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Published

2006

Book Title

Beyond the Iraq War: The Promises, Pitfalls and Perils of External Interventionism

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The New Interventionism and the Invasion of Iraq

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Several commentators observed that the March 2003 invasion of Iraq marked the beginning of a new and dangerous phase of pre-emptive interventionism by the United States and its allies.¹ Others have viewed the war's messy aftermath as an indication that interventionism has now passed its high water mark, and that the US and its allies are not likely to shoulder the burden of more post-intervention reconstructions any time soon.² But if the Iraq invasion is viewed in its proper historical perspective, neither of these positions is persuasive. My argument in this chapter is that the Iraq intervention is part of the latest phase of a long-term trend towards greater interventionism in the domestic affairs of post-colonial and post-communist states. I argue that this trend towards interventionism is itself a reaction to a set of normative injunctions and instrumental disincentives developed during the era of decolonisation (1945-1975) against any criticism of the internal affairs of post-colonial states. At that time, as Cold War competition saw the contestation over global norms at its height, there was a much greater tolerance for the heterogeneity of international society — in terms of the internal constitution of states — than there is currently.³ However, the tolerance for this heterogeneity began to be challenged in the 1980s as the countries of the developed world started to believe that their interests were being significantly affected by consequences arising from the internal politics of post-colonial states. With the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s came the end of serious contestation over global norms: the neoliberal, democratic market ideal became unchallenged in theory, if not universal in practice. This, in turn, made demands for the homogenisation of international society — bringing the internal constitution of states into greater alignment with global norms — ever more insistent.

I define the “new interventionism” that has resulted from these pressures towards greater homogenisation of international society as the provision of prescriptive advice about, or the direct manipulation of a state's domestic processes and institutions of government, backed by the threat or use of coercive measures or conditions on assistance, by external states or international agencies.⁴ In labelling it as the new interventionism, I distinguish it from “strategic interventionism”, the traditional form of interventionism found in international history, particularly during the Cold War. Strategic interventionism involves the coercive replacement of a

¹ See Sean Aylmer, “Bush Goes Back on the Warpath”, *Australian Financial Review*, 10 March 2005; Timothy Lynch, “America's Foes Should Fear its Irrationality”, *Daily Telegraph*, 24 July 2004; Robert Schelsinger, “We'll Strike First Under the Emerging Bush Doctrine”, *Boston Globe*, 30 June 2002; Jeffrey Record, “The Bush Doctrine and the War in Iraq”, *Parameters*, 33:1, Spring 2003.

² See Robin Wright and Thomas E Ricks, “US Faces Growing Fears of Failure”, *Washington Post*, 19 May 2004; Paul McGeogh, “The Bush Doctrine Has Been Turned on its Head”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 March 2004; Lawrence Kaplan, “Dream of Liberal Iraq is a Casualty of War”, *The Australian*, 1 February 2005; Donald C F Daniel, Peter J Dombrowski and Rodger A Payne, “The Bush Doctrine: Rest in Peace?”, *Defence Studies*, 4:1, (Spring 2004).

³ The discussion of degrees of heterogeneity and homogeneity in international society was inaugurated by Ramond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Baker-Fox, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1966), Chapter 13.

⁴ Michael Wesley, “Towards a Realist Ethics of Intervention”, *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2005

government based on a great power's concern about the effects of that state's foreign policy on the balance of power generally. As I will argue below, strategic interventionism cares little for domestic processes and outcomes; whereas the new interventionism focuses exclusively on these issues. The implication of my analysis is that the March 2003 invasion of Iraq was an inevitable consequence of the rise and evolution of the new interventionism. By the early 1990s, Iraq's foreign policy adventurism had been diagnosed as the inevitable result of pathologies in its internal constitution. Thus plans to strategically contain Saddam — a quintessentially Cold War policy of strategic interventionism — were never sustainable. Even as the sanctions and inspections regimes were failing in the Gulf, the conviction was rising in both Democratic and Republican administrations in Washington that Iraq could only become a dependable member of the international community following a wholesale renovation of its internal constitution.

My argument begins with an exploration of the rise of a body of norms against the criticism of the internal affairs of post-colonial states, and the ascendancy of the practice of strategic interventionism during the international heterogeneity and intense competition of the Cold War. I also discuss the beginnings of the challenge to this heterogeneity. Four sections follow, devoted to examining the rise of the new interventionism, and its evolution through four distinct but overlapping phases: economic interventionism, political interventionism, human rights interventionism and governance interventionism. Strictly speaking, each “phase” of interventionism does not completely replace its predecessors — previous types of interventionism continue despite the rise of more contemporary rationales. My conclusion discusses the invasion of Iraq, and the immediate post-invasion measures undertaken by the interim administration, as logical consequences of the rise of the new interventionism in international relations.

1. International Political Correctness

Arguably the greatest change to global order following the Second World War was the rapid decolonisation of European empires between 1945 and 1975, and the extension of the state form to all inhabited parts of the earth's surface. The speed of decolonisation, given the centuries-long process of imperial acquisition and the centrality of colonies to the economic and emotional well being of many European states, demonstrates the power of new anti-colonial norms that arose during and after the war, and the belief of most colonial governments that continuing to administer colonial possessions would likely be prohibitively expensive. The persuasiveness of both these considerations led to the rapid abandonment of the long-standing norm that before achieving statehood, prospective states had to exhibit a certain “standard of civilization” demonstrating that the government-in-waiting was able to exercise “empirical statehood”, or the requisite control of the people and territory of a viable state unit.⁵ Those states that held out, such as Portugal, were subjected to intense international opprobrium; many colonies or mandates were granted independence in almost unseemly haste, with little consideration of their capacity to govern themselves.

⁵ Robert H Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

The decolonisation imperative, as it gained momentum, led to a new international regime governing the circumstances, processes and form of decolonisation. The obligation to prove “empirical statehood” was rapidly replaced by a powerful right to self-determination based on what many called the “salt-water rule”: the right of former colonies that were geographically removed and racially different from the colonial centre to be ruled by a native government.⁶ The territory and population granted self-determination were enclosed by the borders that had delimited them as a colonial jurisdiction. According to the international legal principle of *uti possidetis*, these borders were unchallengeable once self-determination was secured. Colonial governments, when considering what should fill the juridical void left behind by the decolonisation process, had little hesitation in settling on the state form. By helping establish in the place of their former colonies units essentially constituted as they were, Western states sought to ensure a framework enabling the peaceful mediation and co-existence of societies that were enormously different in culture, social outlook and economic and political development.⁷ As former colonies became states, metropolitan powers gained assurance that relations with all areas of the occupied earth’s surface could be managed according to a standardised system of representation and responsibility, of centralised power and accountable control.

As a result of the decolonisation imperative and their preference to universalise the state form, the metropolitan powers accepted that new states would be constituted on the basis of what Robert Jackson calls “negative sovereignty”, that is the international assurance of the juridical existence and status of former colonies as sovereign states. The exclusive focus on the international form of these new states led the former colonial powers to ignore questions of “positive sovereignty”, that is whether new states possessed sufficient internal control and resources to form viable states.⁸ The preoccupation of the international community with the form rather than the content of new states coincided with the rise of powerful post-colonial norms within the Non-Aligned Movement and the G77 to form a regime of injunctions against criticism of the internal affairs of post-colonial states. As the issue of decolonisation came to dominate many of the debates within the UN General Assembly, the practice of colonialism became subject to deep opprobrium while at the same time its definition began to be stretched to apply to regimes as diverse as white-minority ruled Rhodesia and South Africa and the state of Israel.⁹ The charge of colonialism became a powerful stick with which to beat former colonisers, as many new states delighted in pointing out the hypocrisy of their erstwhile overlords’ calls for human rights, accountability and democracy in the third world.¹⁰

Negative sovereignty, post-colonial sensitivities and Cold War geopolitics coincided to produce a disinclination on the part of Western states to criticise or even examine too closely the domestic affairs of post-colonial states,¹¹ even as the newly

⁶ See A. Rigo Sureda, *The Evolution of the Right to Self-Determination: A Study of United Nations Practice*, (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1973).

⁷ Hedley Bull, “The Emergence of a Universal International Society” in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁸ Jackson, *Quasi-States*.

⁹ See for example United Nations General Assembly resolutions 1663 (XVI) (1961), 2787 (XXVI) (1971), 3175 (XXVII) (1973), 3249 (XXIX) (1974).

¹⁰ Richard L. Jackson, *The Non-Aligned, the UN and the Superpowers*, (New York: Praeger, 1983).

¹¹ The exception, of course, was France, which continued to consider itself bound by ongoing responsibilities towards its former colonies, especially in West Africa, and to intervene in their affairs.

militant third world defended its right to criticise internal politics in South Africa, Rhodesia and Israel. Between the developed and the third worlds, the ambit of moral evaluation and judgement narrowed significantly, as the remit of tolerance, agnosticism and negative comity widened.¹² Where established and new states were compared explicitly was over broad disparities in economic development, and to a lesser extent in political maturity. Developing states were able to tie their underdevelopment to colonialism in a way that conferred an obligation on the developed world to provide them with development assistance. The ascendancy of “modernisation theory” assumed that the progress of economic development and political maturity in the developing world were inevitable given the requisite aid and advice, and would unfold along predictable, well-trodden trajectories. In short, there was a widespread understanding that negative sovereignty could be granted to former colonies irrespective of their “empirical statehood” qualifications, because new states would develop the attributes of positive sovereignty over time.

2. Cold War Heterogeneity and Strategic Interventionism

Decolonisation coincided with the height of a period of contestation over the principles of international order and domestic order that characterised the Cold War. The superpowers’ strategic competition was always underpinned by intense disagreements on global norms relating to the definition and constitution of human rights,¹³ the status and processes of international law,¹⁴ the roles and procedures of international organisations,¹⁵ and the structures and mechanisms of the global economy. The Cold War also involved the toe-to-toe competition between two contrasting models of the political and economic organisation of states — when Nikita Khrushchev threatened “we will bury you”, he was referring to the anticipated demonstration of the superiority of the Soviet model of political and social organisation. As a consequence of this contestation, the period 1945-1975 saw an extensive tolerance for heterogeneity in international relations. Because there was no accepted and uncontested set of global norms, there was little incentive to focus on states’ internal constitutions and whether they complied with global norms.

Yet the Cold War was characterised by regular interventions in the affairs of states by the superpowers and their allies. A close examination of the historical record, however, reveals that these interventions were motivated less by concerns with the internal constitution of states as by the strategic realities of Cold War competition. As the Cold War spheres of influence developed, each of the superpowers came to see any loosening of its own alliance system in zero-sum terms, as a direct gain for its competitor. Both the United States and the Soviet Union moved to counter with force, where practicable, developments in the foreign policy of key allies that implied greater independence.¹⁶ That the internal constitution of the states being intervened in didn’t matter can be seen by the Soviet Union’s toppling of

¹² Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 196.

¹³ See R J Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁴ See Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR*, New York: The Viking Press, 1968

¹⁵ See Inis L. Claude Jr., *Swords Into Ploughshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization*, London: University of London Press, 1965

¹⁶ On occasion, intervention proved impractical: for the Soviet Union in the case of Yugoslavia and China, for the United States in the case of Cuba.

committed socialists in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and US interventions against democratically-elected governments in Iran, Chile and Nicaragua.

The structures of Cold War competition continued to militate against any genuine concern with the internal constitution of states subject to intervention. During the Cold War's early decades, the superpowers stuck to an informal agreement precluding each of them opposing an intervention within each superpower's sphere of influence. The popular or international legitimacy of a government mattered little to the superpowers, as long as the integrity of their spheres of influence remained intact. During later decades, interventions became the sites of direct conflict between the superpowers, and issues of the domestic constitution of states became subsumed in civil wars. The Reagan administration's policy of "rollback" focused more on bleeding the Soviet Union and its proxies than on the establishment of market democracies.

By the end of the 1970s, the West's willingness to tolerate homogeneity in the internal affairs of developing states had begun to weaken. The human rights abuses of various third world dictators allied to the West began to be raised as important ethical issues. After the overthrow of Reza Shah Pahlevi by a rabidly anti-Western regime in strategically situated Iran, internal misrule assumed a new prominence as a policy issue. The growing momentum of the Helsinki process in Europe, which had enshrined human rights as a central agenda item, reinforced this process. International organisations had also developed and refined new capacities for empirical evaluation: through institutions such as the UN and the World Bank, ever more reliable statistics on state performance were becoming available. Evidence began to emerge that the economic and political development that had been assumed to be inevitable was not occurring in many new countries, and that in an alarming number development was going backwards. During the 1980s and 1990s, the developed world began to form the opinion that inadequacies or pathologies in the internal constitution of post-colonial states were a cause for concern. The earliest forms of this doctrine saw the internal constitution of third world states as major impediments to economic development, ethnic harmony and the formation of mature political institutions. Later forms added to the urgency of the West's concern by asserting that dysfunctional states posed a threat to regional and international security.¹⁷ The policy imperative became intervention, not for reasons of strategic advantage, but to help address perceived problems directly.

The weakening of the structures of Cold War competition from the late 1980s also began to erode the West's tolerance for heterogeneity. The end of the Cold War was marked by, among other things, the unchallenged ascendancy of Western-advocated international norms — on human rights, international law, international organisation, liberal democracy, and the capitalist model of state-society relations. The proclamation of a "new world order" and the age of neoliberal internationalism that followed the end of the Cold War brought a new urge towards the homogenisation of the domestic constitution of states to accord more closely with the principles of international order.

¹⁷ This was perhaps best captured by Barry Buzan, who suggested that weak states posed a threat to the "fabric of international society"; see *People, States and Fear*, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 105.

Each iteration of the new interventionism was driven by a distinct instrumental rationale, and partly contributed to and benefited from a weakening of the norms providing immunity from external interference in developing states' domestic affairs. Each interventionist phase saw the rise of a variation on a new normative claim: that post-colonial and post-communist states' sovereignty was contingent upon their capacity and willingness to meet certain international and domestic obligations.¹⁸ Hence, interventionism gained momentum on the back of an interplay between norms and self-interest that allowed developed states to provide legitimating normative cover for interventions by casting developing states' weaknesses in terms of overarching and supposedly universal economic, political, humanitarian and security principles.

3. Phase I: Neoliberal Economics

Part of the decolonisation deal between developed states and former colonies was that developed states were obliged to assist post-colonial states develop the attributes of positive sovereignty over time. In the first instance, this meant the provision of economic aid and advice. In practice, however, it was an obligation never taken particularly seriously. An early benchmark for the provision of aid was set at 0.7 per cent of developed states' GNP, but very few states have provided anywhere near that figure. Many wealthy countries have developed tied aid schemes to secure benefits for national economies and producers.¹⁹ Western countries relied on the United Nations, the World Bank and the regional development banks to provide technical development advice to post-colonial states.

The developed world's benign neglect of the internal economic management of post-colonial states was shaken in the early 1980s by the third world debt crisis and the aid paradox. Despite decades of aid and assistance, many developing countries faced spiralling indebtedness and worsening economic performance. Developing states' internal economic policies and institutions came under close scrutiny, and particularly their use of state-led development strategies, which had emphasised the problem of market failures that needed to be corrected through state interventions.²⁰ The rise of neoliberal economic doctrine directed new opprobrium towards the heavy state intervention in the economy, corruption and distributional inefficiencies that seemed endemic in developing economies. The development banks, the IMF and individual states began advocating a diet of macrostability, liberalisation and privatisation for the domestic economic policy of developing states.²¹

The new interventionism based on neoliberal economic principles was enforced mainly through conditionality: the practice of attaching policy obligations to economic assistance from the major development banks. Many post-colonial states that had become reliant on economic aid had no choice but to accept the new conditionalities on aid; the simultaneous ascendancy of neoliberal doctrine in all international financial institutions removed the option of "aid shopping". Neoliberal

¹⁸ See for example Nicholas J Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ See Stephen Krasner, "Power Structures and Regional Development Banks", *International Organization*, 35:2, (Spring 1981).

²⁰ World Bank, *The State in a Changing World: World Development Report, 1997*, (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1997).

²¹ John Toye, *Dilemmas of Development*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

economic doctrine also entered developing countries in the form of advisors from the development banks, and through the training of developing country economists in Western universities, where many economics departments had succumbed to the neoliberal economic revolution.

The 958 “structural adjustment programs” implemented by the Bretton Woods institutions in developing countries between 1980 and 1998 have registered a very mixed rate of success.²² Often neoliberal zeal resulted not just in the elimination of wasteful economic planning, but the slashing of state capacity, resulting in a net decline of governance capabilities and often a worsening in economic performance: “The result was that liberalising economic reform failed to deliver on its promise in many countries. In some countries, indeed, absence of a proper institutional framework left them worse off after liberalisation than they would have been in its absence.”²³ Nevertheless, the urgency of economic interventionism increased in the late 1990s. The Asian financial crisis caused many to see developing countries’ domestic economic policies and institutions as dangerous to regional and global financial stability:

... crises can now become systemic through contagion. Domestic economic policy must take into account its potential worldwide impact; a duty of universal responsibility is incumbent, making each country responsible for the stability and quality of world growth.²⁴

Many argue that the IMF and the development banks have made marginal modifications to their neoliberal intervention strategies, while continuing to push the neoliberal “Washington consensus” agenda on developing countries.²⁵ Even though subsequent phases of the new interventionism arose in the 1990s, the trend of neoliberal economic intervention has continued.

4. Phase 2: Democracy

During the height of the Cold War, the West was little concerned about the domestic political makeup of post-colonial states. Interventions occurred when it appeared that a state was changing its foreign policy in ways that loosened the ties of alignment within one or other of the Cold War blocs.²⁶ In the realist-dominated thinking of the Cold War, the presence or absence of socialism or democracy was thought to be irrelevant in determining how developing states should be dealt with. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Ambassador to the UN during the first Reagan administration,

²² W. Easterly, “The Lost Decades: Developing Countries Stagnation In Spite of Policy Reform”, mimeo, Washington DC: The World Bank, (February 2001).

²³ Francis Fukuyama, *State Building*, (London: Profile Books, 2004), p. 7.

²⁴ Michel Camdessus, “The IMF at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Can We Establish a Humanised Globalisation?”, *Global Governance*, 7:4, (October/December 1997), p. 364.

²⁵ See Ray Kiely, “Neoliberalism Revisited? A Critical Account of World Bank Concepts of Good Governance and Market Friendly Intervention”, *Capital and Class*, 64, (Spring 1998); and Susan Soederberg, “The Emperor’s New Suit: The New International Financial Architecture as a Reinvention of the Washington Consensus”, *Global Governance*, 7:4, (October/December 2001).

²⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

argued that it was no problem for the United States in supporting non-communist dictators, because they were more likely eventually to become democracies.²⁷

This lack of concern with domestic politics began to change by the mid-1980s. According to one account, a major impetus was the “people power” movement in the Philippines, which for a time threatened the continuation of US bases in that country. Washington’s sudden withdrawal of support for Marcos and backing of Aquino saw the rise of a powerful conservative constituency convinced that democratisation should be a central plank in US foreign policy.²⁸ From that point, both the left and right of politics in the United States provided strong support for the export of democracy to undemocratic states.²⁹ “Democratic peace” scholars had long argued that democratic states were less likely to fight each other and more likely to subscribe to international norms, providing a strategic rationale for democratisation.³⁰ The collapse of the Soviet Union provided further impetus, by demonstrating that some authoritarian regimes were vulnerable to popular demands for political freedoms and democracy. The use of the symbol of the Statue of Liberty by the Tiananmen protesters in China showed that the US example was a powerful motivating force. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Saddam Hussein was immediately portrayed as an aggressive Hitler-style dictator, with the implication that authoritarian regimes were by their very nature a threat to international peace and security.

Opinion began to coalesce around the argument that democratisation should replace containment as the new strategic thrust of US foreign policy after the Cold War.³¹ Anthony Lake, the National Security Adviser in the first Clinton administration, formulated the doctrine of “enlargement” as a central focus of US foreign policy:

Throughout the Cold War we contained a global threat to market democracies; now we should seek to enlarge their reach, particularly in places of special significance to us... we should help foster and consolidate new democracies ... especially in states of special significance.³²

Democratisation was seen as being good not only for those oppressed by autocracies, but also for global stability, because in reducing the number of dictators, it would build trust and adherence to international norms.

This democratic political interventionism relied on certain assumptions about human aspirations and motivations. Democratisation advocates assume that all

²⁷ Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reason in Politics*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

²⁸ See James Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), Chapter 8 for an account of the development of concern for democracy and human rights as part of the conservative agenda in the United States.

²⁹ Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

³⁰ See Michael W Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics”, *American Political Science Review*, 80:4, (December 1986).

³¹ See for example Joshua Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America’s Destiny*, (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1991).

³² Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement”, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 60:1, (October 1993), p. 17.

humans possess a common drive towards free expression and entrepreneurialism, and that it is pathologies that arise within the domestic politics or societies of states that prevent these human qualities from flourishing.³³ This gives rise to further assumptions about the desirability, inevitability and linearity of democratisation, once these state-imposed impediments and pathologies are removed.³⁴ As Charles Call and Susan Cook have argued, “Despite protests to the contrary, democratization theory suffers from some of the flaws of modernization theory, including its tendency to view the West’s experience as both a normative yardstick and an empirical expectation.”³⁵

The mechanisms of political intervention have been various. An initial model was that embodied in the European Community’s *acquis communautaire*, which by making membership contingent on the existence of stable democratic rule, provided a considerable carrot to regional countries to institute human rights and democracy. The EU has also begun to apply this criterion to out-of-area involvements, for example by refusing to take part in discussions to which undemocratic Burma is an invited party. More recently, dictatorships have been subjected to direct pressure. Following the first Gulf War, the US and its allies sanctioned Iraq while actively supporting opposition groups. North Korea, Burma and Zimbabwe were isolated and delegitimised also. In these cases, the strategy of intervention was premised on the assumed inherent fragility of dictatorships and the inherent appeal of democratisation; yet in each of these countries, the autocrats proved highly skilled and ruthless in maintaining power. A significant part of the case for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 stemmed from assessments that Saddam had proved more than a match for more indirect methods of political intervention to overthrow his regime.³⁶ More recently, Western governments and NGOs have concentrated on providing direct advice and assistance to opposition parties in quasi-democratic states, such as Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

There is strong evidence that democratic political interventionism has as mixed a record of success as its neoliberal economic counterpart. Of the wave of democratisation that has occurred since the end of the Cold War, very little can credibly be attributed to the direct intervention of outside actors. And in the above-listed cases of direct political pressure in favour of democratisation as well as situations in which UN missions have undertaken the task of democratic peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, the record of success in constructing durable democracies is very poor.³⁷ Yet democratisation remains a foreign policy priority for

³³ See for example Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (London: Penguin Books, 1992); Moravcik, *Exporting Democracy*

³⁴ See Robert Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

³⁵ Charles T Call and Susan E Cook, “On Democratization and Peacebuilding”, *Global Governance*, 9:2, (April/June 2003), p. 235

³⁶ See Bob Woodward, While economic, political and human rights interventionism are all motivated by concern about the consequences of the domestic organisation of post-colonial and post-communist states, each of these three types of interventionism has directed its attention to the reform of processes. Thus, economic interventionism is concerned to reorganise the processes of economic policymaking and regulation along neoliberal lines; political interventionism seeks to democratise the processes of government; and human rights interventionism promotes processes guaranteeing basic human rights to all citizens. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

³⁷ See Juan J Linz and Alfred Stephan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

many Western countries, and has continued to be a major contributing aspect of the evolving intervention agenda.

4. Phase 3: Human Rights

Until the early 1990s, concern among Western states about human rights in post-colonial states was sporadic. As colonial powers, especially during decolonisation struggles, many Western states had engaged in serious human rights abuses. Even those Western countries with no direct colonial ties were implicated through their common participation in the NATO alliance with colonial powers that were fighting against independence movements. Furthermore, racial equality, which became the key human rights issue in the West in the 1950s and 1960s, closely echoed the third world's anti-colonial rhetoric, making Western leaders and commentators largely inattentive to human rights crimes committed by non-white populations.

The process of decolonisation made many new states rely on repression to control ethnically divided societies. In the context of decolonisation, national self-determination referred only to a "negative right" not to be ruled by members of a different race.³⁸ The ethnic group that gained power in each post-colonial state was entitled to expect the political allegiance of all ethnic groups that had been enclosed within the former colony's boundaries, and often assumed the right to repress rival ethnic groups in the name of state building. Consequently, ethnic conflict has been endemic in many post-colonial and post-communist states, and even democratic governments have used extensive human rights abuses to safeguard the integrity of their states and the tenure of their regimes.

The passing of the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe saw human rights rise to prominence as an issue in international relations.³⁹ The inclusion of a declaration on common humanitarian principles in an agreement on Cold War frontiers provided new attention to the abuses of human rights carried out in the Soviet bloc.⁴⁰ After the Cold War, as Western populations contemplated a "new world order" in the early 1990s, humanitarian catastrophes gained widespread coverage as issues demanding direct preventive and corrective intervention by the international community. Near simultaneous humanitarian catastrophes in the Balkans and Somalia, coinciding with revelations of the extent of the Khmer Rouge genocide in the context of the Cambodian peace process, galvanised attention to international humanitarian standards as part of the post-Cold War order. The failure of the UN to take timely action to prevent large-scale genocide in Rwanda, and the large-scale massacre of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica further raised consciousness of the inadequacies of international mechanisms for the timely protection of human rights. After the NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999 to halt abuses against Muslims in Kosovo, an international commission of legal practitioners and scholars, responding to a challenge from UN Secretary

³⁸ Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 152

³⁹ Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁴⁰ R J Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

General Kofi Annan proposed that the international community has a “responsibility to protect” people subject to abuses by their own governments.⁴¹

Although Western governments scrambled to respond to the demands of their populations that they “do something” in response to recurring humanitarian catastrophes, there were few states willing to subscribe to the doctrine proposed by scholars, jurists and ethicists that a general duty of humanitarian intervention existed or should exist in international law. Every humanitarian intervention that has occurred since India’s invasion of East Pakistan in 1971 has been justified primarily not by humanitarian concern, but by reference to the international destabilisation caused by the conflict. The security rationale has been the key to securing the acquiescence of sceptical great powers in the UN Security Council to humanitarian interventions, and to reassuring the rest of the international community that human rights interventions will not become a general crusade that is destabilising to international order. However, such selectivity carries the cost of generating considerable cynicism in the post-colonial world, among populations to whom it appears that some humans’ rights are more worthy of protection than others’.⁴²

As with Phase 1 and Phase 2 interventionism, each mechanism of human rights intervention has proved problematic. Successive drawbacks and dilemmas have robbed the movement supporting humanitarian interventionism of much of its momentum. “Shaming” mechanisms, such as the US State Department’s annual Human Rights report or the UN Commission on Human Rights, have had much of their impact neutralised by political manoeuvring to stall UN processes or the publication of reports pointing to the human rights failings of accusing states. The debate over “Asian values” in the 1990s saw East Asian states mount a vigorous pluralist rejection of universal human rights standards. Direct sanctions against regimes with poor human rights records was discredited by the case of Iraq in the 1990s, where it became clear that the greatest impact of the sanctions fell on the weakest members of society. Alternative policies of “constructive engagement”, where regimes abusing human rights are engaged in dialogue and trade as a way of changing their internal practices, were implemented in relation to countries such as Burma. But many critics argued that by engaging in normal intercourse with these countries, outside states are bolstering the power and legitimacy of brutal governments. Finally, direct, Kosovo-style military intervention confronts the still-unresolved moral dilemma of doing harm in order to protect and the legal dilemma of using force against sovereign states.

The history of humanitarian interventions show that in seeking to promote human rights standards, the international community has been unwilling to contravene the basic principles of negative sovereignty and the current states system. Even the most ambitious and extensive human rights interventions, such as that in Kosovo, have been unwilling to alter international territorial boundaries or challenge the

⁴¹ United Nations, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, (New York: United Nations, December 2001).

⁴² Mohammed Ayoob, “Third World Perspectives on Humanitarian Intervention and International Administration”, *Global Governance*, 10:1, (January/March 2004).

negative sovereignty of states in pursuit of a durable solution.⁴³ Consequently, human rights interventions into ethnic conflicts must, by default, have the objective of leaving behind functioning multi-ethnic states with strong guarantees of minority rights.⁴⁴ In practice, This means that human rights interventions often result in open-ended post-conflict stabilisation obligations, which over time come to resemble international mandates. The build-up of too many open-ended mandates meant that by the end of the 1990s, governments were much less willing to contemplate direct military intervention in support of human rights.

4. Phase 4: Governance

Following the slow demise of humanitarian interventionism, a new phase, focused on governance, arose after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Governance interventionism is less concerned about processes and more attentive to an outcome: the effectiveness of states in controlling what occurs within and arises from within their borders. The economic, political and human rights concerns continue to exercise policy makers, and often inform the governance agenda, but the single-minded focus on states' capacity to control the people and territory for which they are responsible has often over-ridden concern with democracy or human rights.

Attention to issues of “governance”⁴⁵ and “failing states” had begun to develop in the early-1990s, though in the context of issues of international order.⁴⁶ But after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, governance and state failure became concerns of intense security self-interest to Western governments. Governments such as that in the UK used the context of those attacks to link terrorism, governance, and state failure:

[11 September 2001] confirmed the emergence of two linked threats to Britain's and the world's security: global terrorism and the dangers of “failed states” where the rule of law has broken down and chaos prevails. Terror and state failure had been with us for many years. But never before had they combined to such devastating effect. Al Qaida grew strong in a country where legitimate government had given way to force of arms and barbarism.⁴⁷

As global security concern turned to transnational threats emanating from weak states, international security specialists shifted their attention from the aggregation of power to zones of extreme powerlessness. Some commentators developed a new “domino theory” of state failure, arguing that the chaos from one

⁴³ Kosovo's effective independence from Serbia under the autonomy framework of the Rambouillet accords is unlikely ever to be transformed into statehood; in the case of East Timor, the UN intervention occurred after the formal vote for independence from Indonesia.

⁴⁴ A good example of this can be seen by tracing the history of the various international peace plans for Bosnia and the Dayton Accords, all of which insisted that Bosnia would be reconstituted as a functioning multi-ethnic democracy; see Wesley, *Casualties of the New World Order*.

⁴⁵ See for example World Bank, *World Development Report 1997*, (Washington: D.C: World Bank, 1997); and James N Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (eds) *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ The persistent chaos in Somalia in the early 1990s saw the beginnings of serious consideration of what should be done about collapsed states.

⁴⁷ United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departmental Report*, London, (May 2003), p. 3.

failing state can easily spill over into adjacent states, thereby dragging neighbours into failure also.⁴⁸ The logic of this new geopolitics was clear: weak states, if left alone, would give rise to regional contagion; therefore they must be strengthened before their internal chaos affects regional and global security.

According to the new transnational security paradigm, it is the flows of globalisation that transmits the effects of state weakness to the developed world:

Besides providing tangible “goods”, globalisation facilitates the flow of numerous “bads”. The same networks that channel billions of dollars in investment capital around the world every day can also transmit financial contagion. The same structure of global production that brings opportunity to poor regions can generate cross-boundary pollution. The same internet that links continents can be used to coordinate criminal enterprises. The same flow of scientific expertise that enables medical breakthroughs can put the power to kill thousands in the hand of terrorists.⁴⁹

Globalisation, a pervasive force, requires close attention to governance: “The quality of a country's governance is crucial in determining whether it gains or loses from globalisation.”⁵⁰ Weak systems of governance that are poorly equipped to handle the forces of globalisation become the defining security challenge:

In this century, disconnectedness defines danger. Disconnectedness allows bad actors to flourish by keeping entire societies detached from the global community and under their control. Eradicating disconnectedness, therefore, becomes the defining security task of our age.⁵¹

The new concern with domestic governance represents a significant shift back to international concern with the conditions of positive sovereignty, or the extent of a state's control over its population and territory. The “War on Terror” has created a new normative environment that has allowed post-colonial sensitivities to be brushed aside:

There was a time not so long ago when sensitivities about alleged “neo-colonialism” perhaps caused Australia to err on the side of passivity in our approach. Those days are behind us as we work constructively to address the challenges faced by our immediate neighbourhood.⁵²

And, in preparing the ground for a new phase of interventionism, negative sovereignty has been modified to include a new form of conditionality:

⁴⁸ See for example Elsin Wainwright, “Responding to State Failure – the Case of Australia and the Solomon Islands”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 57:3, (November 2003), p. 489

⁴⁹ Director of the US State Department's Policy Planning Staff Richard N Haass, “The Changing Nature of Sovereignty”, lecture to Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, Washington D.C., 14 January 2003

⁵⁰ Australian Government, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, (Canberra, April 2003).

⁵¹ Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), p. 8

⁵² Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Sydney, 18 June 2004

... one of the most significant developments over the past decades [is] the emerging global consensus that sovereignty is not a blank cheque. Rather, sovereign status is contingent on the fulfilment by each state of certain fundamental obligations, both to its own citizens and the international community. When a regime fails to live up to these responsibilities or abuses its prerogatives, it risks forfeiting its sovereign privileges including, in extreme cases, its immunity from armed intervention.⁵³

As governance has been “securitised”, its meaning has changed. Originally, governance was understood as “the structures and processes that enable governmental and nongovernmental actors to coordinate their interdependent needs and interests through the making and implementation of policies in the absence of a unifying political authority.”⁵⁴ As it became linked to state failure, governance was redefined as the capacity of a state to provide certain public goods to its people.⁵⁵ Primary among these is security from the sort of societal disorder that provides conditions in which malevolent transnational forces can thrive. The focus on transnational security threats helped assuage the suspicions of states such as China and Russia, which would be deeply suspicious of a governance agenda that was not linked to effectiveness against transnational threats.⁵⁶

The governance interventions that have taken place since 11 September 2001 — in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea — have made use of various techniques and rationales. Direct military intervention was used to topple dangerous and mis-governing regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. A pacification force was sent into Haiti to stabilise a society that had been driven to chaos by the mis-rule of a democratically elected government. The interventions into Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea were given stabilisation roles, as well as the task of helping construct more robust systems of governance and public order.

As with economic, democratic and human rights intervention, governance intervention is fraught with difficulties. When governance interventions need to both construct robust institutions and transform political systems, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, they confront all of the problems of political interventions. Often when governance frameworks appear to be externally imposed, the receptiveness of segments of society to the new systems is reduced. When governance interventions do not require or propose a change in the politics of the state, and confine themselves to technocratic tasks, such as in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, other problems can arise. On the one hand, as Francis Fukuyama has argued convincingly, history shows that technocratic solutions that work in one situation often fail in others,

⁵³ Haass, “The Changing Nature of Sovereignty”

⁵⁴ Elke Krahnmann, “National, Regional and Global Governance: One Phenomenon or Many?”, *Global Governance*, 9:3, (July/September 2003), p. 327

⁵⁵ See Robert I Rotberg, “Strengthening Governance: Ranking Countries Would Help”, *The Washington Quarterly*, (Winter 2004-2005).

⁵⁶ China and Russia reacted to 11 September 2001 not by focusing on governance but by emphasising the great powers’ common struggle against radical pan-Islamism; see Ariel Cohen, “Russia, Islam and the War on Terrorism: An Uneasy Future”, *Demokratizatsiya*, 10:4, (Fall 2002); Ahmad Lutfi, “China’s Islamic Awakening”, *The Jamestown Foundation*, 4:10, (May 2004).

due to the advising technocrats' inattention to local variations.⁵⁷ On the other hand, such interventions' lack of attention to local political dynamics can mean that the technocratic solutions they propose will soon succumb to destabilising political competition and violence. For instance, there are strong reasons to question how durable the institutions erected by the Australian-led governance intervention in the Solomon Islands will be, because the mission has no mandate to address the land rights issues that lie at the root of that country's present crisis. Indeed, given Australia's difficulty in addressing its own indigenous land rights issues, there is little hope that the current intervention will even begin to resolve the conflicts underlying Solomon Islands' chronic state weakness.

5. Conclusion: Iraq and the New Interventionism

My argument in this chapter has been that the March 2003 invasion of Iraq can only be understood in the context of the rise of the new interventionism in the 1980s and 1990s. Contrary to many conspiracy theories, the United States had long understood the danger of invading Iraq and establishing a new government. The sheer complexity and likely cost of this option had been the major consideration restraining President Bush senior from "finishing the job" after coalition forces had taken less than 100 hours to push Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991. The option chosen by the administration of Bush senior had been to weaken and disarm Iraq, and to place the regime of Saddam Hussein under such pressure that it would eventually succumb to popular revolt. As such, a large element of Iraq's negative sovereignty remained intact, though considerably constrained by the inspections and sanctions regimes, and in time, by the no-fly-zones across northern and southern Iraq.

At the start of the 1990s, then, the old logic of negative sovereignty was applied to Iraq: if the dictator was to be toppled, it should be at the hands of the Iraqi people rather than by foreign intervention. Iraq was held subject to a series of United Nations resolutions governing its behaviour mainly in relation to disarmament. As the decade progressed, the United States and its allies became increasingly frustrated by Saddam's lack of compliance with these traditional international methods. At seemingly regular intervals, President Clinton warned Iraq over its bad faith in relation to its obligations, and in 1998, the US and the UK launched Operation Desert Fox to punish Iraq for its non-compliance with these resolutions.

There were several issues that had begun to disturb the Clinton administration in relation to Iraq. First was the growing evidence of Saddam's deception and duplicity in bucking the international obligations, actions that seemed to demonstrate a complete lack of respect for international norms and opinion, and a lack of concern for Iraq's international reputation. Almost equally troubling was emerging evidence of the effect of sanctions on the weakest and most vulnerable in Iraqi society, while Saddam's grip on power seemed unshaken. Later, damning accounts of the corruption within the UN oil-for-food program surfaced, serving to further impugn the legitimacy of the sanctions regime. All of these factors, in turn, seemed to be contributing to the slow erosion of the sanctions regime, with one state after another stepping away from isolating Iraq and doing increasing amounts of business with it.

⁵⁷ Fukuyama, *State Building*, draws attention to the cases of Russia and Argentina, which took technocratic advice on economic restructuring only to fall prey to catastrophic financial failures and long-term economic decline.

By the end of the decade, Iraq under Saddam had come to be seen as a recidivist state, which, by nature of its internal constitution, was destined to keep trying to acquire nuclear weapons and control over its neighbours' oil reserves. Such a state could only be induced to comply with international norms by using coercive measures. Without greater commitment to such coercive measures by US allies, the task of forcing Iraq to behave was a losing proposition. In this context, the logic of the new interventionism began to figure strongly. Each of the phases of the new interventionism seemed to diagnose a different aspect of Iraq's pathologies. A socialist, command economy, a brutal dictatorship that allowed and indeed sponsored the operation of transnational threats within its borders, seemed an exemplar of all that was dangerous about tolerating heterogeneity in international relations. It was only if Iraq could be reshaped internally that it would begin to act like a responsible international citizen.

Such was the conviction within the later stages of the Clinton administration and the incoming Bush junior administration. Several commentators report that the incoming administration was determined to confront the issue of Iraq, but needed a public rationale for invading a sovereign state.⁵⁸ Tentative intelligence indications (which were later to prove false) of re-started weapons of mass destruction programs, and links between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaida operatives in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, provided such a rationale. Yet underneath the public selling of the case for invasion was a full commitment to rebuilding Iraq's institutions from the ground up — and according to the dictates of the new interventionism. The socialist, command economy of Saddam was to be converted into a free market economy, open to outside investment. The Ba'athist dictatorship was to be destroyed root and branch — to the extent that the “de-Ba'athification” that occurred after the invasion may have impaired any chance of a stable transitional administration — and replaced by a functioning liberal democracy. The secretive police state and periodically genocidal inter-ethnic relations were to be replaced by the rule of law and human rights. The chaotic kleptocracy was to be replaced by strong, transparent institutions of governance.

Thus the circumstances and motivations for the invasion of Iraq shaped the possibilities for the reconstruction of the new Iraq. It can be argued, on the basis of my analysis, that many of the inadequacies manifested by each phase of the new interventionism similarly occurred in Iraq. Many of these problems, deriving from within the logics of the new interventionism, are explored by other chapters in this volume.

⁵⁸ See for example Woodward, *Plan of Attack*