

The post-modern state and the world order

Robert Cooper

DEMOS

Introduction

1989 marked a break in European history. What happened in 1989 went beyond the events of 1789, 1815 or 1919. These dates, like 1989, stand for revolutions, the break-up of empires and the re-ordering of spheres of influence. But these changes took place within the established framework of the balance of power and the sovereign independent state. 1989 was different. In addition to the dramatic changes of that year – the revolutions and the re-ordering of alliances – it marked an underlying change in the European state system itself.

To put it crudely, what happened in 1989 was not just the end of the Cold War, but also the end of the balance-of-power system in Europe. This change is less obvious and less dramatic than the lifting of the Iron Curtain or the fall of the Berlin Wall, but it is no less important. And, in fact, the change in the system is closely associated with both of these events and perhaps was even a precondition for them.

Historically, the correct point of comparison is 1648, the end of the Thirty Years' War when the modern European state system emerged at the Peace of Westphalia. 1989 marked a similar break point in Europe. What is now emerging into the daylight is not a re-arrangement of the old system but a new system. Behind this lies a new form of statehood, or at least states which are behaving in a radically different way from the past. Alliances which survive in peace as well as in war, interference in each other's domestic affairs and the acceptance of jurisdiction of international courts mean that states today are less absolute in their sovereignty and independence than before.

In a curious symmetry these changes have come about partly as a result of a second thirty years' war: 1914 to 1945. The First and Second

World Wars brought a level of destruction which Europe had not seen since the first Thirty Years' War. The other factor was the Cold War: this offered the possibility of devastation on a scale without historical precedent. At the same time, it froze Europe for 40 years but thereby also allowed a breathing space for new ideas and new systems to emerge. And a change in the state system in Europe was clearly required: if the existing system was producing such unacceptable levels of actual and potential destruction, it was not performing its function. We should not, therefore, be surprised to see a new system emerging.

Thinking about foreign affairs – like any other kind of thinking – requires a conceptual map which, as maps do, simplifies the landscape and focuses on the main features. Before 1648, the key concept was Christendom; afterwards, it was the balance-of-power. Since 1648, the European order, and the policies that predominated within it, have been given a variety of names: the concert of Europe, collective security, containment. Each of these was in fact the name for a variation on the balance-of-power (collective security was a special and particularly unsuccessful variation). If, as this essay argues, Europe has now moved beyond the balance-of-power system, we need to understand the new system on which our security is now based. It requires a new vocabulary and, up to a point, new policies.

A particular problem in understanding the international system – as opposed to the European system – is that it has become less unified since the end of the Cold War.

The Cold War brought the international system together in a global confrontation and seemed to invest even obscure corners of the world with strategic importance. Most foreign policy issues could be viewed in the light of a single overwhelming question. With the end of the Cold War this rather artificial unity of vision has been lost. Unity has also been lost in a second sense. As will be argued later on, while Europe is developing a new and more orderly security system, other parts of the world are becoming, if anything, more disorderly. It was perhaps natural that with one global order gone, statesmen should want to hail the arrival of a new world order. But, as is now obvious, this is a poor description of the actual state of affairs.

Understanding the kind of world we live in is important. The costs of intellectual errors in foreign affairs are enormous. Wars are some-

times fought by mistake. Suez was a mistake, at least for Britain: it was fought against a threat to order, but neither the threat nor the order really existed. Algeria was a mistake: it was fought for a concept of the state that was no longer sustainable. Vietnam was a mistake: the United States thought it was fighting the Cold War, when in practice it was continuing a French colonial campaign. These conceptual errors had heavy costs. Clarity of thought is a contribution to peace.

The purpose of this essay is to explain the changes that have taken place and to offer a framework for understanding the post-Cold War world. The central focus will be on Europe, for a number of reasons. It is Europe that has dominated, first actively and then passively, the international stage for about 500 years. Secondly, it is in Europe that systemic change has taken place: the balance-of-power system came into being first in Europe; and now the post-balance system (which I call the post-modern) has also begun in Europe. Thirdly, this essay is written primarily for Europeans; they face the twin challenge of making their own new model of security work while, at the same time, living with a world that continues to operate on the old rules.

The old world order

To understand the present we must first understand the past. In a sense, the past is still with us. International order used to be based either on hegemony or on balance. Hegemony came first. In the ancient world order meant empire: Alexander's Empire, the Roman Empire, the Mogul, Ottoman or Chinese Empires. The choice, for the ancient and medieval worlds, was between empire and chaos. In those days imperialism was not a dirty word. Those within the empire had law, culture and civilisation. Outside the empire were barbarians, chaos and disorder.

The image of peace and order through a single hegemonic power centre has remained strong ever since. It was long present in dreams of the restoration of Christendom or in proposals for world government; it is still visible today in calls for a United States of Europe. The idea of the United Nations as a world government (which it was never intended to be) still survives; at least the UN is often criticised for failing to be one.

However, it was not the empires but the small states that proved to be a dynamic force in the world. Empires are ill-designed for promoting change. Holding the empire together – and it is the essence of empires that they are diverse – usually requires an authoritarian political style; innovation, especially in society and politics, would lead to instability. Historically, empires have generally been static.

Europe's world leadership came out of that uniquely European contribution, the small state. In Europe, a third way was found between the stasis of chaos and the stasis of empire. The diversity of the small European states created competition. And competition

among the European states, sometimes in the form of war, was a source of progress: social, political and technological. The difficulty of the European state system, however, was that it was threatened on either side. On the one hand, there was the risk of war getting out of control and the system relapsing into chaos; on the other hand, there was a risk of a single power winning the wars and imposing a single hegemony on Europe.

The solution to this, the essential problem of a small state system, was the balance-of-power. This worked neither so perfectly nor so automatically as is sometimes imagined. The idea remains full of ambiguities. Nevertheless, whatever the inadequacies of the system, when it came to the point that the European state system was threatened by hegemonic ambitions from Spain, France or Germany, coalitions were put together to thwart those ambitions. This system also had a certain legitimacy; statesmen were conscious of the desirability of balance. Over the years, a consensus grew that the pluralism of European states should be maintained. Some at least saw this as a condition of liberty in Europe.

Nevertheless, the balance-of-power had an inherent instability. It was the system in which a war was always waiting to happen. The end of the system came about as a result of three factors. The first was German unification in 1871. Here for the first time was a state that was too large and too dynamic to be contained within the traditional European system. Restraining German ambitions twice required the intervention of non-traditional European powers; the United States and the Soviet Union. And on the second occasion both remained behind, changing the nature of the system for ever.

The second factor was the change in technology in the late nineteenth century, which brought the industrial revolution on to the battlefield. War was inherent in the system; but by the beginning of the twentieth century, technology was raising the price of war to levels which could no longer be afforded.

The third change came with the second. The industrial revolution brought with it not just the means of moving the masses to the battlefield but also the mass society and democratic politics. This meant that war and peace could no longer be left to the judgements of a small and internationally-oriented elite. Balance-of-power thinking could be

maintained in the Treaty of Utrecht or the Congress of Vienna or in Bismarck's Treaty with Austria after the War of 1866. But already in 1871 the influence of popular national feeling was playing a part; Bismarck's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, against his own better judgement, showed that the Bismarckian days, when states could be juggled and balanced, had come to an end. By the time of the Versailles Conference, the kind of peace negotiations that Talleyrand and Metternich had conducted were no longer possible. The idea of the balance-of-power was already dead in 1919, although the Second World War saw one final coalition constructed to keep the European state system together.

If the European state system of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and up to a point the first half of the twentieth century) was one of the balance-of-power, the world system was one of empires. The empires were, for the most part, the European system writ large. And the wars of empires – for example the Seven Years' War – were essentially European wars. Empires added prestige and provided background for European politics, whether in the Congress of Berlin or in the Agadir Incident; but the heart of the system still lay in Europe. That European powers had empires overseas was natural, but it was also a paradox. The paradox was that powers which operated a system of balance in their own continent – with its acceptance of national states and international pluralism – operated empires overseas suppressing nationalism and hostile to pluralism. This paradox was at the bottom of the unravelling of the empires in the second half of the twentieth century.

But empires were also natural. It is an assumption of the balance-of-power system that states are fundamentally aggressive, or at least that some states are aggressive some of the time. A system which is designed to thwart hegemonial ambitions makes the assumption that such ambitions are common. And, since balance in Europe prevented expansion there, it was natural for that expansion to take place overseas. This is another reason why Germany was a disturbing factor. By the time of Germany's emergence most of the available chaos had already been converted into empire (and some of the non-chaos, too) or had been declared empire-free (South America under the Monroe Doctrine). This left little room for Germany or Japan.

The Cold War order

The wars of 1914 to 1945 destroyed both the European balance-of-power in its traditional sense and also the European empires. The European empires depended on prestige, and this was fatally undermined in the Second World War. And in Europe itself, America and Russia were now needed to keep the system intact. What happened after 1945 was, however, not so much a radically new system as the concentration and culmination of the old one. The empires became spheres of influence of the superpowers. And the old multilateral balance-of-power in Europe became a bilateral balance of terror worldwide. In a strange way the old systems – balance in Europe and empire outside – were combined to produce something like a world order of balance between empires or blocs; a final culminating simplification of the balance-of-power.

The Cold War years were a period of wars and tension, but there was also an underlying order. This came in the shape of a tacit understanding that the USA and the USSR would not fight each other directly; nor would their major allies. Behind this, of course, lay nuclear weapons. The other side of this coin was that the Soviet Union was free to invade its own allies without Western interference. These unwritten rules also permitted the Soviets to arm North Vietnam, and America to arm Afghan guerillas; but neither sent conventional combat forces to a theatre where the other was committed. For the most part, the Cold War was fought with propaganda, bribery and subversion as much as in military combat. Where there was fighting, it was most often for political or ideological control of a particular country – Nicaragua, Angola or Korea, for example – rather than between countries. Many of the actual battles of the Cold War took place in civil wars. Thus the system had a certain orderliness since boundaries did not often change and major inter-state conflicts were usually outside the Cold War framework.

And yet the Cold War order was not built to last. Although it was stable on a military level it lacked legitimacy as a system. It was not just that many found the balance of terror repugnant – on the whole it was individuals rather than governments who had the moral doubts. Rather, the system lacked legitimacy since the ideologies of both sides rejected the division of the world into two camps. (On the Western side

this was probably more true in America than in Europe.) In this sense, the Cold War balance differed from the European balance-of-power system which was accepted by the governments of the day as legitimate and which, in some sense, matched the rationalist spirit of the times. The Cold War system never suited the more universalistic, moralistic spirit of the late twentieth century. Moreover both sides, within certain limits, were always ready to undermine it.

The end of the Cold War has brought not only the re-arrangement of the international scene that usually follows hegemonic wars but also domestic change. Since the Cold War was a battle of ideas as much as one between armies, those changes have not been imposed by occupying forces but introduced to willing, if bemused, governments by hordes of MIT-trained economists, management consultants, seminars and programmes of technical assistance (including the aptly named British Know How Fund). The unique character of the Cold War is also shown by the fact that instead of extracting reparations – a practice which lasted from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century – we have instead given aid to help convert the defeated side. Thus are wars of ideas different from wars of territory.

Ideas are not cost-free. They can be dangerous to peace. Democracy, the victorious idea in the Cold War, is a destroyer of empires. To run a democratic state with majority voting requires a strong sense of identity. Democracy requires the definition of a political community. In many cases, this is provided by the idea of the nation. The break-up of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia, both in different ways Cold War empires, is a consequence of the victory of Western liberalism and democracy. The wars in those territories are democracy's wars. Liberalism and nationalism can go together today just as they did for eighteenth and nineteenth century states emerging from one or another form of imperial rule.

The new world order

The point of this rather compressed historical survey is that we should understand that what came to an end in 1989 was not just the Cold War, nor even in a formal sense the Second World War – since the 2+4 Treaty (ending the post-war arrangements for Berlin and Germany) represents a final settlement of that war, too. What came to an end in Europe (but perhaps only in Europe) were the political systems of three centuries: the balance-of-power and the imperial urge. The Cold War brought together the ideas of balance and empire and made the world a single whole, unified by a single struggle for empire and locked in a single balance of terror. But both balance and empire have now ceased to be the ruling concepts in Europe; and the world consequently no longer forms a single political system.

The pre-modern

We live now in a divided world, but divided quite differently from the days of the East-West confrontation. First there is a pre-modern world, the pre-state, post-imperial chaos. Examples of this are Somalia, Afghanistan, Liberia. The state no longer fulfils Weber's criterion of having the legitimate monopoly on the use of force. This circumstance may come about because the state has in the past abused that monopoly and has lost its legitimacy. In other cases, given the easy availability of conventional weapons today, it may lose the monopoly. The state itself is a fragile structure, whether in primitive societies which may have less need of it, or in complex urban and industrial societies which have a lower tolerance of disorder but a more delicate structure of authority. The order provided by the state is vital to survival but the

state cannot be overwhelmingly strong or it will also stop the society from functioning, as we have seen in Communist countries. As the fencing master says to his pupil in the film *Scaramouche*,¹ ‘the rapier is like a bird. Grasp it too loosely and it will fly away, too tight and you will crush it.’ So it is with the state and civil society.

The examples above are by no means the only cases of degeneration to a pre-modern state. It is early days since the end of the Cold War and more pre-modern states will emerge. Some areas of the former Soviet Union are candidates; so is much of Africa. No area of the world is without its risky cases. What is different today is that the imperial urge is dead in the countries most capable of imperialism. Land and natural resources (with the exception of oil), are no longer a source of power for the most technologically advanced countries. Governing people, especially potentially hostile people, is a burden. No one today wants to pay the costs of saving distant countries from ruin. The pre-modern world belongs, as it were, in a different time zone: here, as in the ancient world, the choice is again between empire or chaos. And today, because none of us sees the use of empires, we have chosen chaos.

As a result we have, for the first time since the nineteenth century, a *terra nullius*. It may remain so or it may not. The existence of such a zone of chaos is nothing new; but previously such areas, precisely because of their chaos, were isolated from the rest of the world. Not so today when a country without much law and order can still have an international airport. And, where the state is too weak to be dangerous, non-state actors may become too strong. If they become too dangerous for the established states to tolerate, it is possible to imagine a defensive imperialism. If non-state actors, notably drug, crime, or terrorist syndicates take to using non-state (that is, pre-modern) bases for attacks on the more orderly parts of the world, then the organised states may eventually have to respond. Occasionally they do so already.²

The modern

The second part of the world is the modern. Here the classical state system remains intact. States retain the monopoly of force and may be prepared to use it against each other. If there is order in this part of the system it is because of a balance-of-power or because of the presence of hegemonic states which see an interest in maintaining the

status quo. The modern world is for the most part orderly, but it remains full of risks. The Gulf, for example, is an area where it is necessary to think in balance-of-power terms. The Western concept has sometimes been of a balance between Iran and Iraq. Unfortunately, Iraq’s emergence as the stronger power following the Iran–Iraq war brought that theory to an end, and (as in Europe in the first half of the century) the United States has been obliged to become the balancing element.

An important characteristic of the modern order (which I call ‘modern’ not because it is new – it is in fact very old-fashioned – but because it is linked to that great engine of modernisation, the nation state) is the recognition of state sovereignty and the consequent separation of domestic and foreign affairs, with a prohibition on external interference in the former. This is still a world in which the ultimate guarantor of security is force, a world in which, in theory at least, borders can be changed by force. It is not that, in the modern order, might is right so much as that right is not particularly relevant; might and *raison d’état* are the things that matter. In international relations, this is the world of the calculus of interests and forces described by Machiavelli and Clausewitz.

The concepts, values and vocabulary of the modern world still dominate our thinking in international relations. Palmerston’s classic statement that Britain had no permanent friends or enemies but that only its interests were eternal is still quoted as though it were a lasting truth of universal application. Theories of international relations are still broadly based on these assumptions. This is clearly true for ‘realist’ theories, for example those based on the calculus of interests and the balance-of-power; it is also true for ‘idealist’ theories – based on the hope that the anarchy of nations can be replaced by the hegemony of a world government or a collective-security system.

The United Nations, as originally conceived, belongs to this universe. It is an attempt to establish law and order within the modern state system. The UN Charter emphasises state sovereignty on the one hand and aims to maintain order by force. The veto power is a device to ensure that the UN system does not take on more than it can handle by attacking the interests of the great powers. The UN was thus conceived to stabilise the order of states and not to create a fundamentally new order. This is not the whole story, since the United

Nations has developed since its inception; but in conception the collective-security element of the UN Charter represents an attempt to throw the weight of the international system behind the *status quo*, so that the international community as a whole would become the balancing actor in the balance-of-power system.

Before passing on to the third element in the world system, it is worth noting that the modern order contains some worrying problems. The most notable feature is the lack of a real balance-of-power in many areas of the world. In the Gulf, we have already seen the consequences of that. But elsewhere there are also powerful states which might under certain circumstances become destabilising actors. India is one example, China another, Brazil a third.

None of these is directly threatening at the moment; for the most part they are preoccupied with their own internal security and cohesion. That is also one reason why they hate external interference, which is both a challenge to state sovereignty and a threat to internal order. Any of these states could, if things went badly wrong for them, revert to a pre-modern state.

But it could be equally alarming if things went right for them. The establishment of internal cohesion has often been the prelude to external expansion. So it was for Britain after England and Scotland unified (the empire was always British), for Germany after 1871, for Japan after 1868. The arrival of a cohesive and powerful state in many parts of the world could prove too much for any regional balance-of-power system to contain it.

There are many countries which could become too powerful or too aggressive for regional balance. The names mentioned are merely those of the largest regional actors; but we should not become too fixated by size. Internal cohesion and modern (especially nuclear) technology can compensate for small size, as, historically, the case of Britain demonstrates. In the pre-modern world, states (or rather would-be states) may be dangerous because they are failures; in the modern world, it is the successful states which are potentially dangerous.

It is even possible that we could see a new imperialism. Someone may decide to make some part of the chaos a non-white man's burden. If they do so, it will probably not be for economic reasons: taming chaos is not very profitable today – perhaps it never has been.

Imperialism is more likely from defensive motives – when a nearby state of chaos becomes in some way a threat. Or imperialism may be in pursuit of an idea. To persuade your own people to risk their lives in chaotic foreign countries requires the belief that you are spreading some gospel, pursuing a mission of civilisation or (in the worst case) establishing the natural superiority of your race. It requires confidence and conviction. And then, if you are to be successful, you have to persuade the people that you are subjugating that you are doing this in their own interests and in the service of a higher good: most people are subjugated by ideas rather than by force. In this context, Islam is at least a possibility. A successful Islamist state is more likely to be a threat (or a saviour) for the pre-modern world than Europe or the USA.

The conditions for the success of such a new imperialism are much more difficult today than in previous centuries. First, the new imperialists would encounter a national consciousness awakened, or created, by the previous generations of imperialists. Second, they would have to explain why the idea they offered was superior to the liberal/capitalist/consumerist democracy of the West. These are difficult challenges for a country aiming to establish a new empire; they might well make it impossible to sustain one.

A new imperialism from any of the modern states would not necessarily be damaging for Western interests, since it would be established in a zone that the West had chosen to abandon. More problematic would be the attempt to establish a regional hegemony. This might in the short run be threatening to Western interests and in the long run be threatening to the West itself. We have already seen such a threat in the Gulf; it is possible to imagine threats arising in the Pacific. If they did, in some years' time, will the West be equipped materially, psychologically and politically to deal with them? That brings us to the problem of post-modernity.

The post-modern

The third part of the international system may be called the post-modern element.³ Here the state system of the modern world is also collapsing; but unlike the pre-modern it is collapsing into greater order rather than into disorder. Modern Europe was born with the Peace of Westphalia. Post-modern Europe begins with two treaties. The first of

these, the Treaty of Rome, was created out of the failures of the modern system: the balance-of-power which ceased to work and the nation state which took nationalism to destructive extremes. The Treaty of Rome is a conscious and successful attempt to go beyond the nation state.

The second foundation of the post-modern era is the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (the CFE Treaty): this was born of the failures, wastes and absurdities of the Cold War. In aspiration at least the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also belongs to this world, as will the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) when it comes into force.

The post-modern system does not rely on balance; nor does it emphasise sovereignty or the separation of domestic and foreign affairs. The European Union, for example, is a highly developed system for mutual interference in each other's domestic affairs, right down to beer and sausages. The CFE Treaty also breaks new ground in intrusion in areas normally within state sovereignty. Parties to the treaty have to notify the location of their heavy weapons (which are in any case limited by the treaty) and allow challenge inspections. Under this treaty so far, more than 40,000 items of heavy military equipment – tanks, artillery, helicopters and so on – have been destroyed by mutual agreement, surely an unprecedented event. The legitimate monopoly on force, which is the essence of statehood, is thus subject to international – but self-imposed – constraints.

It is important to realise what an extraordinary revolution this is. The normal logical behaviour of armed forces is to conceal their strength and hide their forces and equipment from potential enemies. Treaties to regulate such matters are an absurdity in strategic logic. In the first place, you do not reach agreements with enemies, since, if they are enemies they cannot be trusted. In the second place, you do not let the enemy come snooping round your bases counting weapons. What is it that has brought about this weird behaviour? The answer must be that behind the paradox of the CFE Treaty lies the equal and opposite paradox of the nuclear age: that in order to defend yourself you had to be prepared to destroy yourself. The shared interest of European countries in avoiding a nuclear catastrophe has proved enough to overcome the normal strategic logic of hostility and suspi-

cion. The mutual vulnerability that provided stability in the nuclear age has now been extended to the conventional end of the spectrum where it becomes mutual transparency. (The Cold War nuclear stalemate already contained some elements of the post-modern. It relied on transparency. For deterrence to work it has to be visible.)

The path towards this treaty was laid through one of the few real innovations in diplomacy – confidence-building measures. Through the fog of mistrust and deception, the Cold War states began to understand late in the day that the others might not, in fact, be planning to attack them. Measures to prevent war through miscalculation grew out of this, for example, observation of manoeuvres. The progression has proceeded logically to observation of weapons systems and to limitations on them. The solution to the prisoners' dilemma lies in ending mutual secrecy.

In one respect, the CFE Treaty has already collapsed under its own contradictions. As originally designed, the treaty embodied the idea of balance between two opposite blocs. The underlying assumption was one of enmity: balance was required to make it unlikely that either side would take the risk of making an attack. Transparency was required to make sure that there was really a balance. But by the time you have achieved balance and transparency it is difficult to retain enmity. The result is that transparency remains but enmity and balance (and one of the blocs) have effectively gone. This was not, of course, the work of the CFE Treaty alone but of the political revolution that made that treaty possible. It does suggest, however, that there is a basic incompatibility between the two systems; the modern based on balance and the post-modern based on openness do not co-exist well together.

Intrusive verification – which is at the heart of the CFE system – is a key element in a post-modern order where state sovereignty is no longer seen as an absolute. But far-reaching as they may be, the CFE Treaty and the CWC are only partial approaches towards a post-modern order.

Although their acceptance of intrusive verification breaks with the absolutist tradition of state sovereignty, the field in which sovereignty has been sacrificed is limited to foreign affairs and security. Thus what is permitted is interference in the domestic aspect of foreign affairs.

The aspirations of the OSCE go rather further. OSCE principles cover standards of domestic behaviour – democratic procedures, treatment of minorities, freedom of the press – which are distant from the traditional concerns of foreign and security policy. Whether the OSCE will develop – as it aspires to – into a system for international monitoring of domestic behaviour remains to be seen. If it does, this will be a break with the tradition of the European state system which will take all the OSCE countries (or all those who play by the rules) decisively into a post-modern world. The characteristics of this world are:

- the breaking down of the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs
- mutual interference in (traditional) domestic affairs and mutual surveillance
- the rejection of force for resolving disputes and the consequent codification of rules of behaviour. These rules are self-enforced. No-one compels states to obey CFE limits. They keep to them because of their individual interest in maintaining the collective system. In the same way the judgements of the European Court of Justice are implemented voluntarily, even when they are disliked, because all EC states have an interest in maintaining the rule of law
- the growing irrelevance of borders: this has come about both through the changing role of the state but also through missiles, motor cars and satellites. Changes of borders are both less necessary and less important
- security is based on transparency, mutual openness, interdependence and mutual vulnerability.

The most prominent post-modern institutions are mentioned above but this list is by no means exclusive. The Strasbourg Court of Human Rights belongs in this category; so, in the economic sphere, do the IMF and the OECD with their systems of economic surveillance. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), taken together with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), safeguards and special inspection regimes, aspires to be a part of it, although the lack of openness on the part of the nuclear powers themselves means that it does not fully qualify.

This security system deals with the problems identified earlier that made the balance of power unworkable. By aiming to avoid war it takes account of the horrors of war that modern technology represents; indeed, it depends to a degree on the technology and on the horrors. It is also more compatible with democratic societies: the open society domestically is reflected in a more open international order. And finally, since security no longer depends on balance, it is able to incorporate large and potentially powerful states. The peaceful reunification of Germany is in itself a proof that the system has changed.

A difficulty for the post-modern state – though one that goes beyond the scope of this paper – is that democracy and democratic institutions are firmly wedded to the territorial state. The package of national identity, national territory, a national army, a national economy and national democratic institutions has been immensely successful. Economy, law-making and defence may be increasingly embedded in international frameworks, and the borders of territory may be less important, but identity and democratic institutions remain primarily national. These are the reasons why traditional states will remain the fundamental unit of international relations for the foreseeable future, even though they may have ceased to behave in traditional ways.

The post-modern world

What is the origin of this change? The fundamental point is that 'the world's grown honest'. A large number of the most powerful states no longer want to fight or to conquer. This gives rise both to the pre-modern and to the post-modern world. France no longer thinks of invading Germany or Italy although it has nuclear weapons, and these should theoretically put it in a position of overwhelming superiority. Nor does it think of invading Algeria to restore order there. Imperialism is dead, at least among the Western powers. Acquiring territory is no longer of interest. Acquiring subject populations would for most states be a nightmare.

This is not altogether a novelty. Imperialism has been dying slowly for a long time. Britain was inventing dominion status in the nineteenth century and – admittedly under intense pressure – was letting Ireland go early in the twentieth. Sweden acquiesced in Norwegian independence in 1905. What is, however, completely new is that Europe should consist more or less entirely of states which are no longer governed by the territorial imperative.

If this view is correct, it follows that we should not think of the European Union or even NATO as the cause of the half century of peace in Western Europe; at least not in the crude way that this is sometimes argued – that states which merge their industries cannot fight each other. This proposition seems to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for peace. After all the EFTA countries did not fight each other even though most were members of neither NATO nor the EU. And on the other side, Yugoslavia has shown that a single market and a single currency and integrated armed forces can be

broken up if those concerned want to fight.

NATO and the EU have, nevertheless, played an important role in reinforcing and sustaining the basic fact that Western Europe countries no longer want to fight each other. NATO has promoted a greater degree of military openness than has ever existed before. Force planning is done in the open even if it is not quite so much a joint procedure as it is supposed to be. Joint exercises and an integrated command structure reinforce this openness. Thus within Western Europe, there has been a kind of internal CFE Treaty for many years – except that most of the times, states were urging each other to increase rather than to cut defence spending.

No doubt the solidarity created by having a common enemy also played a part initially; so did the presence of US forces, which enabled Germany to keep forces at lower levels than its strategic position would have warranted; and so did the US nuclear guarantee which enabled Germany to remain non-nuclear. But for Germany to have pursued these policies in isolation would not have been enough: France or the UK might still have suspected a secret German troop build-up or a nuclear weapons programme. What mattered above all was the openness NATO created. NATO was and is, in short, a massive intra-western confidence-building measure.

This is why the reunification of Germany within NATO was so important. In a curious way, it is part of how NATO won the Cold War: it provided a framework within which Germany – the epicentre of the Cold War – could be reunited. The balance-of-power system broke down in Europe because of Germany and, for a while, it seemed that the solution to the problem was to divide Germany. And – in the same logic – the Cold War was needed to maintain the division. Balance in Europe seemed to require a divided Germany and a divided Germany required a divided Europe. For Germany to be reunited, a different security system was required: in effect a post-balance, post-modern system, of which NATO was one key element.

The EU was another. Its security role is similar to that of NATO though this is harder to see since it is further from the sharp end of military hardware. It is not the Coal and Steel Authority (which did not integrate the industry so much as the market – German coalmines remained German and French steel mills remained French) that has

kept the countries of Europe from fighting each other, but the fact that they did not want to do so. Nevertheless, the existence of the Coal and Steel Authority and the Common Market and the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy and so forth, has served important reinforcing functions. They have introduced a new degree of openness hitherto unknown in Europe. And they have given rise to thousands of meetings of ministers and officials, so that all those concerned with decisions over peace and war know each other well.

They may or may not agree; they may or may not like each other, but they do belong to the same organisation and work together and make deals together over a wonderful range of subjects. By the standards of the past this represents an enormous degree of what might be called administrative integration. (This is neither complete political integration – which would require *inter alia* European political parties – nor economic integration, which takes place at the level of the firm, the investor and the workforce.) Again, compared with the past, it represents a quality of political relations and a stability in political relationships never known before. To create an international society, international socialisation is required and one of the important functions of the Brussels institutions is to provide this.

A second important function is to provide a framework for settling disputes between member states. Since force is no longer available some mixture of law, bargaining and arbitration is required: the EU provides this in most cases (not all since, for example, territorial disputes remain outside its ambit). The same framework of bargaining and law also regulates a good deal of transnational cooperation. As one (disappointed) observer noted, the EU is an organisation not for pursuing a European interest, but for pursuing national interests more effectively. In the post-modern context ‘more effectively’ means without being obliged to resort to military means.

The EU is the most developed example of a post-modern system. It represents security through transparency, and transparency through interdependence. The EU is more a transnational than a supra-national system. Although there are still some who dream of a European state (which would be supra-national), they are a minority today – if one takes account of ordinary people, a very small minority. The dream is

one left over from a previous age. It rests on the assumption that nation states are fundamentally dangerous and that the only way to tame the anarchy of nations is to impose hegemony on them. It is curious that having created a structure that is ideally adapted to the post-modern state, there are still enthusiasts who want to destroy it in favour of an idea which is essentially more old-fashioned.

State interests

To say that the EU (or for that matter the Council of Europe or the OSCE) is a forum in which states pursue their interests should not be misunderstood. ‘Interests’ means something different for the modern state and for its post-modern successor. The ‘interests’ that Palmerston referred to as eternal were essentially security interests. They included such notions as the Russians should be kept out of the Mediterranean; no single power should be allowed to dominate the continent of Europe; the British Navy should be bigger than the next two largest navies combined and so forth. Even defined in these terms, interests are by no means eternal, though they can have a shelflife measured in decades at least. These interests are defined by the security problems in a world of fundamentally predatory states. It is the essential business of a state to protect its citizens from invasion: hence the absolute, if not eternal, nature of these interests; hence the adjective ‘vital’. Such interests still exist for the West today: it is probably a vital Western interest that no single country should come to dominate world oil supplies, perhaps also that nuclear weapons should not get into the hands of unstable, aggressive or irresponsible hands. Or if Japan, for example, should come under serious military threat there would be a general Western interest, probably a vital interest, in defending it.

These are problems about encounters between the post-modern and modern world. Within the post-modern world, there are no security threats in the traditional sense; that is to say its members do not consider invading each other. The ‘interests’ that are debated with the European Union are essentially matters of policy preference and burden sharing. There is no fundamental reason why in the last GATT negotiations France should have been ready to sacrifice the interests of its software companies in favour of its farmers; France’s ‘interests’ are defined by the political process. Such interests may change with

governments. In the UK, the Thatcher government brought with it a stronger commitment to open markets than its predecessor had shown. The 'interest' in free markets was born in 1979 – it was certainly not eternal. The vital national interests that are defended under the Luxembourg compromise are almost certainly neither vital nor national and they are not even 'interests' in the Palmerstonian sense – none of which is to say that they are unimportant.

If the second half of Palmerston's proposition, that interests are eternal, no longer applies in the post-modern world, the first half, that no country has permanent friends is equally alien. Although friendship is hardly a concept that applies between states, institutions like the EU and NATO constitute something analogous to a bond of marriage. In a world where nothing is absolute, permanent or irreversible, these relationships are at least more lasting than any state's interests. Perhaps they will even turn out to be genuinely permanent.

At all events we should beware of transferring the vocabulary of the modern world into the post-modern. Germany may (occasionally) exercise a dominant influence in the EU, or the USA may dominate NATO policy making, but this kind of dominance, achieved by persuasion or bought in some other way, is quite different from domination by military invasion. (These two countries are not, of course, mentioned by accident – but the significant fact in each case is probably not their size but the fact that they are dominant financial contributors to these two institutions.)

Who belongs to the post-modern world?

It is certain that there is a new European order based on openness and mutual interference. The EU countries are clearly members. Whatever happens to the European Union, the state in Western Europe will never be the same again.

Although these post-modern characteristics apply among the states of the EU they do not necessarily apply between them and other states: if Argentina chooses to operate according to the rules of Clausewitz rather than those of Kant, Britain may have to respond on the same level. Similarly, in the days of the Cold War, all the European states had to operate on the old logic *vis-à-vis* the Warsaw Pact although among themselves the post-modern logic increasingly applied.

Outside Europe, who might be described as post-modern? Canada certainly; the USA up to a point perhaps. The USA is the more doubtful case since it is not clear that the US government or Congress accepts either the necessity and desirability of interdependence, or its corollaries of openness, mutual surveillance and mutual interference to the same extent as most European governments now do. Its relative reluctance to accept, for example, challenge inspection in the CWC, its hesitations about certain OSCE ideas are examples of US caution about post-modern concepts. The knowledge that the defence of the civilised world rests ultimately on its shoulders is perhaps justification enough for the US caution.

Besides, as the most powerful country in the world, the USA has no reason to fear any other country and so less reason to accept the idea of security based on mutual vulnerability, except of course in the nuclear field. Here the US is unavoidably vulnerable. Hence one very emphatic piece of post-modern diplomacy in an otherwise rather uncompromising insistence on sovereignty: START⁴ and all the other nuclear treaties with Russia – not least the anti-ABM⁵ Treaty which is designed to preserve mutual vulnerability. (The occasional bouts of longing for a Strategic Defence Initiative astrodome show, however, that the US is not necessarily reconciled to post-modernism even in the nuclear field.)

Russia poses an important problem for us. Is it going to be a pre-modern, modern or post-modern state? It embodies all three possibilities. A collapse into pre-modernism is perhaps the least likely: the urbanised and industrialised landscape of Russia has a low tolerance for disorder. The risk is more of the state becoming too powerful than of it disappearing altogether. But there are also post-modern elements in Russia trying to get out. And Russian acceptance of the CFE Treaty and of OSCE observers in Chechnya suggests that it is not wholly lost to the doctrine of openness. How Russia behaves in respect of its post-modern treaty commitments will be a critical factor for the future: so will the behaviour of the rest of Europe as it decides how to build its security relationship with Russia.

Of non-European countries, Japan is by inclination a post-modern state. It is not now interested in acquiring territory, nor in using force. It would probably be willing to accept intrusive verification. It is an

enthusiastic multilateralist. Were it on the other side of the world, it would be a natural member of organisations such as the OSCE or the EU. Unfortunately for Japan it is a lone post-modern country surrounded by states firmly locked into an earlier age: post-modernism in one country is possible only up to a point. If China develops in an unpromising fashion (either modern or pre-modern), Japan could be forced to revert to defensive modernism.

And elsewhere? What in Europe has become a reality is in many other parts of the world an aspiration. ASEAN,⁶ NAFTA,⁷ MERCOSUR,⁸ even the OAU⁹ suggest at least the desire for a post-modern environment. This wish is unlikely to be realised quickly. Most developing countries are too unsure of their own identity to allow much interference in domestic affairs. Nevertheless, imitation is easier than invention and perhaps rapid post-modernisation could follow the rapid industrialisation that is already under way in many parts of the world. Europe's military power may have declined but the power of example remains. Perhaps that is the post-modern equivalent of imperialism.

The post-modern state

Lying behind the post-modern international order is the post-modern state – more pluralist, more complex, less centralised than the bureaucratic modern state but not at all chaotic, unlike the pre-modern. As the state itself becomes less dominating, state interest becomes a less determining factor in foreign policy: the media, popular emotion, the interests of particular groups or regions, including transnational groups, all come into play. The deconstruction of the modern state is not yet complete, but it proceeds rapidly: in their different ways the European Community, the movement in many countries towards greater regional autonomy and the more or less universal movement towards privatisation are all part of the process.

Is it fanciful to identify (loosely) the three stages of state development with three types of economy: agricultural in the pre-modern, industrial mass production in the modern, and the post-industrial service and information economy with the post-modern state?

The post-modern state is one that sets value above all on the individual. Hence its unwarlike character. War is essentially a collective activity: the struggles of the twentieth century have been the struggles of liberalism – the doctrine of the individual – against different forms of collectivism: class, nation, race, community, state. In their different ways both fascism and communism were systems designed for war. Fascism was open about it: its ethos and rhetoric – the uniforms, parades, the glorification of war: the state did not just have a monopoly on violence; violence was its *raison d'être*.

Communism also seems, in retrospect, like an attempt to run a state as though it were an army, and as if the country were continuously at

war. Not for nothing was the term 'command economy' used.

Both communism and fascism were attempts to resist the break-up of society brought about by the ideas of the enlightenment and the technology of the industrial revolution. Both ideologies tried to provide protection for the individual against the loneliness and uncertainty of life in a modernising society. Both tried to use the state to replace the sense of community that was lost as industrial cities replaced agricultural villages (and both thereby maintained *inter alia* the intrusiveness and conformity of the village too: 'Upper Volta with rockets' – was exactly what they aimed at in a way: village life plus state power). These were thus the culminating points of the modern state – *raison d'état* made into a system of domestic governance as well as foreign policy.

The post-modern state is the opposite. The individual has won¹⁰ and foreign policy becomes the continuation of domestic concerns beyond national boundaries and not vice versa. Individual consumption replaces collective glory as the dominant theme of national life. War is to be avoided; empire is of no interest.

A post-modern order requires post-modern states, and vice versa. To create a lasting post-modern security system in Europe it is crucial that all the most powerful actors should fit into the post-modern pattern. The Cold War could come to an end only through a domestic transformation in the Soviet Union. This is as yet neither complete nor certain, but in historical terms progress has been rapid. What has happened, though, probably irreversibly, is a foreign policy transformation.

Russia has largely given up its empire, joining the rest of Europe as a post-imperial state. The last details of this transition remain to be settled – and this could take a long time. Nevertheless, there is at least a chance that Russia will eventually abandon both imperialist gains and imperialist ambitions. This is important for West European countries. No country can feel safe while their neighbour is under enemy occupation or a regime imposed from the outside. In this sense, security is indivisible.

So long as the Soviet Union tried to maintain territorial control over Poland, and other East European states, the possibility of its ambitions stretching further to the West could not be ruled out. Nor need such ambitions be part of a quest for glory or for power; the logic of terri-

torial-based defence is that you always need more territory to defend that which you have acquired ('I have no way to defend my borders except to extend them', said Catherine the Great). As the Soviet Union lost an empire, the West lost an enemy.

For Western Europe, the real post-modern age began in 1989. Until then it was all very well for West European states to operate in the post-modern mode within their own circle, but the dominating theme of their foreign and defence policies for the post-war period was the Cold War. That compelled all of us to base our thinking ultimately on armed protection, secrecy and balance. The hard core of Western policy during this time was ultimately that of the modern state. That is now gone. We are post-modern states living on a post-modern continent. What, then, should we do?

The implications for security

The first step is to stop and think. We should recognise that this is a new world but there is neither a new world order – to use the phrase that was fashionable in the early 1990s; nor is there a new world disorder – to use the phrase that is more fashionable today. Instead there is a zone of safety in Europe, and outside it a zone of danger and a zone of chaos.

A world divided into three needs a threefold security policy and a threefold mindset. Neither is easy to achieve.

Before we can think about the security requirements for today and tomorrow, we have to forget the security rules of yesterday. The twentieth century has been marked by absolutes. The war against Hitler and the struggle against communism had to be won. The only possible policy was absolute victory, unconditional surrender.

In the more complex and more ambiguous post-war world, we shall not face the same total threats or need to use the same total war against them. We have to forget, therefore, that the only purpose of the military is to win complete victories. In none of the three worlds that we live in will this be appropriate.

Security and the post-modern zone

There may be no new world order but there is a new European security order. Our task must be to preserve and extend it. Broadly speaking that is what European countries are doing. The task is to promote open democratic institutions, open market economies and open multilateral or transnational diplomacy with as many of our neighbours as possible. Among ourselves we have to maintain these habits and to improve

them in the hope that the key transnational institutions – the EU and NATO – will eventually acquire some of the permanence and solidity that our national institutions enjoy. That means essentially acquiring more loyalty and more legitimacy.

The key question for European security, in the narrow sense, will be how Russia turns out. It must be our central interest to draw Russia into the post-modern European system. That means not just exporting democracy and markets but also bringing Russia into our system of multilateral diplomacy. This cannot be achieved overnight; for the moment, our goal should not be to close off any options. If the Russians decide to retreat to the old system of security by military power, that, regrettably, is their business. Our policy should be to do everything possible to make the alternative course of security by confidence and cooperation – that is to say post-modern security – possible and attractive to them.

Advice for the post-modern state: never forget that security can be achieved more by cooperation than by competition.

Security and the modern world

Dealing with the modern world, the world of ambitious states, requires a different approach. If eventually these states decide to join a post-modern system of open diplomacy, so much the better; but this will take time, and between now and then lie many dangers. The Gulf War provides an illustration both of the dangers and of how they should be dealt with. One ambitious state attacks another, threatening vital Western interests. In the case of the Gulf War, the interests in question were twofold: first, the maintenance of a plurality of states in an area of the world containing vital oil supplies (in global energy terms this is a policy similar to the traditional British requirement that there should be a plurality of powers on the European continent). The second interest was to ensure that a dangerous and ambitious state did not get its hands on weapons that could ultimately threaten the West itself. Had Saddam Hussein been allowed to retain Kuwait, he would have become the geopolitical master of the Gulf; and the wealth available to him would have financed whatever weapons programme he desired.

The Western response was precisely as it should be: build the most powerful coalition possible, reverse the aggression, punish the aggress-

sor, deal with the weapons programmes. These limited goals required limited means. They did not imply that Iraq should be invaded or occupied or that Saddam Hussein should be removed from power (attractive as that idea undoubtedly is). The reference point for a war of this nature is the eighteenth or nineteenth century, not the twentieth century wars of absolutes. The Gulf War was a war of interests, not a clash of ideologies.

Note that the reasons for fighting this war were not that Iraq had violated the norms of international behaviour. Unfortunately, the reality of the world is that if you invade a country which lies some way outside the vital interests of the powerful, you will probably get away with it. Very likely you will be condemned and your gains will not be recognised (if you choose to keep them); you will lose trust and reputation; you may suffer economic sanctions for a while. But you will not be attacked by the powerful. If India were to invade Nepal, for example, or Argentina Paraguay, it is unlikely that a Gulf War coalition would be put together to reverse the result.

The initial enthusiasm for the idea of a new world order¹¹ that followed the Gulf War was based on the hope that the United Nations was going to function as originally intended: a world authority policing international law, that is to say a collective-security organisation. In one sense that hope was not unreasonable. The end of the Cold War took us back to 1945. While institutions that had grown up because of, or against the background of, the Cold War, such as NATO or the EU, began to look in need of radical change, the UN was a pre-Cold War institution and, therefore, might become a workable post-Cold War institution. Up to a point this proved to be the case. The UN is more active today than it ever was during the Cold War (between 1946 and 1990 there were 683 Security Council Resolutions; in the period since then there have been more than 350; and, at the same time, there are some 500,000 UN troops in the field today).

The UN is, however, active in peace-keeping and humanitarian work rather than as a collective-security organisation. And a new world order, that at one time attracted hope, was that of a collective-security order.

A collective-security order is one in which the international community enforces international law on recalcitrant states. This would certainly be a new order in the sense that we have never seen anything

of the kind in the history of international relations. Unfortunately, we are never likely to see it either.

The complaint of many people about the UN's role in Yugoslavia is precisely that it is not enforcing international law. But then it is quite clear that no one is willing to do that. Perhaps that is just as well. War is a serious business. It is dangerous to get involved in wars for principles; one risks finding oneself in the position of the Americans in Vietnam, that 'sometimes you have to kill people in order to save them'. And in the end, because wars fought for other people are difficult to sustain in domestic opinion, one may end up not even saving them. War is, and should be, a last resort: the world would surely be a safer and more peaceful place if countries fought only when there are vital interests to defend.

Some mistook the Gulf War as a war for principles or a collective-security action – and indeed the political rhetoric at the time fostered this impression. In fact, it was a collective defence of interests by the West. The Gulf War was fought to protect an old order, not to create a new one.

In a different sense, though, a collective-security order would not really be new. Collective-security is a combination of two old ideas: stability through balance and stability through hegemony. The *status quo* is maintained by a world body of overwhelming power (the hegemonic element), which throws its weight on the side of a state which is the victim of aggression – the balance-of-power, that is, with the world community as the balancing actor.

This is the old world of state sovereignty in which others do not interfere, of coalitions, of security through military force. The UN, as a collective-security organisation, is there to defend the *status quo* and not to create a new order. And, indeed, the new European order which I have described above is based on entirely different ideas.

For the post-modern state there is, therefore, a difficulty. We need to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of state, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary for those who still live in the nineteenth century world of every state for itself.

Advice for post-modern states: those who have friendly, law-abiding neighbours should not forget that in other parts of the world the law of the jungle reigns. Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we also must use the laws of the jungle. In the coming period of peace in Europe, there will be a temptation to neglect our defences, both physical and psychological. This represents one of the great dangers for the post-modern state.

Security and the pre-modern world

What of the pre-modern chaos? What should we do with that? On the basis of a rational calculation of interest, the answer should be: as little as possible. Chaos does not represent a threat, at least not the kind that requires a conventional military response. One may need to bar one's door against its by-products – drugs, disease, refugees – but these are not threats to vital interests that call for armed Western intervention. To become involved in a zone of chaos is risky; if the intervention is prolonged it may become unsustainable in public opinion; if the intervention is unsuccessful it may be damaging to the government that ordered it.

Besides, what form should intervention take? The most logical way to deal with chaos is by colonisation, or hegemony. But this is unacceptable to post-modern states: so if the goal is not colonisation, what should it be? Usually the answer will be that the goals will be ambiguous.

The risk of 'mission creep' is therefore considerable. Those who become involved in the pre-modern world run the risk that ultimately they will be there because they are there. All the conventional wisdom and all realistic doctrines of international affairs counsel against involvement in the pre-modern world.

And yet such 'realistic' doctrines, for all their intellectual coherence, are not realistic. The post-Cold War, post-modern environment is one where foreign policy will be driven by domestic politics; and these will be influenced by the media and by moral sentiment. We no longer live in the world of pure national interest. Human rights and humanitarian problems inevitably play an important part in our policy-making.

A new world order may not be a reality but it is an important aspiration, especially for those who live in a new European order. The wish

to protect individuals, rather than to resolve the security problems of states, is a part of the post-modern ethos. In a world where many states suffer breakdowns, there is wide scope for humanitarian intervention. Northern Iraq, Somalia, Yugoslavia¹² and Rwanda are only the beginning of a trend. Operations in these areas are a halfway house between the calculation of interest which tells you not to get involved and the moral feeling which tells the public that something must be done. In different ways, all these operations have been directed towards helping civilians – against the military, the government or the chaos. The results are not always impressive and the interventions are in some respects half-hearted. That is because they live in the ambiguous half-world where interest tells you to stay out and conscience tells you to go in – between Hobbes and Kant. Such interventions may not solve problems, but they may salve the conscience. And they are not necessarily the worse for that.

Thus we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that we are going to get involved in situations where interest and calculation would tell us to stay out. In this case, there are some rules to observe. The first is to moderate the objectives to the means available. The wars of ideology called for total victory; the wars of interests call for victory; in the pre-modern world victory is not a relevant objective.

Victory in the pre-modern world would mean empire. The post-modern power who is there to save the lives of individual civilians wants to stop short of that. In consequence, goals must be even more carefully defined than in wars of interest. They will be goals of relatives and not of absolutes: more lives saved, lower levels of violence among the local populations; and these must be balanced by low casualties for the interveners. At the same time, we must be prepared to accept, indeed we must expect, failure a good deal of the time. And then we must be prepared to cut our losses and leave. The operation in Somalia was not a success for anybody. And yet it was not unreasonable to try (though perhaps the trial might have been better organised). It gave those responsible in Somalia a breathing space, a chance to sort themselves out. That they failed to take that chance was not the fault of the intervention force. It follows also that when intervening in the pre-modern world, Clausewitz's doctrine still applies: war is the pursuit of politics by other means. Military intervention should always

be accompanied by political efforts. If these fail, or if the cost of the military operation becomes too great, then there is no alternative but to withdraw.

Advice to post-modern states: accept that intervention in the pre-modern is going to be a fact of life. To make it less dangerous and more sustainable in the long run, there are four requirements: clear, limited objectives; means, also with clear limits attached to them; a political process to parallel the military operation; and a decision, taken in advance, to withdraw if objectives are not achieved in a given time. This essay is intended to say many things, but especially to say this one thing. That there is no new world order is a common conception. But it is less widely understood that there is a new European order: new in that it is historically unprecedented and also new because it is based on new concepts. Indeed, the order has to a larger extent preceded the concepts. One commentator who fails to understand this – though he understands most other things better than the rest of us and describes them with great elegance and clarity – is Henry Kissinger. In a recent speech,¹³ he said the following: ‘In a world of players of operationally more or less equal strength, there are only two roads to stability. One is hegemony and the other is equilibrium’. This was the choice in the past, but today it no longer works. Balance is too dangerous; hegemony is no longer acceptable in a liberal world that values human rights and self-determination.

Instead, there is a third possibility. In fact, there have been three sets of alternatives: first came the choice between chaos and empire: or instability or hegemony. Then it was a choice between empire and nationalism: or hegemony or balance. Finally, today we have a choice between nationalism and integration: or balance or openness. Chaos is tamed by empire; empires are broken up by nationalism; nationalism gives way, we hope, to internationalism. At the end of the process is the freedom of the individual; first protected by the state and later protected from the state.

The kind of world we have depends on the kind of states that compose it (see table on page 43): for the pre-modern world, success is empire and failure is disorder; in the modern system, success is balance and failure means falling back into war or into empire. For the post-modern state, success means openness and transnational cooperation.

The open state system is the ultimate consequence of the open society. Failure we shall come to in a moment.

This categorisation is not intended to be exclusive – the future is full of surprises (and so indeed is the past). Nor is it intended to represent some inevitable Hegelian progression. Progress it certainly represents, but there is nothing inevitable about it. In particular, there is nothing inevitable about the survival of the post-modern state, in what remains basically a hostile environment.

The post-modern order faces three dangers. First, there is the danger from the pre-modern. The risk here is one of being sucked in for reasons of conscience and then being unwilling either to conquer or to get out. In the end, the process may be debilitating for morale and dangerous for military preparedness.

In that case the *coup de grâce* would be administered from the modern world. States reared on *raison d'état* and power politics make uncomfortable neighbours for the post-modern democratic conscience. Supposing the world develops (as Kissinger suggests it might) into an intercontinental struggle. Would Europe be equipped for that? That is the second danger – the danger from the modern.

The third danger comes from within. A post-modern economy can have the result that everyone lives only for themselves, and not at all for the community – the decline of birth rates in the West is already evidence of this tendency. There is a risk too that the deconstruction of the state may spill over into the deconstruction of society. In political terms, an excess of transparency and an over-diffusion of power could lead to a state, and to an international order, in which nothing can be done because there is no central focus of power or responsibility. We may all drown in complexity.

It may be that in Western Europe the era of the strong state – 1648 to 1989 – has now passed, and we are moving towards a system of overlapping roles and responsibilities with governments, international institutions and the private sector all involved but none of them entirely in control. Can it be made to work? We must hope so, and we must try.

Notes

1. *Scaramouche*, 1952, MGM, Dir. George Sidney.
2. For an excellent general description of the pre-modern state see *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I, Scene iii.
3. I am not alone in choosing this terminology, see, for example, Christopher Coker: 'Post-modernity and the end of the Cold War,' in *Review of International Studies*, July 1992.
4. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.
5. Anti-ballistic missiles.
6. Association of South East Asian Nations.
7. North American Free Trade Area.
8. Mercado Commun del Sud (South America).
9. Organisation of African Unity.
10. Perri 6 of Demos commented on this paragraph: 'the rise of individualism is coincident historically with the rise of organisations. Cultures of individualism are arguably sustainable

only in a highly organised society: individualism is not self-sustaining or victorious over other principles of social order'. I agree: this is a useful corrective to balance my possible overstatement. The complex organisational structures that are necessary to sustain individualism coincide exactly with my own picture of the post-modern state.

11. The phrase was in fact used by President Bush in the context of the Gulf War.

12. The former Yugoslavia contains elements of pre-modern, modern and even post-modern. It used to be pre-modern (hegemony option), this has dissolved and it is trying to escape from chaos into the modern national state. In Bosnia there are many with post-modern longings.

13. At the 'Britain in the world' conference, 29 March 1995.

	State	Economy	Intellectual basis (Zeitgeist)	Foreign relations
Pre-modern	Where the state functions it will be authoritarian and weak. Control may often break down. State activities most military. Feudal systems and military empires.	Agrarian	Religion, magic scholasticism, religious art and music.	Chaotic, imperial or linked to a religious order. Main objective is acquisition of territory.
Early Modern	More organised and centralised. Military and diplomatic functions remain central to state but some functions now relate to commerce.	Agrarian/commercial	Rationalist. Hume, Voltaire, Kant, Machiavelli, Pope, Racine, Newton, Leibnitz, Bach, Mozart.	Inter-state relations dominate. Separation of domestic and foreign policy. Commerce becomes a casus belli.
Late Modern	Centralised and bureaucratic; may be ideological and authoritarian or democratic. Takes responsibility for education, health, welfare, industry, as well as military functions.	Commercial/industrial; mass production	Darwinism, ideas of progress (Hegel, Marx, Treitschke), Clauswitz, Tolstoy, Thomas Mann, Zola, Kipling, Brahms, Mahler.	Nationalistic, era of mass armies and total war.
Post-modern	Power diffused both domestically and internationally; much influenced by media and popular emotion. Industrial functions may be reduced. Competing pressures complicate decision making.	Industrial/post-industrial. Services and information industries begin to dominate.	Diversity and uncertainty. Existentialism. Wittgenstein, Camus, Joyce, Einstein, Heisenberg, Warhol.	Transparency and mutual vulnerability; non-state actors including media play an important role. Policy time-frame shortens.