Multipolarity

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Multipolarity

The promise of disharmony

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Foreword

Peter W. Schulze

"Europa kann seine Stabilität nur gewinnen,
wenn es sicherheitspolitisch zwischen Lissabon und Wladiwostok
für seine Staaten eine Struktur mit gemeinsamen Regeln formt".

["Europe can only obtain stability if it constructs a security architecture
for its states between Lisbon and Vladivostok, based on common rules".]

Egon Bahr (1998, 84)

The current international order is in transition, driven by the interplay of its main actors: Washington; Moscow; Beijing; and less significantly, the European Union. Other emerging powers are also challenging the present arrangement and if successful, they will eventually create a multipolar global order. The transient international order is currently characterised by chronic instability, regional and global turmoil, and a dramatic decline in its ease of governance. The central question is whether the emerging multipolar order can provide security and welfare for the international community. Or, will we see policies based on protracted narrow definitions of national interests, undermining opportunities for trust and confidence-building among the driving forces of the transformation process? Are we bound to reawaken memories of the bipolar, Cold War era, with its proxy wars that instrumentalised domestic and regional conflicts for external purposes? The chances of reforming and democratising the United Nations are rather slim. Mutual trust and consensus over the essential challenges facing the world's chief international actors are missing. This book is devoted to the questions of what the multipolar world order could lead to, and how it could affect the international system's major powers.

As *Richard Sakwa* concludes, the leading actors themselves are also exposed to drastic changes. According to Sakwa, the international system today is a binary order, with *secondary institutions* of international society at the top, including the United Nations and other institutions of economic, financial, legal, environmental, and social governance, while at a lower level are competing *orders*, whose relations are governed by the primary institu-

tions of international society. Within this framework, Sakwa examines the contest between two putative post-Cold War orders. On one hand, the *transformative* order outlined by Mikhail Gorbachev—to which successive Russian leaders have been committed—is now joined by China and a few other countries in anti-hegemonic alignment. On the other hand, the US-led liberal international order became radicalised in the post-Cold War era in the absence of a serious peer competitor.

Richard Falk explores the United States' response to world order challenges with a special concern for the rise of China and the qualitative decline of democracy in many important countries. On one level, the new situation at the global level pits China, as the master of soft power, on a collision course with the United States, the master of hard power. This collision course is threatened by the outbreak of wars between states that possess or seek nuclear weapons, by ecological decline, and by demagogic styles of leadership.

Jia Qingguo argues that the international community is rightly worried about the future of the international order if the US refuses to play an ongoing leadership role, pointing to dire consequences: a looming trade war; the potential collapse of the international non-proliferation regime; and the failure of initiatives that address global challenges like climate change, cyber security, arms control, and pandemic disease. In this respect, the Trump presidency amounts to a game changer. Washington no longer subscribes to the view that the US needs to maintain the international order in order to protect its own interests. Despite its economic and industrial strength and enhanced international reputation, Jia Qingguo denies that China can step into the role of world leader in the near future.

Sergey Karaganov and *Dmitry Suslov* say the collapse of outgoing international orders requires creative participation in the building of a new, balanced world order. Both authors assume the hegemonic position of the US—along with the attraction of its prevailing ideological scheme, institutionalised international liberalism—will steadily evaporate. They define Russia as a major supplier of global security, as is borne out by its policies in the Middle East and Central Asia, and by its efforts to prevent the expansion of Western alliances in Europe. The chapter recommends that Russia formalise this status politically and revive its commitment to international law. In geopolitical terms, the authors argue Russia's most promising option "in the coming years would be a further pivot to the East to create a comprehensive partnership in Greater Eurasia". In order to achieve this, Russia, China, India, Japan, and other actors in Asia and Eurasia should develop Greater

Eurasian and Indo-Pacific partnerships as compatible and cooperative—not adversarial—projects. Only if these goals are successfully accomplished can Russia turn again to Europe and improve relations with leading European countries.

Alexey Gromyko takes up the concepts of Greater Europe and Greater Eurasia. He explores the various models of international relations that have existed since 1945, emphasising the increasing complexity of the contemporary world and promoting the idea of constructive polycentrism reliant on modern international law with the UN and its Charter at the core. Gromyko dwells on the EU's inability to conduct independent foreign policy as a consequence of its undeclared lowest-common-denominator principle. Regarding Russia, he points to numerous external threats that have been aggravated by the broader challenges faced by Europe, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. External conditions have hampered Russia's goals for economic modernisation and social development. Gromyko concludes that Russia's goal to establish itself in the twenty-first century, not only as a European, or even a Euro-Asian power, but as a power of the three oceans, is impossible to achieve unless Wider Europe becomes a reliable and stable region. Without this precondition, Russia's "turn to the East", as a long-term diversification of its economic and political policies, will be fraught with significant risks.

Raffaele Marchetti investigates the predominant macro-political trends at the international level and examines the three main world order arrangements that could emerge in the coming decades. World order one: The West vs. the rest; world order two: Eurasian integration and US solitude; and world order three: Enlarged West vs. China. These options derive from the current distribution of power at the international level and from how current trends enable us to extrapolate possible future developments. Each involves the four major powers in the world to come: China; the European Union; Russia; and the US. The international system will most likely pivot on the interaction between the declining hegemon, the US, and the emerging power, China. Many see the relative decline of the US and the growth of China as setting the two on a collision course. Marchetti points to significant balancing dynamics between the two countries, primarily their economic interdependence.

Adrian Pabst claims that the liberal world order, which came into existence after World War Two and expanded at the end of the Cold War, is in retreat. Brexit, alongside other political insurgencies, marks a popular revolt against the economic and social liberalism underpinning globalisation, mass

immigration, and multilateral free trade. Trump's election undermines aspects of the Atlantic alliance and weakens the West's commitment to multilateral cooperation, international law, environmental protection, the promotion of democracy, and the defence of universal human rights. The demise of democratisation and the rise of strongmen in countries as diverse as China, India, Russia, Japan, and the Philippines pose the most significant threat to the institutions of the liberal world order since the slide into dictatorship during the interwar period. As part of a wider shift from a values-based foreign policy to an interest-based contest among great powers, the Western-dominated, liberal, post-1989 world order is giving way to a multi-order whereby the international system, with the UN and other international organisations at its apex, will endure, but will also witness competition for hegemony among great powers.

Winfried Veit believes Africa will be a major force influencing the future world order, mainly due to its dramatically increasing demographic weight. Europe will be most affected by developments in Africa, due to its geographic proximity, historic links, migration, and terrorist threats. Possible scenarios for the coming decades include Africa as a destabilising force, or alternatively as a booming *young* continent, or either way as a Chinese zone of influence. This thesis poses the question of whether Europe's security and wellbeing is more threatened by the challenges of unrelenting migration from the south than by security threats to its east.

Walter Schwimmer views the story of European unity as both one of success and one of crises and disagreements. Brexit is not the only problem. The EU lacks a strategy for the future and currently has to tackle a *poly-crisis* including the repercussions of the global financial crisis, problems in the eurozone, internal disputes over common values, the threat of terrorism, and a deterioration of relations with Russia that is not only due to the Ukraine conflict. Schwimmer is convinced there is no Europe without Russia and no Russia without Europe. Recalling the Meseberg declaration of June 2010, he considers a flexible and leanly structured "European Security Council". The future of Europe must involve unity in diversity, mutual understanding, and a concentration of efforts towards peace.

Jacopo Pepe argues that with the decline in transatlantic centrality, different geopolitical and geo-economic macro-structural trends across Eurasia, which both predate China's Belt and Road initiative and transcend it, are leading to a different kind of order that can be defined in the somewhat contradictory terms of *fluid hegemonic multipolarity*. Neither a Western-style ar-

chitecture nor a new hegemon, be it China or another, will be ascendant in the wake of US power. Instead, Pepe argues the continent will return to the structural status quo ante of half a millennium ago, when mutually dependent civilisations with different socioeconomic and value systems—in those days both nomadic and sedentary populations—existed in a fluid, self-sustaining, but less stable equilibrium.

I argue that the diffusion of power among new actors has questioned Washington's leadership and simultaneously weakened international rules and institutions like the United Nations. With the hegemonic role of the US practically over, the transition into the emerging order is confronted with a complex abundance of locally, regionally, and internationally interwoven clashes that are fundamentally different from the conflicts of the bipolar era. Under such circumstances, creating stability and security has become more difficult and risky for leading international actors. I emphasise that a balance of deterrence has been the crucial structural factor in the international system since the era of bipolarity. Because of this, the objectives of great powers can only be achieved through soft power and a restrained use of hard power intervention. Against a backdrop of transformational change and internationally systemic threats, I discuss leading US, European, and Russian reports that present core arguments for governments on how the changing nature of power is influencing relations between and within countries for decades to come. I focus on US National Intelligence Council (NIC) reports, a recent study by the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), and the EU's 2016 view of global developments. What all three reports share in common is reflection on how EU, US, and Russian experts view global developments as they make political recommendations. No report presents a precise prognosis for the coming decades but all share a vision of the future for the sake of their respective national and regional administrations, highlighting necessary decisions and likely challenges in light of ongoing international transformation.

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Multipolar prospects amid multiple challenges: Resurgent nationalism and declining US leadership

Richard Falk

Point of departure

This chapter explores the United States' response to world order challenges with a special concern for the rise of China and the qualitative decline of democracy in many important countries. In one sense, this new situation at the global level pits China, as the master of soft power, on a collision course with the United States, the master of hard power. This collision course is threatened by the outbreak of wars between states that possess or seek nuclear weapons, by ecological decline, and by demagogic styles of leadership. The new global situation seems inclined to rest its hopes for the future on a weak, consultative form of multilateralism and geopolitical prudence.

Yet this picture is clouded by nationalist retreats from global leadership roles, especially by the US. Such a dangerous set of circumstances has resulted from many causes, above all, irresponsible and negligent responses to the final phases of the Cold War, the Soviet collapse, and the 9/11 attacks. The current depolarised drift with regard to world order is neither sustainable nor desirable, prompting a search for alternative futures, including benign forms of bipolarity.

First stage of world order after World War Two: Peace diplomacy

Three goals dominated American-led efforts to re-establish world order after the end of World War Two. The primary goal was to avoid any recurrence of major warfare. World War Two had been the most devastating war in history when measured by casualties and costs, a reality dramatised by the atomic bombs dropped on Japanese cities and the anticipated post-war advent of

nuclear weapons at the disposal of several states. The United Nations was established to reinforce this resolve with the core commitment of its Charter being the prohibition of all international uses of force except in cases of self-defence against a prior armed attack. Such a norm had truly revolutionary potential, provided it was respected and implemented.

The second goal, given a slightly lower priority by Western political leaders, yet still of utmost importance, was to take steps to prevent the onset of another Great Depression. In this regard, although combined with other strategic objectives, the rapid reconstruction of Europe was regarded as indispensable and was facilitated by the Marshall Plan, which provided major economic assistance to Western European governments, especially Germany, recovering from a devastating defeat and shocking political experience. The international dimension of this resolve to stabilise the world economy led to the formation of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the IMF, later supplemented by the WTO, with the overriding goal of using monetary and trade policy to maintain economic stability and promote economic growth in the face of various pressures.

The third goal was to include Germany and Japan in arrangements designed to achieve a peaceful and prosperous world order, as well as a geopolitical atmosphere that would oppose and contain the Soviet Union and resist Marxist penetrations of Western economies. This was interpreted so as to pursue a peace diplomacy that was not punitive in the way the treatment of Germany—widely believe to be a contributing factor on top of German extremism and ultra-nationalism—after World War One was. At the same time, the nature of World War Two demanded some demonstrable justice in regard to the criminality of the defeated countries and the just cause of the victors. The solution was found in the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, which held surviving German and Japanese leaders individually responsible for war crimes, a kind of symbolic way of achieving closure on patterns of unacceptable behaviour, although flawed by exempting the crimes of the victors from scrutiny. In this way, the individual accountability of a small number of individuals accused of terrible crimes was combined with non-punitive collective policies towards the defeated Axis powers.

All in all, with the United States abandoning its traditional isolationist foreign policy, taking the lead role as architect of the post-war international order, there was a widespread sense that a reasonably benevolent approach had been adopted in Washington, which generated hope in the future of international relations. At the same time, these constructive arrangements

were soon threatened by the looming rivalry with the Soviet Union, viewed as an expansionist and ambitious international actor, especially due to its approach to Eastern Europe and policies taken in territory of the three divided countries of Germany, Korea, and Vietnam.

Second stage of world order after World War Two: The Cold War

Whereas peace diplomacy emphasised the unity of the coalition established to combat fascism, and was bound together by a rhetoric that expressed a universal dedication to peaceful relations and human rights, the geopolitical landscape was dominated by the US-Soviet rivalry, which soon evolved into a full-blown ideological, diplomatic, and military confrontation taking on menacing proportions after the Soviet Union acquired its own nuclear weapons. The central focus of tensions was Europe, particularly the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the division of Germany, although the divisions of Korea and Vietnam would lead to the worst wars fought during the Cold War era.

This Cold War atmosphere produced a bipolar global order, and dimmed hopes that the nascent UN could function effectively to prevent war. In a sense, this eventuality had been foreshadowed by vesting veto rights in the five states which had prevailed in World War Two, greatly undermining the role of the Security Council in contexts of war and peace, producing gridlock and disillusionment, and reviving dependence on the security logic of balance-of-power geopolitics in the now far more threatening context of bipolarity and nuclear weaponry. The marginalisation of the UN reflected both the practical need to overcome the deficiencies of the League of Nations—which had failed to gain the participation of several major states through the exclusion of geopolitical considerations from its constitutional framework—and the sense that cooperation among dominant political actors was not sustainable in the absence of a common enemy, as had been the case during the struggle against fascism and Japanese imperialism.

The Cold War coincided with the most significant transformation of the second half of the twentieth century, the collapse of European colonialism and the subsequent rise of the global south. This prioritised economic, social, and political development, and the idea of catching up with the West with respect to several modernist metrics of success.

The interplay of the Cold War with widely shared fears of a hot war led to a global pattern that was relatively stable in the north, but quite volatile in the south. The two superpowers felt they could compete for ascendancy in the global south without raising the risk of a collapse in geopolitical stability to imprudent heights. Despite some close calls, especially in Europe but also in the struggles for control of divided Korea and Vietnam, the West's dual objectives were upheld: Soviet—and Chinese—containment, without the outbreak of a direct war. At the same time, the collapse of colonialism and universal endorsement of self-determination as an inalienable *legal* right achieved a rollback of Western hegemony.

Mishandling unipolarity

The Cold War ended abruptly and surprisingly, preceded by Gorbachev's softening of its ideological dimension and his offering to the world of a taste of *normative globalisation*: nuclear disarmament, conflict prevention, and common security, as well as the internal reforms signalled by glasnost and perestroika.[1]

The failed response: Unipolarity

With the Cold War over, a unipolar moment appeared to be the most accurate way of understanding the geopolitical structure of world politics after this painless termination of bipolarity, which fortunately occurred without a major war (Krauthammer 2002a, 5–17).

In retrospect, it appears the US suffered from a paralysing version of triumphalism after the Soviet collapse, typified by various narratives of its vic-

1 As the whole world learned these two Russian words, I was told by Shakhnazarov at the time that Gorbachev wanted to do for Russian communism what Franklin Roosevelt had done for capitalism, saving the system, not destroying it. Momentarily partnering with Reagan, reaching a briefly encouraging climax at the Reykjavik Summit, afterwards came the collapse of the Berlin Wall and soon thereafter, the fall of the Soviet Union. American triumphalism followed with an embrace of neoliberalism throughout the Bush and Clinton presidencies, and a strong conviction that democratic and capitalist states do not make war against one another.

tory, most influentially, perhaps, by Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History* (1992).[2] Some found the American-led response to Iraq's attack and annexation of Kuwait promising, especially the peacekeeping consensus at the UN, and the proclamation by George H.W. Bush of a *new world order* based on the renewed potential for cooperation among the permanent five members of the Security Council, and a more robust role, in keeping with Charter intentions, for the UN. Unfortunately, these hopes were transitory.

The Gulf War of 1991, although mandated by the Security Council, seemed accompanied by excessive uses of force, and ended with the imposition of a harsh sanctions regime on a defeated and devastated Iraq. This rejection of the lesson of World War One was exhibited by imposing a punitive peace that inflicted massive suffering on Iraq's civilian population over the course of the next twelve years, preceding the initiation of a war of aggression against the country in 2003, certainly one of the proximate causes of ongoing regional turmoil.

The Bush Sr. presidency quickly showed its lack of commitment to the emergence of a new world order beyond its opportunistic usefulness in 1991 for the mobilisation of an anti-Iraq consensus in support of military action. The idea that this was the beginning of more serious forms of collective global governance in the aftermath of the Cold War was just not part of the American political imaginary. Instead, the efficiency of the military operation at the core of the Gulf War was predominantly interpreted as restoring US confidence—previously lost by way of a traumatic defeat in Vietnam—in its war machine to prevail quickly and at acceptable costs. The White House also made it clear that the new world order was only intended for this one instance and did not represent an American commitment to accept UN authority in future situations inconsistent with its own assessment of national interests. The American Secretary of State at the time, James Baker, made it clear that his boss in the White House had made a mistake at the time by associating the new world order with UN peacekeeping rather than with the triumph of capitalist constitutionalism over Soviet branded state socialism.

Bill Clinton's presidency was no more capable of shaping an imaginative international response to the new realities of international life. It promoted the Baker version of the new world order under the banner of encouraging democratisation around the world, as well as by placing the efficiency of

2 Ahmet Davutoğlu (2018) repudiates the end-of-history interpretation of the Cold War's political outcome, demonstrating instead that it resulted in an acceleration of historical change.

transnational capital high on its list of policy priorities (Falk 1999). Its goal was to facilitate the transnational flow of capital and it contributed to a perverse shift of ideological emphasis from Keynesian to neoliberal economics. This shift is significantly responsible for the various dimensions of inequality that now afflict the internal public order of many states, giving rise to the present era of freely elected autocrats, and the severe qualitative decline in democracy worldwide.

The tragedy of these responses to the end of the Cold War was the lost opportunity to exert two major forms of constructive US leadership: proposing serious international negotiations seeking nuclear disarmament, in keeping with the Article VI commitment of the Non Proliferation Treaty; and strengthening the UN by firstly adding permanent non-Western members to the Security Council as a reflection of the new geopolitical landscape and secondly by proposing restrictions on the use of vetoes to circumstances of self-defence. This openness at the end of the Cold War was the great lost opportunity to establish normative globalisation with an accompanying advantage of a much-diminished polarisation of international relations with respect to global policy generally and in relation to the security agenda in particular. What occurred in the 1990s was a degree of depolarisation, yet without normative enhancement through institutions and cooperative protection of the *global* interest, producing instead two disappointing post-Cold War approaches: a governmental focus by both liberals and conservatives on giving market forces a free hand in transnational arenas of trade and investment; and a neoconservative upsurge that advocated taking advantage of unipolarity so as to spread American influence and values, if necessary by force, especially in the Middle East, striking quickly while this temporarily favourable situation lasted.[3]

Mishandling mega-terrorism after 9/11

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were apparently the work of a non-state actor, heralding two broad developments that affected the structure and processes of world order: firstly, the re-securitisa-

3 For such advocacy see the Project for a New American Century's *Rebuilding America's Defenses* report (Kagan et al 2000) and the *Clean Break* report by the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (2006).

tion of international relations that re-established the primacy of politics over economics as determining the trajectory of geopolitical behaviour; secondly, the response to the attacks being categorised within the war paradigm rather than the crime paradigm, which had always been relied upon in past government responses to terrorism (Falk 2018).

In one respect, the war on terror was an extension of unipolarity, especially given the political logic articulated by George W. Bush, to the effect that, "you are either with us, or with the terrorists" (2001). Even more so than during the Cold War, the war on terror has seen no legitimate space given to traditional international law doctrine and the sovereign right to opt for neutrality so as to remain disengaged from an ongoing war. Beyond the obligatory solidarity with the counter-terrorist side, there is a sense that territorial sovereignty can be legally breached if a foreign government is unable to eliminate terrorists from its soil. There are no safe havens if the world becomes the battlefield.

These developments had drastic effects. The structure of international humanitarian law and the constraints of the law of war were gravely weakened, if not cast aside. These normative orders had evolved to regulate interstate warfare but they did not fit neatly into the logic of a warlike conflict between a state and a political movement without a territorial base, armed forces, or a statist identity.[4]

The moral polarisation associated with a view of terrorism and its perpetrators as *evil* is quite different from regarding one's international enemies as continuing to be members of international society, as is exhibited by UN membership. If the adversary is evil, it has no claim on rights or reciprocity of duties, and diplomacy is inappropriate. The fact that torture was practiced as a matter of policy, and those detained were denied prisoner-of-war status in accord with the Geneva Conventions is illustrative of this counter-terrorist logic, although it also produced legalist and pragmatist critics (for a range of views see Yoo 2006; see also Sands 2005; Danner 2006).

In this regard, the immediate decision of the Bush Jr. presidency to treat the 9/11 attacks in terms of war rather crime has led to numerous concerns

4 ISIS made the disastrous mistake in 2014 of claiming to establish a territorial caliphate in Iraq and Syria, which was substantially destroyed by 2018. The tactical mistake was to expose itself to a form of conflict in which military superiority could control the political outcome. It was not so much the proclamation of a new caliphate, but reliance on a Westphalian claim to exert sovereign control over delimited territory that needed to be defended against a technologically superior adversary.

about civilisational decline and the abandonment of international law and common humanity (Weber 2017). The names Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo are often invoked to epitomise what went wrong in responding to 9/11. As with the general tenor of world order, an opportunity existed to devise a regime of common security adapted to regulating non-state violent political crimes. This would have created greater reliance on overtly cooperative arrangements among national police forces and a stronger set of capabilities entrusted to Interpol.

The 9/11 response, by way of a series of controversial international wars that did not achieve their goals despite massive military commitment, weakened international law, the UN, and multilateralism generally (Falk 2007). Re-securitisation also led to internal security initiatives that impinged on human rights and diminished the quality of democratic life in a series of important countries, creating a lethal trade-off between security and freedom in previously liberal societies.

At the same time, the rise of China, India, Brazil, the return of Russia to the global scene, and the emergence of a number of strong mid-sized powers have induced calls for policymaking and problem-solving procedures that improve upon the veto-prone Security Council. Economic power has been more dispersed, making the old mechanisms, principally the Bretton Woods institutions and the G7, unable to gain as much traction for their policies as in the past. The G20 was established as a more representative venue for global economic policy but lacks institutionalisation and effective authority to implement its recommended policies. This has created a confusing situation characterised by inadequate international regulation, and states increasingly relying on national economic policy at the risk of trade wars and regressive forms of protectionism. The result has been a weak form of multipolarity with regard to agendas for trade, investment, and development. In relation to global security, what seems to be emerging is an amalgam of military unipolarity so far incapable of producing any impressive political results and a helpless global passivity with respect to atrocities and massacres, typified by responses to the Syrian war that has been raging since 2011. In Syria, it is questionable whether a government persistently guilty of crimes against humanity, yet still a member of the UN, retains the privileged legitimacy of receiving military support that would be illegitimate if provided to insurgents.

Resurgent nationalism and the decline of democracy

Amidst the complexities of geopolitical leadership's failure to produce a safer, more sustainable, and more equitable structure of world order based on increasing respect for the global rule of law and the need for both procedures and political will to meet the challenges of climate change, several regressive tendencies have emerged. As new wars have raged, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, and parts of Africa have been ravaged by the effects of global warming, large numbers of refugees and migrants, and the global reach of anti-Western political extremism, a generation of ultra-nationalist leaders has been elected, exemplified by Donald Trump in the United States and the related phenomenon of Trumpism around the world. This tendency has been accentuated by nationalist reactions to the threats to identity and sovereignty posed by minimally regulated forms of neoliberal capitalism.

Such trends have weakened international capabilities and approaches to multilateral problem-solving, and produced a pronounced decline in the role of multilateral institutions, beginning with the UN but embracing virtually the entire institutional framework of the international liberal international order (well-depicted by Ikenberry 2011).

What has emerged from these world order developments is a set of circumstances that can be best described as an anaemic form of multipolarity. The weakness arises from the combination of US withdrawal from leadership on public order issues—a role it has played for at least the last 70 years—with the gravity of current public order challenges associated with climate change, nuclearism, global migration, *new wars*, and world trade. At present, there is no alternative candidate capable and willing to fill the leadership role vacated by the United States, and thus able to compensate for the weakness of the UN arising from its predominantly statist and geopolitical operating procedure. The impact of resurgent nationalism creates further obstacles to cooperative problem-solving, shifting interaction among sovereign states towards *transactional* bilateral relations, which tend to emphasise power disparities and accentuate inequalities within a win-lose logic of statecraft. Such a regressive orientation, destructive of any hope for the gradual development of a global community, is particularly pronounced in Trump's approach to world order and economic policy.

Alternatives to anaemic multipolarity

Anaemic multipolarity is inherently unstable, given the increasing tensions and harm resulting from contemporary global challenges which have been insufficiently attended to. Either a creative alternative will emerge or there is likely to be a series of regressive trends and events associated with a deterioration of general conditions arising from one—or more—unmet challenge. The most plausible positive alternatives, under these conditions, are multilateralism with benevolent leadership or bipolarity with benevolent leadership.

Multilateralism with benevolent leadership

China has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to extend influence through soft power, together with the greatest surge in economic growth in history. China seems to have a mature appreciation of the need for global problem-solving and management of global warming, nuclear policy, and the world economy. Whether it can assert the kind of leadership that the United States showed in the period after World War Two is an unanswered question. As a global leader, China would experience several drawbacks: the lack of a widely spoken language beyond its borders; the lack of a globally traded currency; the absence of experience in global, as distinct from regional, diplomacy; and an ideology that lacks adherents, even if China's actual practice is rather flexible under the heading of *market socialism*.

The United States is at its lowest point yet, so far as global leadership and influence is concerned, at least with respect to the last hundred years. This imperils structures and procedures for cooperative problem-solving that have evolved over many years, structures which at their best, although less than what was needed and desired, were still contributions to a more orderly global scene. Part of American decline is exhibited by its naked and almost obsessive reliance on *hard* power capabilities and coercive diplomacy in a period of international relations when military superiority has less leverage. The US is no longer the principal agent of change and geopolitical discipline that it once was.

It seems possible, almost likely, that the Trump presidency will in one way or another be rejected by means other than global catastrophe, that is, by electoral dismissal, impeachment, or resignation. It also seems that a pro-

gressive backlash against Trumpism in the United States and, perhaps, elsewhere, and also against the dysfunctionality of resurgent nationalism, will give rise to a new global mood receptive to enhanced multilateralism, revived vitality for the UN and other international institutions, and support for more compassionate global public policy processes dedicated to the promotion of global and human interests as well as national interests.

A variant of this kind of world order scenario would be a new global political atmosphere induced by a shared recognition of urgent challenges. Such an atmosphere could lead to a *benevolent bipolarity*, in which the United States and China share leadership roles in much the same way as wartime alliances have produced strong cooperative relations between apparently antagonistic political actors, as was the case with the anti-fascist coalition. This bipolarity would transcend multilateralism by concentrating policymaking within two centres of governmental authority, status, influence, and capabilities. Its reach would encompass *common* and *human security* systems to overcome the war system and reduce the domain of geopolitics. In this process, security would be increasingly assessed from the perspectives of human rights, global justice, civilisational equality, and ecological sustainability.

Conclusion

We are living in a period of radical uncertainty, clearly accentuated by palpable world order challenges. The dominant trend at present is highly problematic, configured by various expressions of resurgent and exclusivist nationalism, and unresponsive to the global agenda. The contemporary era is highly unstable because challenges on the global agenda require unprecedented cooperation and global leadership, or catastrophe is almost certain to follow. There are also hopeful possibilities, especially the resilience of civil society and the re-emergence of leaders sensitive to global responsibilities in complement to their roles as national leaders.

At present, what is feasible falls dramatically short of what is necessary and desirable, and lacks the credibility to underpin hopes for a humane and ecologically sustainable future (Falk 2016, 2004), but the future will certainly produce opportunities for positive adaptation as well as disclose the gravity of risks and the urgency of meeting world order challenges.

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Part I: Central elements of an emerging world order

The international system and the clash of world orders

Richard Sakwa

The Cold War generated conflict but it also provided stability.[1] The bipolar system based on the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of 1945 recognised the existing balance of power, and on that basis created a system with recognised spheres of influence. This in due course was accompanied by a set of rules of the game that provided a certain type of peace in Europe for over a generation. This was clearly an inadequate order, because of its reintroduction of a hierarchy of sovereignty into the European state system. This was recognised in the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975, but at the same time the third basket provisions on human rights began the process of transcending the Yalta system. This in turn was formulated in the Paris Charter of November 1990, which while stressing a Europe whole and free, bent the stick—it could be argued—too far the other way. While reasserting the equal sovereignty of all the European states, it made no provision for the realities of great power politics. It is into this theoretical, and harshly practical, no man's land that Europe entered and remained in the years of the *cold peace* between the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the onset of what some call the new Cold War in 2014. The expansion of the Atlantic security system provoked a classic security dilemma: when attempts to increase the security of one state provoke another to undertake defensive responses, starting an escalation cycle that is hard to break.[2]

The expansion of NATO is a spectacular case of over-balancing, in which the perceived threat from a potentially resurgent Russia prompted a set of pre-emptive measures which in the end created the potential threat against which the initial balancing was designed to counter. In turn, Russia perceived itself to be under threat, so it countered by measures which in turn exacerbated the threat perceptions of its neighbours and ultimately of the

1 This chapter draws from Richard Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order* (2018), chapter 2.
2 For the classic statement, see Robert Jervis (1976).

Atlantic alliance as a whole (Krickovic 2016, 111–26). From a realist point of view, this new confrontation was unnecessary. For the first two post-communist decades Russia did not challenge American primacy or even the Atlantic security system, and instead tried to find a way in which mutual security interests could be combined. In the end, no adequate formula was found. Russia's objection in the end was to the way that hegemonic power was exercised, and in particular the strategic dead-end and neo-containment measures imposed on Russia. This prompted the creation of an anti-hegemonic alignment with China and some other countries, based ultimately on a pluralist view of the international system.

The international system

Drawing on English School thinking, the international system can be envisaged as a two-level construct. At the top, there are the developing apparatus and processes of global governance—termed the secondary institutions of international society by the English School—with the UN at its apex and complemented by an increasingly ramified network of international law and normative expectations. The English School distinguishes between primary institutions of international society, comprising sovereignty, territoriality, balance of power, war, international law, diplomacy, and nationalism, and these European-generated elements were expanded to the rest of the world (Bull and Watson 1984). The so-called secondary institutions include not only the UN but also other bodies that seek to generalise solidarist practices in a plural international system (Buzan 2014, 32–36). They cover the institutions of international financial governance, derived initially from the Bretton Woods system comprising the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the system of global economic governance, notably the World Trade Organization (WTO). Here also are the international legal and environmental covenants, as well as those covering the rules of war and international humanitarian practices. These secondary institutions are by definition universal, whereas the primary institutions generate practices of exclusion, with the Western core imposing its own "standards of civilisation" and acting as the gatekeeper, notably in the context of colonialism (Gong 1984).

Although initially most of the secondary institutions were of Western origin, their development has been governed from the outset less by expan-

sion than by mutual constitution (Dunne and Reut-Smith 2017). For example, the establishment of the UN drew on various Western traditions as well as Soviet, Islamic, and other ideas. As the secondary institutions strengthen and become more genuinely universal they threaten accustomed patterns of Western hegemony, but at the same time provide the sinews for order after the waning of this hegemony. English School thinking suggests that the international state system evolved out of institutions like the state, territoriality, the balance of power, diplomacy, and sovereignty, which formed in Europe and then expanded through colonialism and then revolutionary nationalism across the world to become truly universal, whereas many of the institutions of international society were created by the Allies during the war and reflected Western values, and were at first relatively exclusive. Without challenging this genealogy, it should be noted that from the first, a universalist dynamic was embedded not only in the primary institutions of international society, but also in the top-level secondary institutions, which have since become generalised as the institutions of global governance, have become more delineated, and have gained in authority.

Hedley Bull's classic study, *The Anarchical Society*, stresses the elements of cooperation and regulation in relations between states, highlighting the way that transnational ideas generate norms and interests that are institutionalised in the form of international organisations and rules (Bull 1977; Buzan 2014). He explicitly did not "place major emphasis upon international organisations such as the United Nations", and instead found "the basic causes of such order as exists in world politics" in the "institutions of international society that arose before these international organisations were established" (Bull 1977, xvii–xviii). Bull's approach retained much of the traditional thinking about a state-centric world, but this was tempered by his view that states have common interests that can be best advanced through the cooperative institutions of international society.[3] These are the structures of universalism and inter-state cooperation that became increasingly ramified after World War Two.[4] It is in this sense that I will use the term international society, a broad conceptualisation of the institutions of global governance. After the end of the Cold War they were anticipated to gain greater

3 For the articulation of a less statist ontology of international society than Hedley Bull's, see Adam Watson (1992), *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative International Analysis*.

4 Anne-Marie Slaughter (2005) identifies a dense network of "government networks" that increasingly coordinate cross-border cooperation.

autonomy and substance. Instead, as Cold War bipolarity gave way to unipolarity, they continued to be eclipsed by great power politics.

This is where we move to the second level. Beneath the solidarity of international society, we have a number of competing world orders. First among them is the liberal international order, which was born in the early years of the twentieth century and then formulated by Woodrow Wilson in terms of a commitment to an Atlantic-based system of universal order. After World War Two, this became formulated as the US-led liberal international order. During the Cold War years this was countered by a Soviet-led alternative model of world order, based on claims of the socialist transcendence of capitalist militarism and colonialism. There were also other putative world orders, including the one defined by Maoist China as the third world. The preeminent project for world order is the Atlantic community and the broader but increasingly anachronistic appellation of *the West*. In the original English School formulation, the international society of states devised in Europe expanded in successive waves to encompass the whole world. This really was an expansion, enlarging a system into which Russia, with its characteristic ambivalence, was soon incorporated (Neumann 2011, 463–484). However, the original expansion model is based on a single level system, but with the development of the secondary institutions and their associated sharing of sovereignty on functional issues—such as the environment—the single-planed model becomes inadequate.

The cold peace and world order: Hegemony vs. pluralism

After 1989 a radical transformation took place. The Soviet model of world order disintegrated, as well as its theoretical underpinning. By then, China was beginning its extraordinary transformation within the framework of insertion into the global capitalist economy accompanied by the preservation of Communist Party rule. The dissolution of the Communist order in the USSR allowed the Cold War to come to an end, as well as the Yalta system of international relations. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union had disintegrated and a much weakened post-communist Russia emerged as the continuer state. It appeared that Russia would no longer be at the centre of a model of world order, and that instead its post-communist future lay in becoming a part of the US-led liberal international order. This was an aspira-

tion shared by a large part of the Russian leadership. However, the terms and mode of integration were not negotiated and instead assumed, and it is this which created the tensions and misunderstanding that in the end provoked the breakdown in relations.

With its apparent victory at the end of the Cold War, the US-led liberal international order became radicalised in three ways, each in turn corresponding to a classical model of world order. The first is the Hegelian, in which the Marxist materialist dialectic of history is once again inverted, this time back in an idealist direction. The liberal international order asserted itself as the only viable model of world order, and as the ineluctable future of humanity—apart from some recalcitrant holdouts of autocracy. This is the ideology of the end of history accompanied by a simplified model of globalisation. The rules and norms of a particular constellation of power and ideas are paraded as universal. The second is the Kantian version, in which human rights and a certain republican ideal were advanced through increasingly intensive and well-funded democracy promotion programmes, which at times veered into the direct policy of regime change. The third basket of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975 in this reading becomes the foundation of the post-Cold War international order. One of the consequences was that the US-led order inserted itself into some sort of tutelary relationship with international society (Ikenberry 2004). This helps explain US ambivalence about the normative and practical power of the UN, which remains the only legitimate body to sanction international interventions, thereby limiting its freedom of manoeuvre. This is where the third model comes in, which can be labelled the Hobbesian one of a war of all against all. At this third level, power is exercised, military force is deployed, and bloc discipline imposed. The abiding fear of Russia driving a wedge between the US and its European allies is constantly rebuffed. The US jealously preserves its primacy, not only on a global scale but also within its alliance system.

In short, the US-led liberal international order operates at three levels—of ideas (if not ideology), of norms, and of power—and it is this very range and complexity that makes engagement with outsiders so complex. Above all, it is difficult for outsiders to devise adequate policy responses to this three-fold world order. If policy is challenged at one level, the response can come back in the framework of one or other of the various levels. This has evoked Russian condemnation as double-standards, but perhaps it would be better to talk in terms of triple standards. From the Western perspective, there is nothing anomalous about operating simultaneously at these

three levels, and the notion of soft power has been an attempt to theorise the whole complex. In this context, Joseph Nye—the founder of the term—is quite right to argue that soft power is effectively a characteristic unique to the Western power system and cannot be operationalised by others, and attempts by China and Russia to do so provoke only ridicule and condemnation (Nye 2013).

This is a particular challenge for Russia. The collapse of the state socialist alternative model of modernity represented by the Soviet system was not followed by Russia's anticipated seamless return to what Gorbachev-era intellectuals called the main highway of history.[5] It turned out that history has many highways and byways. At the end of the Cold War, Russia aspired to join the historical West, but believed that its very act of joining would change its character and that it would be transformed into a Greater West. Russia asserted that it was a senior constitutive member of international society, a founding member of the UN and a permanent member of its Security Council, and sought to lever this to transform the historical Western order. In the Gorbachevian variation, Moscow argued that it had done more than anyone to bring an end to what it increasingly perceived as a futile Cold War, and therefore deserved some sort of special status in a reconstituted Greater West. The self-willed disintegration of the Soviet bloc represented a pledge of Moscow's bona fides as a member of the expanded Western order. This also applies in the regional context, where the idea of a common European home—today called Greater Europe—would have established a co-operative pan-European community. Instead, Moscow was offered guest membership of the existing enterprises—the historical West and the smaller Europe represented by the European Union. For historical, status, geographical, and security reasons, this type of membership was not acceptable. Moscow would not enter into some sort of neo-colonial apprenticeship to join the historical West. From this foundational difference all the rest flows.

There are quite understandable reasons why the historical West refused to transform itself with Russian membership. There were fears about norm dilution, especially concerning human rights; institutional incoherence if Russia joined or became affiliated with such bodies as NATO; and concern about the loss of US leadership, especially in crisis situations—as in the various conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. At the theoretical level, the key point is that the US-led liberal international order effectively claimed to be synonymous

5 For a classic discussion, see Yurii N. Afanas'ev (ed.), *Inogo ne dano* (1988).

with international society. In this conception, world order emerges not out of cooperative (solidarist) inter-state practices regulated by international society, but out of American leadership of the liberal international order. The institutions of international society and the liberal international order are effectively fused.[6] This does not mean that the US-led coalition gets its way all the time—in fact, the UN, as a product of the Yalta order, remains a recalcitrant body because of the veto powers wielded by Russia and China, as well as their allies in the global south. There is therefore the potential for divergence between multilateral processes and the Western hegemonic formation. Relations between the US and the UN have been far from easy, prompting complaints by US legislators about the disproportionate burden. The US contributes 22 percent of the main UN budget and nearly 29 percent of peacekeeping costs (Quinn 2017, 13). There have been various attempts to bypass the UN's authority through various coalitions of the willing, as in Iraq in 2003. The idea of a League of Democracies was also intended to achieve a similar autonomy from international society in the normative sphere.

The implicit claim of co-terminality was challenged by Russia from the first, supported by other re-emerging or rising powers. The fundamental Russian argument is the traditional state-centric one; that the international system is made up of a plurality of states with their own interests, and that the post-Cold War inversion which claimed a certain universality for the liberal international order—often described in the guise of globalisation—was unacceptable. The ideological framework in which Russia asserted the pluralist model is through the idea of multipolarity. At the second level there are nation-states and their various regional combinations, creating what some call a "multi-order world" (Flockhart 2016, 3–30). As Amitav Acharya stresses, the US-led liberal international order was never genuinely global, with the Soviet bloc, China, India and large parts of what was called the third world outside. As he stresses, "it should be seen as a limited international order, rather than an inclusive global order". He argues that the foundations of the liberal order have been eroding for some time, including the loss of some important domestic constituencies, and that the election of Donald J. Trump in the US was a consequence rather than the cause of this erosion. Instead he argues that a "multiplex world" is emerging, in which "elements of

6 For a critique of how the Western powers—above all the US—used the UN to advance their own influence, see Shirley Hazzard, *Defeat of an Ideal: Self-Destruction of the United Nations* (1973).

the liberal order survive, but are subsumed in a complex of multiple, cross-cutting international orders" (Acharya 2017, 271–85).

Multipolarity suggests different poles in the framework of a single-level international system, whereas in the binary model presented here the various sub-orders and states interact horizontally with each other in the sphere of international relations, but relate vertically with international society in what could be called the sphere of norms. Neither is exclusive, and norms play an important part in international relations; while in the normative relationship between states and the institutions of international society—like the UN—the power and other considerations of international relations play no small part. This model of the international system is multipolar at the level of horizontal state interactions, but polycentrism is tempered by vertical interactions between the order of states and the order represented by international society. The universalist normative aspirations of international society are challenged by the particularistic features of competing states and blocs. Sovereignty is shared in the vertical order, but contested and defended in relations between states at the horizontal level.

Flockhart notes that a complex network of "inter-order" relationships will determine the character of the coming "multi-order world", but for her the world orders operate at the single level of states (2016, 5). This sophisticated analysis also applies a two-level model, but differs in suggesting several orders or international societies nested within an overall international system. Although I draw on Flockhart's insights, my model is rather different. Inter-state interactions in my model are tempered by the vertical relationship with international society, and a different sort of pluralism operates in the international system as a whole. Fu Ying, a former deputy foreign minister and then chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, alluded to this in her speech at the Munich Security Conference on 13 February 2016, when she stressed that "China supports the current international order. And you may note that the word used is *international order*. The Chinese seldom talk about the *world order*. What China refers to is the UN-based system including the international institutions and norms". Chinese officialdom avoids the term *world order* because of the power assumptions inherent in the term. Fu Ying clarified that China had reservations about the practices of the US-led world order, but rejected the idea that China was creating a parallel order: "of course not, we are part of the international order" (2016).

Russia's traditional Westphalian statism is tempered by a commitment to international society, of which it claims—as does China—to have been a

founder member. There is a profound historical dimension to this, since an extensive literature describes global order before European hegemony (Abu-Lughod 1991). Today, the putative autonomy of international society constrains the freedom of manoeuvre of dominant powers, provoking a hostile reaction among universalists in Washington—whether in the neoconservative or liberal internationalist guise. On the other side, for non-Western powers international society remains too deeply rooted in the structure of Western hegemony, and hence for them the goal is to universalise universalism; in other words, to make international society work genuinely independently as the highest instance of the common aspiration of humanity and the nations of which it is comprised.[7] More prosaically, there is now a growing demand for the institutions of global financial, legal, and political governance to work autonomously, resisting the tutelary claims of liberal hegemony and the latter's predominance in the Bretton Woods international financial institutions.[8]

Critics of liberal internationalist hegemony go further and question whether this order was ever pluralist. This line of thinking is advanced in an extensive literature that describes the moment of American unipolar dominance in terms of empire (Bacevich 2003; Colas and Saull 2005; Dorrien 2004; Falk 2004; Harvey 2005; Johnson 2002, 2004; Kiely 2005; Maier 2006; Mann 2005). In other words, the Wilsonian form of liberal internationalism represented a distinctive form of monist thinking that after the asymmetric end of the Cold War, in the absence of a substantive alternative, was radicalised to become axiological in its interactions with those outside the hegemonic order. The result was ruinous engagement in futile military expeditions that destabilised whole regions and in the end blew back into Europe in the form of waves of refugees, adding to the swelling tide of economic migrants.

7 For discussion of the issues, see Amitav Acharya, *Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies* (2014a) and *Advancing Global IR: Challenges, Contentions, and Contributions* (2016).

8 For a detailed interrogation of English School thinking on international society and how it works in practice, see Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (2007), including a discussion of regional pluralism (chapter 10) and *empire reborn* (chapter 11).

The clash of world orders

Russian thinking in the early years tended to mirror the historical West's own conflation of the liberal international order with international society writ large. Russia viewed itself a founding member of substantial elements of post-war international society, hence it was automatically a constitutive member of the liberal international order. The failure to transform the historical West into the Greater West in the end reinforced the never-ending domestic debate about Russia's place in the world. When Yevgeny Primakov was foreign minister between January 1996 and September 1998 and then prime minister to May 1999, he adopted a foreign policy stance of competitive coexistence, drawing on Nikita Khrushchev's earlier idea of peaceful coexistence. Putin between 2000 and 2012 believed that the relationship could be better than mere coexistence, and hence advanced a new realist agenda of engagement with the West. Even in the liberal guise of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency, this in Moscow's eyes failed, and hence from 2012 in his third term, Putin adopted a politics of resistance within a neo-revisionist framework. This included developing the institutions of Eurasian integration and alignment with powers critical of Western hegemony. This was accompanied by longing glances at the West that may have been, and at the Europe that it may one day become. This was also complemented by an evolution in conceptual understanding, to the point that today Russia defends the autonomy of international society against the hegemony of the historical West. Although reflecting a shift of emphasis in the post-communist era, Russia's defence of the normative order of international law—described as part of the broader order of international society above—represents a resumption of Tsarist and Soviet traditions (Mälksoo 2015).

This revived appreciation of the multi-layer quality of the international system is reflected in Russia's neo-revisionism: horizontally, critiquing the hegemonic ambitions and double standards of the liberal international order; but vertically, defending the autonomy of international society. Article 15.4 of the Russian constitution proclaims the supremacy of international law over domestic legislation, and although a law of December 2015 allows the Constitutional Court to adjudicate the application of the principle, the constitution has not been amended. The traditional advocacy of multipolarity has now become a more sophisticated defence of multi-level pluralism as well as the pluralism of state-centric international relations. Russia's neo-

revisionism does not seek to isolate Russia from international society, but challenges the historical West's right to define its norms (Browning 2008, 3–13). Russia has reverted to its traditional self-representation as the guardian of international law. As Fu Ying intimated for China, this does not mean the creation of a counter-hegemonic "world order" or bloc in opposition to the historical West, but a more profound anti-hegemonic politics. There is no attempt to destroy the framework of international society, but the objection is to the hegemonic practices of a liberal order that claims to be universal.

The tensions and contradictions of the cold peace and Moscow's frustrations generated an anti-hegemonic alignment of states resistant to the hegemonic practices of the historical West, but defending the autonomy and the universalism of international society. The leading power in this alternative constellation is of course China. Russia's relations with China today are better than they have ever been, yet there are points of tension in the bilateral relationship and in the various institutions and networks in which the relationship is embedded. Nevertheless, this alternative alignment shares a common aspiration to share in the management of global affairs, and works together to render the structures of global governance more independent. Russia's so-called turn to Asia can in classic realist terms be seen as part of its long-term attempt to balance against American hegemony; but more substantively, it asserts the normative ambition to create a more plural international system. Pragmatic factors are also at work, including the developmental needs of the Russian Far East and Russia's insertion into the dynamically developing East Asian region (Korolev 2016, 53–73). The shift represents a partial recasting of Russian self-representation away from the West towards a more Eurasian, if not Asian, identity. This does not entail the repudiation of Russia's long-term ambition to become part of a transformed Greater West or Greater Europe, although there are voices in Moscow calling for precisely that, accompanied by a mobilisation model of economic development.

The multilateralism of international society in this model is decoupled from the hegemonic order. This entails the restoration of pluralism to the international system, whose normativity is based on pluralism itself. In other words, cultural diversity, different paths of development, and pluralist polity construction repudiate the idea that the historical experience of one set of states can act as universal models to all others. This paradigm also achieves Russia's long-term goal of an international security system that transcends

military blocs.[9] This is a pluralism founded on the belief that each state has to resolve its own challenges and that historical experience cannot be transplanted from one context to another—the conceit of much of post-communist democracy promotion. This does not mean that comparative lessons cannot be learned, but it rejects programmatic attempts to transfer models. This is the conceptual basis for the rejection of norm transfer as an appropriate framework for relations between states. It does not mean simply the restoration of spheres of influence and the defence of state sovereignty of the Westphalian sort, since resistance to Western hegemony is accompanied by attempts to strengthen the universalism represented by international society. Both Hegel and Kant are rejected, but this does not mean a reversion to a purely Hobbesian view of the world.

Grotius and the English School

This describes what the Russian position is not, but what then is the positive vision? The pluralism as described above differs from that defined by English School theorists as "the communitarian disposition towards a state-centric mode of association in which sovereignty and non-intervention serve to contain and sustain cultural and political diversity". Instead, it shares something with the contrasting English School view of solidarism, defined as "the disposition either to transcend the states-system with some other mode of association or to develop it beyond the logic of coexistence to one of cooperation on shared projects" (Buzan 2014, 16). Solidarism promotes the benefits of international community, an inherent feature of the rules-based norms of the secondary institutions of international society, while horizontal relations between states are implicitly pluralist, except when combined in various sub-orders. The core of the anti-hegemonic case is that solidarity is generated by international society and not by a power system masquerading as a universal world order. Pluralism is achieved by the recognition of diverse developmental paths to sustain not so much multiple modernity—since modernity by definition can only be singular, although taking a multiplicity of forms—as a number of distinctive security and civilisational complexes, each of which, taken together, is today conventionally described as a project

9 Enunciated, for example, by Putin in his Victory Day speech (Higgins 2016).

for world order.[10] Neither is this the pluralism generated, according to the realist paradigm, by the return of great power politics. Instead, the various world orders represent a combination of pluralism and solidarism, with the latter represented by the shared commitment to international society. This is a pluralism of procedure—that world orders can relate to international society autonomously, and not necessarily through alignment with the liberal internationalist order—rather than a pluralism based on substantive normative differences.

This is a substantive invocation of the Grotian position advanced by Bull.[11] He distinguishes between the Hobbesian or realist tradition that sees international relations as a permanent state of conflict between states in a system that is pre-eminently distributive or zero-sum. In this perspective, peace is only a "period of recuperation" between renewed bouts of war. Contemporary realist thinkers, such as Hans Morgenthau, have developed a complex language to describe the strategies adopted by states in this endless war for position and status (2005). Dominant states try to get others to bandwagon with them, while weaker powers try to establish counter-balancing coalitions. There is little scope for morality here, and instead the Machiavellian impulse prevails. By contrast, the Kantian or universalist tradition asserts that international politics is capable of generating a "potential community of mankind" (Bull 1977). Various trans-national bonds tie nations and peoples together and foster cooperative policies to transcend conflicts and indeed ultimately to transcend the state system itself. The moral imperative of what we today call human rights, for example, works not only to limit the sovereignty of states but drives towards their replacement by a cosmopolitan society. In between the realist and universalist traditions there is the Grotian idea of a society of states, or international society. Against the Hobbesians, common rules and institutions constrain the bellicosity of states; but by contrast with the Kantians, states remain the fundamental actors in the international system. In the Grotian concept, states are bound not only by the rules of prudence and expediency, but also by the norms of morality and law as generated by the particular international society of the era.

Thus the Christian international society devised in the fifteenth century in the twentieth gave way to what Bull calls world international society

10 This model in part overlaps with the idea of regional security complexes, in which contiguous states establish a regime of intense security interdependence, Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*.

11 The following account is drawn from Bull's *The Anarchical Society* (1977), pp. 23–26.

(1977, 36–38). The League of Nations, the attempt by the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 to renounce war as an instrument to advance state policy, and other idealistic initiatives of the inter-war years proved a false start, and in E. H. Carr's view actually impeded rational inter-state diplomacy (1939). Nevertheless, the Grotian impulse returned after World War Two and remains embedded in the thickening networks of world international society today. The UN represents the highest manifestation of the Grotian or solidarist representation of world order. It seeks to aggregate the concerns of international society while not denying the centrality of sovereign states. The Grotian approach repudiates the ideological homogeneity so deeply embedded in Kantian cosmopolitanism, while rejecting the expansive normative idealism of the Kantian position and the brutality of Hobbesian realist positions. It has no time for the so-called end of history and its concomitant assumption of the end of international politics or for human rights imperialism, but neither does it succumb to the realist imposition of hegemonic order by powerful states. It offers the possibility of combining political realism and normative pluralism.

The Hegelian twist at the end of the Cold War represented a radicalisation of the Kantian position. The human rights agenda and democracy promotion were imbued not only with a normative and linear character, but were also embedded in an expansive power system. This gave rise to what I have called elsewhere "transdemocracy": the combination of normative with security concerns, within the framework of democratic peace theory (Sakwa 2018, 98–104). The post-Cold War assumption that the liberal international order could enlarge almost to the bounds of the earth—and thus achieve perpetual peace—soon proved false. The assumption that this system was enlarging into an empty field provoked resistance, of the sort that the enlargement of the Atlantic system after the Cold War evoked in Russia. The global and regional debates raise similar issues and comparable responses, with demands for a pluralistic universalism at the global level.[12] The developing field of global international relations represents a call for the radical pluralisation of the international system, while Russia calls for multipolarity, or more recently *polycentrism*, a term reflecting the Russian ambition to democratise international relations.

12 See various publications by Amitav Acharya, indicatively his most recent study: *The End of American World Order* (2014b).

The new global crisis: New Cold War or something else

The strategic impasse in which Russia found itself after the Cold War has now been translated into a broader impasse in relations between Russia and the West. As Walter Russell Mead puts it, "Russia cannot be transformed into a democracy or won over as a genuine friend by any steps that the West can take. We must think about a Russia that is a neighbour to Europe but quite possibly for many years to come does not share the values, hopes and political system of its neighbours" (2016, 46). On 17 March 2016, the US defence secretary Ashton Carter listed the five countries representing the major global strategic challenges, placing Russia in first place followed by China, North Korea, Iran, and terrorism. He described Russia and China as the most "stressing competitors", and asserted that his policy was based on a "strong and balanced approach to deter Russian aggression" in Eastern Europe (Ferdinando 2016).

All of this reflects the fundamental tensions in global affairs. After a quarter century, in 2014 the dead-end of the cold peace gave way to something new. This is not simply a new Cold War but a period in which Russia looks to achieve a strategic breakthrough away from the perceived impasse of the cold peace years. In the Russian view, it has a number of allies in this process. For the first time since the fall of communism, the idea of a new world order, the term used by Mikhail Gorbachev in his landmark speech at the United Nations on 7 December 1988, is once again on the horizon. Old-style Western-focused globalisation is receding and a range of regional blocs are beginning to exert their influence to create a more plural world system.

Russia now ranks itself among *the rest*, although it does not foreclose the option of becoming part of the West if the strategic limitations of the cold peace period can be overcome. This ambivalent stance, which seeks to ensure maximum freedom of manoeuvre, means that its new partnerships will not turn into exclusive alliances. Russia is resigned to the fact that in the new era sanctions and counter-sanctions will become the norm. The Cold War bipolar system will not be restored, but neither will a new concert of powers take its place because of the great variety of actors with different ways of exerting influence. The new system will be a "dialectical combination of competition and interdependence" (Lukyanov 2016). The old historical West—the US and its allies—will now be balanced by the Greater Eurasia led by Russia and China, with other countries aligning selectively with either or both. Neither will engage in deep integration but Greater Eurasia will instead remain

a general orientation with sufficient flexibility and economic potential to attract participants but not so exclusive as to generate bloc discipline. Structural realism shapes preferences, but it does not determine choices.

At the same time, following the Ukraine crisis, US primacy regained the prominence it had enjoyed for much of the Cold War. Although President Barack Obama tried to shift America's strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region, the US once again became the cornerstone of a European security complex. As in the Cold War, bloc discipline became a central concern of the Atlantic leadership. After some initial wavering, accompanied by a shift in the modality of American primacy from *leadership* to *greatness*, the Trump presidency soon reverted to traditional Atlantic solidarity. However, not all European countries believed in the Russian threat with the degree of passion exhibited by the most alarmist members of the Atlantic community, notably the UK, Poland, and Lithuania. More countries came to meet the two percent defence spending threshold, yet others were sceptical about the whole basis of the new confrontation.

On the other side, a disparate, mostly inchoate, but nevertheless strengthening tide of counter-hegemonic arrangements and organisations is emerging. This is nothing like as formalised or intense as its counterpart during the Cold War, since Russia lacks the attractive power, ideological conviction, or economic resources of the USSR. It makes no sense for countries to wilfully antagonise the Atlantic powers, with whom they are tied by so many trade and political relations. Nevertheless, the dangers of unipolarity are clear. The experience of post-Cold War military interventions is a clear warning of what happens to a country when it steps out of alignment or seeks to embed its economy in greater social control in a manner that threatens global corporations. The creeping universalisation of American law accompanied by practices of universal jurisdiction represents a new type of power that threatens the sovereignty of states everywhere. In response, anti-hegemonic movements are gaining vitality and dynamism rooted in real challenges.

In all of this, Russia is in the vanguard. Its attempts to join a transformed West ended in failure. Instead, the institutions and practices of the historical West were reinforced. In response, Russia became one of the most active proponents of the creation of a non-West. Bobo Lo notes that "the Kremlin seeks to build an alternative ideational and political legitimacy that challenges Western notions of global governance and moral universalism" (Lo 2015, 9). This is not quite accurate, since the challenge is to the perceived inadequacies of the existing system of global governance, a dissatisfaction that is

shared by a number of countries and has prompted the creation of alternative structures. Equally, the challenge is to the practices of moral universalism and not the principles, since Russia has no intention of repudiating such foundational acts as the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As far as Russia and its allies are concerned, the values-based policies of the post-Cold War years had been applied instrumentally and selectively to advance the hegemonic power of the West, rather than genuinely to advance the realm of justice. From Moscow's perspective, it simply made no sense to condemn Russia's failing while giving Saudi Arabia a free pass, where the abuse of human and civic rights is far more egregious. Moscow's critique had some substance, but this fails to recognise that the historical West's commitment to the principles as outlined in the Atlantic Charter were genuinely foundational. Equally, the West tends to under-play the hegemonic and commercial distortions in the application of value-based policies. As the Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, and the New Labour government quickly discovered, it is very hard to pursue an ethical foreign policy.

Criticism of "an imposed model that presents itself as universal", provoked a "demand for alternatives" (Valdai Discussion Club 2015, 4). The alternative, however, can only be partial, since Russia is not an outright revisionist power, but neo-revisionist: condemning not the principles but the practices of the hegemonic powers. Moscow seeks to temper the practical application of moral universalism in what are perceived to be arbitrary and punitive ways, while ensuring that the instruments of global governance really do reflect global concerns. The goal is not simply to reproduce polarity in a single world order, but to create an alternative world order whose very existence would ensure geopolitical and ideational pluralism. Talk of an alternative globalisation does not mean the reproduction of what is increasingly seen as Western monism. As a Valdai discussion paper puts it, "The Atlantic community is a unique example of value unification. By contrast, non-western states are together in stressing the importance of diversity, insisting that no uniform emblems of a 'modern state and society' are either desirable or possible. This is an approach more in tune with the conditions of a multipolar world" (Ibid, 5). But even the Valdai paper failed to recognise the potential radicalism of the multi-order perspective.

Western sanctions accelerated the trend to find alternatives to the Dollar, such as pricing oil in gold and other currencies, but this did not entail withdrawal from global economic integration. China helped Russia to with-

stand the sanctions, while the BRICS countries began to create an alternative to Western-dominated international institutions. This is a non-West that remains part of the global economy, but seeks to ensure that universal rules become impartial and not part of a monist power system. In other words, a pluralistic multi-order world would remain based on the UN system and the internationalisation of economies, but would move away from the narrow perspectives of the historical West. If Russia could not join a new West, then it would become a founding member of the non-Western community.

Russia led the way in challenging the conventional post-bipolar world. The fundamental question is whether attempts to reshape global order represent the beginning of an enduring shift that will remodel world politics; or whether it is no more than a temporary aberration in the long-term process of the consolidation of a liberal world order. Russian policy reflects elements of both perspectives, yet the fundamental assumption since at least 2007 and Putin's Munich speech is that the current framework of liberal order works to Russia's disadvantage. The benefits it can offer, which Russia is only too keen to exploit, come at too high a cost in terms of undermining the long-term foundations of Russian security and development as a sovereign state. Part of the Russian elite has bought into the view of America's long-term decline and the weakening viability of the US-led international order. Thus the countervailing strategy makes sense, aligning Russia with the rising powers such as China and the nascent alternative world order. However, this assessment may be a mistake, and instead of being part of a rising wave, the current perturbations may be about little more than Russia and do not indicate the sinews of an alternative global architecture. If that is indeed the case, Russia's strategy is fundamentally mistaken, driving it further into the post-Cold War strategic impasse, into a political and developmental dead-end.[13] A stable order may well emerge, from which Russia would be an outcast. Russia is playing one game, when in fact the action is elsewhere.

However, although the shape of an alternative world order remains speculative, the fact of the emergence of elements of multipolarity is clear. The establishment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) without China indicates the creation of nascent blocs in the Asia-Pacific region. Although TPP is primarily about the economy and trade, there are signs of growing politicisation. China's response to TPP has been to intensify its links with Rus-

13 For a challenging discussion of the issue, see Ivan Timofeev, World (Dis)order: An Advantage for Russia? (2016).

sia and to develop its own financial, developmental, and economic instruments. China's attempt to assert sovereignty rights within the Nine-Dash region, including building artificial islands and military installations, was censured by the International Court of Arbitration in July 2016 in an action brought by the Philippines, but the judgment was angrily dismissed by China. China remains an enormous strategic challenge for the US. Their tight economic links have not prevented moves towards the intensification of security links that exclude China. This does not preclude the long-term stabilisation of the Sino-US relationship. This would jeopardise the foundation of the Russian strategy of resistance. Already, Chinese financial institutions have been reluctant to lend to Russia for fear of falling foul of US sanctions. China has avoided politicising the conflicts with the US, but it is devising various practices of resistance of its own while it unfurls its wings globally. Economic development policies and programmes like the Silk Road Economic Belt have important geopolitical implications. The situation remains in flux, and thus Russia seeks to avoid becoming trapped in positions that become untenable.

As Putin's various interventions at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in 2016 demonstrated, Putin refused to use the term Cold War to describe the stand-off between Russia and the West, recognising the absence of ideological rivalry between two systems while looking to deepen economic ties with countries such as Italy, Germany, and even the US, whose business leaders attended the forum in greater number than in earlier years. With Donald Trump advocating a more isolationist America that focuses on its own problems, Putin repeated his statement that Trump was a "bright" person, while Trump complimented Putin on his leadership qualities (Pager 2016).

The Ukraine crisis reinforced Euro-Atlantic solidarity, but at the same a plethora of challenges revealed the European Union's vulnerability. The Syrian crisis showed that on such issues as terrorism and refugees, NATO was not able to guarantee European security. The EU's lack of adequate security instruments was also exposed, encouraging Member States to take matters into their own hands, undermining the EU's institutions and policies. The EU's global strategy, adopted by the European Council on 28 June 2016, indicates moves towards greater security coordination within Europe. The document stressed that "peace and stability are no longer a given. Russia's violation of international law and the destabilisation of Ukraine, on top of protracted conflicts in the wider Black Sea region, have challenged the Euro-

pean security order at its core. The EU will stand united in upholding international law, democracy, human rights, cooperation and each country's right to choose its future freely" (2016, 33). The wave of terrorist attacks in France and Germany in 2015 and 2016 highlighted the need for greater coordination of intelligence and border services. The Warsaw summit of NATO on 8–9 July 2016 saw moves towards greater cooperation between NATO and the EU in naval patrols and other issues, but this advanced in parallel with the EU developing independent capacities.

It is too early to be able to predict the consequences of the Brexit vote of 23 June 2016, when 52 percent voted for the UK to leave the EU. It could well accelerate moves towards greater integration, certainly within the eurozone, although there is not much popular support for more Europe. It is unlikely to lead to greater fragmentation. Brexit is a challenge for Europe, but it is primarily a problem for the UK. It is likely that none of the existing models of relations will be applied—Norway, Switzerland, Canada—but a tailor-made set of relations will be devised. The UK and Europe are too important for each other for the rupture to be too intense. The view that the UK could re-establish some sort of Anglosphere, combining the US with former dominions, is rather fanciful. In a world full of uncertainty, the British vote has added a whole set of unknowns into the mix.

At the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in 2016, Putin outlined grandiose plans for Greater Eurasia. Instead of the much-vaunted but still-born Greater Europe, Putin announced "As early as June, we, along with our Chinese colleagues, are planning to start official talks on the formation of comprehensive trade and economic partnership in Eurasia with the participation of the European Union states and China. I expect that this will be one of the first steps towards the formation of a major Eurasian partnership". He noted that "Despite all the well-known problems in our relations", the EU remained Russia's "key trade and economic partner". He thus invited Europeans to join the project for the Eurasian partnership, and he welcomed the initiative by Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to hold consultations between the Eurasian Economic Union and the EU (St Petersburg International Economic Forum 2016). Contrary to those who argue that Putin sought to weaken the EU and to exacerbate its internal divisions, the ambitious plan for a trading bloc from the Pacific to the Atlantic sought to make the EU a full partner, with the support of the Chinese leadership. Russia would not have to choose between Europe and Asia, and Eurasia in between would unite the two.

Russia and China combined to think in global terms, but missing from this formula is the US. As with the Greater Europe project, the US would see it as weakening the Atlantic system and undermining its own global leadership. Already, many in Russia believe that the Ukrainian events and Yanukovych's overthrow were designed to drive a wedge between Russia and Europe, and its advocacy of TTIP would have done for the West what TPP earlier was to have achieved in the East—the creation of US-centred blocs in which Russia and China had no place. After the Cold War, Russia had been dependent on the West to create the common European home; now Russia and China could move forward in the creation of a new bloc independently. Putin clearly tried to avoid Gorbachev's mistake in risking Russia's future on factors beyond his control. Nevertheless, these plans remain on paper to a large extent, but they do indicate the high degree of flux in the international system. While the West retains its global leadership, it no longer holds a monopoly on models of global order.

Conclusion

The fundamental goal of Russia's anti-hegemonic strategy is not clear. Is it simply to enhance its bargaining power to lever its way into a Greater West? Certainly, some of its associates in the East believe that this is the case, and that Russia's foundational identity as European will ultimately win out, rendering its alignment with eastern powers and engagement in anti-hegemonic strategies instrumental and contingent. The Kremlin leaders are rational enough to understand the dangerous futility of any attempt to defeat, destroy, or in any way militarily challenge the power of the Atlantic system. Certainly, the aim is to modify the behaviour of the historical West, and thus to ensure Russia's greater military and political security, accompanied by a continued transformative impulse. In the absence not only of a mode of reconciliation but even of a basic common language, this modifying strategy assumed the character of remilitarised confrontation, undermining the security of all.

The anti-hegemonic bloc is certainly shaped by perceptions of national interest, but at the same time there remains a normative commitment to the transformation of the international system that harks back to the idealism of the late perestroika years. This generates contradictions in Russia's neo-revi-

sionism, but also gains adherents to Russian policy from global sympathisers with what is perceived to be a counter-hegemonic agenda. While Russia may well be against the rest in realist terms, with few genuine allies among even its closest neighbours, in this normative framework Russia is admired by an eclectic mix of traditional sovereigntists, peaceniks, anti-imperialists, critics of globalisation, condemners of hegemonic blundering in international affairs, as well as variegated populists of left and right. The great power alignment with China, India, and some other countries has a counter-hegemonic edge, and to that degree it has features of a balancing coalition predicted by realist theory. However, such an interpretation misses the more profound dynamic at work, namely the anti-hegemonic impetus that seeks to ensure that international society genuinely regulates horizontal relations between the great powers.

The Russian and Chinese alignment in defence of the normative commitment to international society and a pluralistic international relations questions realist arguments. John Mearsheimer, for example, argues that the twenty-first century will be shaped by US-China relations and not US-Russian relations, and that China's increasing strength provokes "intense security competition with the US". In his view, there are three possible options. Firstly, Russia aligns with China; secondly, Russia aligns with the US; and thirdly, Russia remains neutral. Facing US pressure, Russia was aligning with China: the US and its elites "failed to appreciate Russia's legitimate security concerns by pushing NATO's eastward expansion" (Khlebnikov 2016; Valdai Discussion Club 2017). Some Chinese scholars endorse this view, arguing that while relations with Russia will remain stable, the Sino-American relationship will become increasingly turbulent. American leaders were unlikely to renounce their hegemonic ambitions, so the Russo-Chinese partnership will act as a healthy check on Washington's "unipolar folly" (Xiang 2016, 152–6). Neither realist nor liberal internationalist views adequately capture the dynamics of the contemporary international system. In the two-level model, international society centred on the UN, the institutions of global economic and political governance and the structures of international law temper the sovereignty of states—the liberal view; but at the level of international relations states retain their autonomy and engage in class power plays. International politics in the binary international system is constituted by the constant interplay of the sub-systems. International society in this reading is a common endeavour devised by states in the post-war era to temper militarised anarchy and short-sighted economic nationalism; but at the level of inter-state international relations, hegemonic and anti-hegemonic struggles continue.

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