995) *The Guardian Soldier: on the Nature and Use of Future Armed Conflict*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, New York.

for detecting radioactive, chemical, and biological materials;[37] all backed up by computers where data from these and other sources is stored, collated, processed, and sent to wherever it is needed, instantaneously and sometimes across borders as states try to coordinate their responses to the threat. Should the security forces in certain countries have their way, then it is only a question of time before each and every one of us will be ordered to have his body implanted with a chip that will enable his or her movements to be tracked twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; and even that is only the tip of the iceberg.

As various groups concerned with the preservation of privacy are telling us,[38] these developments are certainly disturbing. Perhaps even more disturbing, in face of the potential dangers—including, besides the ordinary bomb or guerrilla attack, chemical terrorism, biological terrorism, and nuclear terrorism—is the apparent inability of the various police forces to maintain the monopoly over violence in the hands of the state. Even in developed countries, the most that the majority of them can boast of is to have kept terrorism within "acceptable" boundaries. However, as people get used to watching terrorist actions unfold on TV the definition of what constitutes "acceptable" seems to be stretched year by year. To some extent the change has been recognized by formal international law. In 1977, the Fourth Geneva Convention was signed, affording some protection to combatants who are not recognizable from a distance and do not wear uniforms while participating in military operations.[39]

Meanwhile, from Washington's White House to London's Downing Street, the change that has taken place is obvious even to the casual tourist. Entire city-blocks in which presidents and prime ministers live and work, and which until not so long ago were open to traffic, are being sealed off and turned into fortresses; if only because nobody is willing to assume the responsibility, once closed it is unlikely that they will ever open again. Their protection is entrusted to uniformed and, especially, non-uniformed personnel with every imaginable technological device ready to hand. From Sweden to Israel, leaders who used to walk the streets freely and without an escort have long ceased doing so. They are now seen by the public, if at all, only when they are whisked from one place to another in their curtained, heavily armored, cars; to mislead potential terrorists, there are often several identical cars in a convoy or even several convoys moving in different directions. The places in which they are expected to appear are routinely sealed off and searched, sometimes for days or weeks before the event, as are the surrounding areas. It is the kind of security a Cesare Borgia, constantly assassinating others and constantly fearing assassination himself, might have been proud of and which, just a generation or two ago, was only considered necessary to protect some of the world's worst dictators such as Hitler and Stalin.

37. CNN, 16 March 1998.

38. See e.g. Davies, S. (1996) *Big Brother; Britain's Web of Surveillance and the New Technological Order*, Pan Books, London.

39. See, out of the vast literature, Watkin, K. (2005) *Warriors without Rights? Combatants, Unprivileged Belligerents, and the Struggle over Legitimacy*, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, no. 2, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

If only because security is one of the most manpower-intensive fields of human endeavor, providing it can be extremely expensive. To secure a military base or turn a block of government buildings into a fortress is one thing; to offer the same kind of protection to an entire country, another. Even supposing it could be made affordable and effective, it would render ordinary life next to impossible by leading to an intolerable slowing-down of the most ordinary activities. For these and other reasons—including, not least, the likelihood of being criticized in case of failure—many states are reluctant to engage their own forces on the task. At best, they will train anti-terrorist units and keep them in reserve in case they are called upon to deal with high-profile emergencies such as bombings, kidnappings, and the like. The financial and organizational burden represented by day to day security, however, is something which, as experience shows, they are quite ready to shift to private industry and individuals.

Whether because the government has ordered them to, as in the case of civil aviation in many countries, or because they simply do not trust the state to provide them with reasonable security, individuals and private industry have, in fact, been looking after themselves to a growing extent and on a constantly increasing scale. Depending on the nature of the perceived threat, the citizens of many countries have become accustomed to have their belongings checked, and/or their persons searched, each time they enter a department store, movie house, football stadium, rock concert, or similar places where crowds gather and where a terrorist act is therefore both more probable and, should it in fact take place, likely to result in heavy casualties. Individuals, neighborhoods, and corporations have tried to protect themselves against terrorism and crime by hiring private guards, erecting security fences, installing alarm systems and closed circuit TV, demanding proof of identity from employees and visitors who enter and leave buildings and installations, requiring badges, and much more.

While not all countries are affected to the same extent, so far those measures seem to have done little to win the war on terrorism. What they have done is to turn private security into a growth industry *par excellence*, world-wide.[40] In the U.S alone there are currently more people employed by private security firms than there are uniformed personnel in the armed forces; still the expansion is going on as, day by day, more and more targets are perceived as needing protection. Like so many others, the security industry is heavily centralized at the top. Some of the leading firms in the field are presently in command of private armies numbering in the thousands and more.

In many developing countries, notably New Guinea and Sierra Leone and Liberia, mercenaries have already been used to stage coups and countercoups.

40. See, for Germany, Jean d'Heur, B. (1994) 'Von der Gefahrenabwehr als staatlicher Angelegenheit zum Einszatz privater Sicherheitskraefte—einige Rechtpolitische und Verfassungsrechtliche Anmerkungen', *Archiv des Offentlichen Rechts*, vol. 119, no. 1, pp. 107–136; for France, Coqeteau, F. (1990) 'L'etat Face au commerce de la securite', *L'Annee Sociologique*, vol. 40, pp. 97–124; and for Italy, Ogliati-Vittorio, A. M. (1988) 'La Defesa Armata Privata in Italia', *Sociologia del Diritto*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 47–71.

While mercenaries do not yet threaten the political stability of developed countries, the range of services they offer is astonishing. They include research and development, both of weapons and of scenarios; recruiting, training, and testing personnel of every sort, from simple guards to the kind who specialize in fortifying entire compounds and conducting sophisticated investigations; selling, renting or leasing equipment that ranges from ten-cent plastic badges and crowd-control equipment all the way to million dollar explosive detectors; vetting personnel, detecting fraud, conducting polygraph tests, and wiretapping; planning, building, and operating security systems of every kind; as well as probing those defenses, also by means of specially designated "red" teams. Perhaps most surprising of all, their clients include not just private individuals, neighborhoods, and corporations, but, in some cases, government itself.

From the men in the boardroom to the guards at the gate, the personnel employed by the private security industry are often ex-military, intelligence and police in search of greener pastures. Sometimes prior service in one of those bodies is a condition for being taken on by the industry in question. In other cases, it is the policemen themselves who moonlight during their free time; they offer their services to everybody from the owners of football teams to shopkeepers.[41] Their training, which is equivalent to that given to the members of the state's own security apparatus, is thus put at the disposal of purely private objectives. As the American occupation of Iraq illustrates very well, with every passing day the members of the security industry and the state's security establishment appear to be growing more and more interchangeable.

Clearly the impact of these developments differs sharply from one place to another. Still, should present trends continue then the outcome is in sight, and indeed already now it is the subject of much science fiction[42] as well as the kind of games that may be run on one's personal computer. The provision of security—which since at least Thomas Hobbes has been recognized as *the* most important function of the corporation known as the state—will again be shared out among other entities.[43] Some will be territorial but not sovereign, i.e. communities larger than states; others, perhaps more numerous, neither sovereign nor territorial. Some will operate in the name of political or ideological or religious or ethnic objectives, others with an eye purely to private gain. Whatever their goals, all will need money to survive. They will get it by contracting with states to do their dirty business for them, or by selling their services to other organizations, or by blackmailing the population;[44] e.g. during

41. See Vardalis, J. J. (1992) 'Privatization of Public Police', *Security Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 210–214.

42. E.g. Stephenson, N. (1992) *Snow Crash*, Bantam Books, New York.

43. See Mansbach, R. W., Ferguson, Y. H. & Lampert, D. E. ((1976) *The Web of World Politics, Nonstate Actors in the Global System*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, p. 297.

44. On these methods see, in general, Naylor, R. T. (1993) 'The Insurgent Economy: Black Market Operations of Guerrilla Organizations', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 13–51; and, for a case study, Maguire, K. (1993) 'Fraud, Extortion and Racketeering: the Black Economy in Northern Ireland', *Ibid*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 273–292.

the PLO's uprising against Israel all three methods were used, whether by different factions or simultaneously by the same ones. Conversely, and as is already the case in some places, it is likely that states will adopt the principle of "user pays". They will start charging fees for at least some kinds of security, such as providing assistance in case of a burglary, which used to be provided—to the extent that they were provided—for free.

Thus the likelihood grows that the state will lose its monopoly over those forms of organized violence which still remain viable in the nuclear age, becoming one actor among many. Spreading from the bottom up, the conduct of that violence may revert to what it was as late as the first half of the seventeenth century: namely a capitalist enterprise little different from, and intimately linked with, so many others. Where princes and other military entrepreneurs used to contract with each other in order to make a profit—an Amsterdam capitalist, Louis de Geer, once provided the Swedish Government with a complete navy, sailors and commanders up to the vice admiral included—in the future various public, semi-public and private corporations will do the same. With some of them security will form their main line of business, whereas with others it will be ancillary. Some will be legal, others criminal; although as time goes on and the various organizations and people interact with each other—if only in order to learn how to provide security better—the differences between them are likely to diminish.

In many so-called developing countries, the situation just described already exists and has, indeed, never ceased to exist. Whether acting on their own—mounting private guards, even setting up entire armies—or by forming agreements with local insurgents, people and corporations are trying to safeguard their property and their operations; a situation often known as neocolonialism.[45] It is true that most citizens of most advanced countries are still able to sleep safely in their beds, albeit that more of those beds are coming to be protected by weapons and surrounded by walls. As of 1999, an estimated three million U.S citizens were living in tens of thousands of gated communities, and the numbers were growing every day.[46] Both for them and for their less fortunate countrymen, future life will likely become less secure, or at any rate more obsessed with security, than the one which was provided by the most powerful states of the past.

Through a Glass, Darkly

Whereas, during the sixty years since 1945, the number of states has tripled, this does not necessarily mean that states, qua organizations, are becoming stronger. Numerical growth may, in fact, be a sign of decay; what everybody has is worth

45. See Clapham, C. (1996) *Africa and the International System, the Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Particularly part 3.

46. Blakely, E. J. & Snyder, M. G. (1999) *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States,* Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC, p. 3.

little or nothing. Furthermore, almost all newly-created states are subject to the same forces as the old ones. They are able to fight each other only when they are weak to begin with; their financial, fiscal, and welfare systems are weak; feeling the power of globalization, they hasten to become members of every kind of international organization that will take them; plus, in many cases, they are unable to maintain law and order within their borders.

Will states win the war against terrorism or will terrorism continue to spread, threatening and disrupting the lives of ordinary people not only in developing countries but in developed ones as well? Will the growth of the private security industry strengthen the states that employ it or encourage their citizens to employ it, or will the day come when, like some Frankenstein monster, it turns its guns on those who created it? Will the various measures now being put into place to combat terrorism, from the Patriot Act down, achieve their purpose, or will they merely create a situation where more and more people, losing their faith in the state's essential fairness as well as its ability to protect them, will either start looking after themselves or take up arms against it? At the time of writing, the jury concerning these questions is still out.

Be the answers to these questions as they may, the remaining three processes outlined in this paper seem to be advancing relentlessly. Whatever presidents, prime ministers, ministers of defense, chiefs of staff, and other "strategists" may say, in practice the ability of states to wage war on other states has, largely thanks to nuclear proliferation, been steadily declining over the last sixty years. Whatever socialists (in the US, liberals), may say, in practice almost every state around the world has been cutting its welfare services and privatizing its assets; the latter process has now reached the point where even port-operations and national electricity grids are for sale to domestic and foreign investors. Whatever proponents of national sovereignty may say, in practice advancing technology, particularly transportation and communication, has created a situation where hardly any state can survive, let alone prosper, without becoming involved with, hence in part restricted by, international organizations of every sort.

What the future may bring is anybody's guess. It is, however, likely that, should the four factors described in the present paper continue to operate, the state will gradually find itself replaced, in part at least, by other organizations. Some, such as the European Union and the United Nations, will stand above the state and will be able to demand compliance as a price of further membership. Others, such as the multinational organizations, the media, and various terrorist organizations will be of a completely different kind. What they all have in common is that they either assume some of the functions of the state, such as providing welfare and security, or else use various means to escape its control, or both. What they also have in common is that, thanks largely to the fact that they do not have either sovereign territory or borders, they are better able to take advantage of modern, systems-based, technology than states are.

To sum up, the three hundred something year period that opened at Westphalia in 1648 during which the state was the most powerful and most

important organization in which people lived—first in Europe, then in other places too—is coming to an end. The full significance of the transition cannot be foreseen. It is likely to be eventful; and, as is already the case in many "failed" states across Asia and Africa, bloody. Still, given that the last full-scale conflict between the world's most powerful states (World War II) left some sixty million people dead, the future cannot be much worse than the past. To quote a verse by Mao, written in response to the question, what the world would look like in the wake of a nuclear war:

> The sun will keep rising
>
> Trees will keep growing
>
> And women
>
> Will keep having children.