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History ends, worlds collide

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War was an event of great significance in human history, the consequences of which demand to be glossed in broad terms rather than reduced to a meaningless series of events. Neorealist writers on international relations would disagree; most such see the end of the Cold War in terms of the collapse of a bipolar balance of power system and its (temporary) replacement by the hegemony of the winning state, which in turn will be replaced by a new balance. There is obviously a story to be told here, they would argue, but not a new kind of story, nor a particularly momentous one. Such shifts in the distribution of power are a matter of business as usual for the international system.[1] The end of the Cold War was a blip on the chart of modern history and analysts of international politics (educated in the latest techniques of quantitative and qualitative analysis in the social sciences) ought, from this perspective, to be unwilling to draw general conclusions on the basis of a few, albeit quite unusual, events. Such modesty is, as a rule, wise, but on this occasion it is misplaced. The Cold War was not simply a convenient shorthand for conflict between two superpowers, as the neorealists would have it. Rather it encompassed deep-seated divisions about the organization and content of political, economic and social life at all levels.

An interregnum?

The sense that something important happened in 1989 is conveyed by the general theme of this collection, although it should be noted that the Gramscian notion of an 'Interregnum' is, in one important respect, question-begging. If the Cold War is taken to begin not with conflicts over the post-1945 future of Eastern Europe, but with the ideological clash between Woodrow Wilson and Lenin in 1917, or perhaps

[1] Key writings expressing this perspective are helpfully collected in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynne Jones and Steven Miller (eds.), *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995). This *International Security* Reader contains the most influential post-Cold War realist theoretical manifestos, John Mearsheimer 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, 15 (1990), pp. 5–56 and Kenneth Waltz 'The Emerging Structure of International Security', *International Security*, 18 (1993), pp. 44–79. William Wohlforth 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 19 (1994/5) and in the same collection, argues that the Cold War was not a balanced system, and its ending simply confirmed US hegemony.

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much earlier, with the failed liberal revolutions of 1848 or even the French Revolution of 1789, then what we have seen in the 1990s may not have been part of an interregnum, an interval between two different international orders: this may actually *be* the new order. It is not impossible, although perhaps a little improbable, that the period from 1789–1989 may come to be seen as the real interregnum, a two-century long transition period during which the implications of the fall of the *Ancien Régime* worked their way through domestic and international political, economic and social systems. On the other hand, as Chou En Lai is alleged to have remarked when questioned on the significance of the French Revolution, it may be too soon to say.

How is this putative new order to be understood? A bewildering number of different approaches to this issue have circulated over the last decade. Some of the most famous have been based on positively apocalyptic predictions such as 'the end of history' or the 'clash of civilizations'.[2] Such formulations certainly take seriously the scale of the change taking place, and the debates they have stimulated have performed a valuable service in bringing this issue of scale to the forefront. Nonetheless, it may be premature to attempt to capture the nature of our time with such broad brush-strokes. Equally valuable may be the many less grandiloquent, more empirical, attempts to work out what is going on. Labourers in the 'democratic peace' vineyard, theorists of liberal hegemony, writers on modernization and globalization, students of cultural diversity, cosmopolitan democrats—the list of those who have tried to put things together but who have resisted the lure of overgeneralization is long.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to bring together these different bodies of work. It will be seen that two quite different stories about the post-Cold War world emerge. In one, the end of the Cold War is seen as ushering in an (indefinite) period of world dominance by forces which, using the term very broadly, could be seen as 'liberal'. One version of this story stresses the hegemony of the United States, the liberal-democratic, 'constitutional' empire; another—but at the same level of analysis—looks to the democratic peace and the realization of Kant's vision of a pacific union of republican states; and yet another emphasizes the ideological dimension of 1989, the sense that market economies are somehow 'natural' and liberal democratic politics 'normal', both terms being much used in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Fukuyama writes of 'the total exhaustion of viable systemic alternatives to Western liberalism' as a precondition for his end of history.[3] The dystopic consequences of this ideological dimension are stressed by those who fear the adverse effect of neoliberal economics on the poor, and the homogenization brought about by a 'McWorld' version of globalization. All these approaches agree that, for better or for worse, the essentially liberal combination of a market economy with a system of representative democracy has seen off all its deadliest enemies—the immediate future may involve a number of 'mopping-up' operations (ideological and military) in which pockets of resistance are overcome, but the real campaign is over.

[2] Francis Fukuyama 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, 16 (1989), pp. 3–16, and *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992): Samuel Huntington 'The Clash of Civilizations', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993) and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

[3] 'The End of History', p. 3.

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The alternative vision of the future cannot be summarized so easily, because its very essence is to predict difference and diversity. From this perspective the contending parties in the Cold War had more in common than they were prepared to admit; liberalism and communism are but different versions of Western post-Enlightenment universalism, and the victory of liberalism over communism does no more than end a civil war within the West. The real divisions in the world lie elsewhere, between civilizations, or religions or ethno-national groupings, and the ending of the Cold War simply allows this real agenda to become visible once again (or, perhaps, for the first time). Modernity is not something that comes with a Western trademark—the 'Jihad' that Barber opposes to 'McWorld' can be fought with the Internet and the fax machine as well as more traditional methods of self-sacrifice and terror.[4] There are alternatives to neoliberal economic doctrines and liberal democratic politics, and the environmental degradation which the former causes and the latter is unable to prevent provides a strong reason for thinking that these alternatives will prevail in some parts of the world. Civilizations may clash or they may coexist but either way they will remain plural. The victory of the West has been much exaggerated.

These two different visions of the future will be examined below, but, as will gradually become apparent, the terms of this binary opposition are highly suspect. Although there has been a tendency in the literature to organize discussion around a debate between Western liberalism and its critics (even the West versus the Rest) this may be both analytically and normatively confusing—the future may well be more a case of but/and rather than either/or.[5] However, before this conclusion can be reached a number of earlier stages of the argument must be rehearsed, beginning with an account of liberalism triumphant.

Liberalism triumphs

Of all the post-communist national leaders in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, none can claim greater moral or intellectual authority than Václav Havel, the former dissident, political prisoner, playwright and Velvet Underground fan who became President of Czechoslovakia after 1989, and is now President of the Czech Republic. His reflections on our era are worthy of respect; naturally enough he is a democrat and a political liberal, but slightly less predictable are his thoughts on economic organisation:

> Though my heart may be left of centre, I have always known that the only economic system that works is a market economy, in which everything belongs to somebody—which means that somebody is responsible for everything. . . . This is the only natural economy, the only kind that makes sense, the only one that can lead to prosperity because it is the only one that reflects the nature of life itself. The essence of life is infinitely and mysteriously multiform, and therefore it cannot be contained or planned for, in its fullness and variability, by any central intelligence.[6]

[4] Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996).
[5] Kishore Mahbubani, 'The West and The Rest', *The National Interest*, 28 (1992), pp. 3–13.
[6] Václav Havel, 'What I Believe', in *Summer Meditations on Politics, Morality and Civility in a Time of Transition* [Tr. Paul Wilson] (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 62.

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His first point—that under a market system somebody is responsible for everything—may seem overoptimistic to those more familiar with the ability of capitalist enterprises to dodge this responsibility, but makes sense coming from someone who was only too well aware of the environmental degradation inflicted on the industrial areas of Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic by communist industrial policy. His second point repays closer examination.

Arguments for the naturalness of markets—even, or perhaps especially, when buttressed by meditations about the essence of life—are not usually taken seriously. Most social scientists learn early on in their education that the historical record undermines any idea that markets are the only way of organizing economic activity, and that the ideas of the political economists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were products of their age and not, as they believed, for all time; Havel's remarks are unlikely to shake our faith in the fundamental truth of these positions. However, add two qualifications taken for granted by Havel, and a different, more plausible picture emerges. First, restrict consideration to complex industrial and post-industrial societies and the inevitability of a market economy becomes apparent. If there is one clear lesson to be learnt from the Soviet experiment it is that once the early stages of industrialization have been gone through, the command economy cannot be made to work. The range of variables which need to be kept in play to ensure that, for a very simple example, the right number of size nine boots are available in Kiev when people need them is simply too large to be modelled even using the most advanced computers—and this is without taking into consideration issues such as consumer choice, style and fashion.[7]

Of course, the command economy can be made to work after a fashion if it is combined with political repression, but Havel's second unspoken assumption—unspoken on this occasion at least—is that this is unacceptable. Some form of representative democracy is the only legitimate form of government, not because it is the most efficient, or because it can be relied upon to make the 'best' decisions from some external viewpoint, but because it is the only form of government consistent with the assumption of natural human equality.[8] Alternative modes of legitimation such as the authority of the party crumbled in the face of this fact in the 1980s. There is a real irony here. The 'legitimation crisis' predicted for post-1945 welfare capitalism by Habermas, O'Connor and others in the 1970s did not occur; wholesale disruptions to pre-established social patterns took place in many of these societies, Britain in particular, in the 1980s but de-legitimation did not take place because no acceptable alternative to representative democracy was available.[9] Far lower levels of disruption led to the de-legitimation of the Soviet regime precisely because its rulers were unelected and were unwilling to replace the mild repression of the Brezhnev years with a return to Stalinism.

If these points are right, then something very important has been demonstrated over the last decades. The combination of some kind of market economy with repre-

[7] Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983) and *The Economics of Feasible Socialism Revisited* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), provides the demonstration of this point.

[8] See Brian Barry, 'Is Democracy Special?', in *Democracy, Power and Justice: Essays in Political Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 56.

[9] Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (London: Heinemann Educational books, 1976); James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1971).

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sentative democracy does seem to be the only effective way of running complex industrial and postindustrial societies. This should not be read as an endorsement of Thatcherism or Reagonomics (which, unfortunately, is how the lessons of 1989 have been misunderstood in parts of East-Central Europe); rather, this combination leaves room for a great deal of variation in types of regime and in the level of planning that accompanies markets, from neoliberal systems, to welfare capitalism, traditional social democracy, the 'Third Way' and so on. But it does rule out some possibilities that have been taken very seriously in the past. Since the emergence of industrial society, the most persistent opponents of liberal capitalism from right and left have argued that it is both possible and desirable to replace the impersonal forces of the market by conscious human control. Even those who were repelled by the politics of the Soviet Union and the stupidities of Soviet central planning assumed that a better way of reaching the same goal could be devised. Part of this process would be the simultaneous replacement of 'bourgeois' democracy with a genuine people's democracy (as opposed to the fake version offered by 'really-existing socialism'). Recent experiences make it difficult to take either of these ideas seriously. Richard Rorty captures the significance of this very crisply when he remarks that '[if] you still long for total revolution, for the Radical Other on a world historical scale, the events of 1989 show that you are out of luck'.[10]

There obviously remain many serious problems with liberalism/capitalism. The transition to liberal political and economic forms has not gone smoothly in many areas of Eastern Europe, partly because of the misunderstanding noted above; broadly speaking, those countries where some kind of civil society survived under communism have done best, in some cases very well indeed, while those (including the Russian Republic) where civil society and an effective state-apparatus had to be created simultaneously have done much less well, in some cases very badly. Some kind of authoritarian rule may emerge in these latter countries but no-one, including the reformed communist parties of the region, anticipates the re-establishment of old-style command economies. In this sense, the absence of a viable systematic alternative form of rule, liberalism has triumphed. The next step is to examine whether, as Fukuyama and others have suggested, this triumph applies equally to those parts of the world which were not directly involved in the great contest between liberalism and socialism of the past century and a half. But before moving in this direction a digression on the international relations of triumphant liberalism is in order.

Liberal empire, democratic peace?

'Liberal internationalism' is what one might term the 'default' liberal theory of international relations. Given its clearest expression in 1917–19 by Woodrow Wilson, Leonard Woolf, Robert Cecil and other advocates of international organization in

[10] Richard Rorty, 'The End of Leninism, Havel, and Social Hope', in *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 229. This essay, originally written in 1991, is one of the best reflections on the implications for the democratic Left of the end of the Cold War.

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the post-World War I era, it envisages a world of democratic states committed to the principles of national self determination and free trade between nations, the rule of law internationally and membership of global institutions. It draws upon Kantian notions of a federation of republican states dedicated to the abolition of war, and Manchester School doctrines stressing the importance of non-intervention and the peace-generating qualities of trade. It finds contemporary expression in the United Nations system (and in particular in the cluster of specialized agencies that have grown up to manage, or oversee, the global economy), in regional bodies such as the European Union (although the latter may have ambitions to outgrow the pluralism of liberal internationalism), and in the international human rights regime. President Bush's 'New World Order' of 1990 was a marginally modified version of the doctrine; as is Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'Doctrine of the International Community'.[11] Many contemporary theorists of international relations, impressed with the difficulty of managing cooperation among egoistic states, now think in terms of neoliberalism rather than liberal thought unqualified, nevertheless, liberal internationalism in the full sense still has its supporters.[12]

Perhaps the strongest contemporary support for the underlying theoretical assumptions of liberal internationalism comes from the literature on the 'democratic peace'. Nearly twenty years ago, the basic proposition of this body of work was given its clearest expression by Michael Doyle: constitutionally stable democracies do not fight each other, he noted.[13] Doyle based this proposition on some simple statistics and an argument drawn from Kant (although his equation of modern liberal-democracies with Kantian republics can be questioned). However, a great many writers after Doyle, driven partly no doubt by the changing circumstances of the 1980s and 1990s (and in particular by the growth in the number of liberal democracies), have carried out very sophisticated statistical analyses, and found it to be highly robust, that is to say not dependent on particular definitions of either war or democracy.[14] In spite of this, the democratic peace hypothesis has attracted a great deal of hostile commentary: in part from neorealists for whom model regime-type is, by definition, irrelevant; but also from liberals who, for reasons that are not entirely clear, find the proposition unconvincing if not positively offensive.[15] Possibly the latter have not grasped the nature of the argument, thinking, wrongly, that the proposition asserts a general peacefulness on the part of liberal states, or believing

[11] Tony Blair, 'Doctrine of the International Community', speech in Chicago, 22 April, 1999.

[12] Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989) is a standard reference point for neoliberalism, along with the essays collected in David A. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). An interesting recent contribution, difficult to classify is Andrew Moravcsik 'Taking Preferences Seriously: The Liberal Theory of International Politics', *International Organisation*, 51 (1997), pp. 513–53.

[13] Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Policy', parts 1 & 2, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12, (1983), pp. 205–35, 323–53; see also Doyle 'Liberalism and World Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 1151–70.

[14] Particularly useful collections are Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Nils P. Gleditsch and Thomas Risse-Kappen (eds.), 'Democracy and Peace', Special Issue *European Journal of International Relations*, 1 (1995), pp. 429–574.

[15] See, e.g. John Macmillan, 'Democracies Don't Fight: A Case of the Wrong Research Agenda', *Review of International Studies*, 22 (1996), pp. 275–99, Raymond Cohen 'Pacific Unions: A Reappraisal of the Theory (sic) that "Democracies Do Not Go to War with Each Other"', *Review of International Studies*, 20 (1994), pp. 207–23.

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that it is possible to refute a statistical generalization by anecdote. More charitably, critics of all types point out rightly that the 'democratic peace' is not a theory of international relations, but simply an empirical observation. What they perhaps fail to see is that this observation provides quite important support to liberal internationalist accounts of international relations. When in 1919 liberals argued that liberal-democratic states would not go to war with each other, they had very little empirical support for this generalization, there having been too few liberal-democratic regimes at the time to provide a suitable data-base. Nowadays this proposition is very well supported, and writers such as Russett have begun the task of identifying the mechanisms by which democracy, selectively, hinders war-making.[16]

Part of the reason for scepticism about the 'democratic peace' perhaps derives from the current distribution of world power, that is from the status of the US as the only surviving superpower. In any event, American predominance certainly does have considerable significance for any current assessment of liberal internationalism; in 1919 it was assumed that in the emerging order the US would be one of the most powerful liberal states, and perhaps the most powerful, but no-one at that point envisaged the kind of concentration of power that emerged immediately after 1945, and has emerged again with the ending of the Cold War and the rapid decline of Soviet and Russian power. One result of this predominance is that it becomes simultaneously both very important and very difficult to distinguish between the impact on the world system of a victorious liberal internationalism and that of hegemonic America—to distinguish between the New World Order and the New World giving the Orders, as the saying goes. Characterizing the contemporary international order becomes, in important respects, a matter of characterizing America's role in world affairs, forming a view about the way in which the United States exercises, and has exercised, its power.

One very instructive account of the exercise of American power is that given in a recent series of articles by G. John Ikenberry.[17] His thesis is that in the post-1945 world the US employed its power to create institutions which were designed to act in such a way as to bind the United States itself as well as its competitors. In so doing, the US in effect traded some of the potential short-term gains from its predominance in exchange for a greater flow of benefits over the longer term. Thus, initially, a system of international rules and regulations would constrain US policy more than that of other states, because the US had the power to act on its own and they did not, but, in the longer run, in so far as other states found themselves increasingly able to develop independent positions but were constrained from so doing, the system would benefit the US. The US effectively foreswore direct use of its hegemony in order to create a 'constitutional' basis for world politics, thereby

[16] Russett *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, refers to 'cultural-normative' and 'structural-institutional' explanations for the democratic peace; David Lake presents a compelling argument in terms of democratic elites resisting rent-seeking militarists both at home and abroad in 'Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War', *American Political Science Review*, 86 (1992), pp. 24–37.

[17] G. John Ikenberry, 'Constitutional Politics in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 4 (1998), pp. 147–177, 'Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Post-War Order', *International Security*, 23 (1998/9), pp. 43–78. See also *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (forthcoming).

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regulating the terms of interstate competition to its long-run advantage.[18] On Ikenberry's account, the US will continue to reap the benefits of this policy so long as it does not turn its back on constitutional international politics by reneging on its international obligations, and undermining the organisations it created, by looking for short-term gains—a serious possibility given the populist streak always present in US politics, but one that he believes can be resisted. What is striking about this perspective is the way in which it can be aligned with what, on the face of it, seems to be the very different angle on American power developed by Susan Strange.[19] Strange's analysis of the continuing structural power of the US parallels Ikenberry's account of the benefits to be gained by 'constitutionalizing' world politics; her realist insistence that international regimes mask power is recognized by his model—the point at which they part company is over whether or not international relations are generally to be characterized as norm-governed. Strange argued that they are not, while Ikenberry's account assumes that norms can be made to stick.

The liberal approach to international relations rests very heavily upon the ability of international institutions to promote cooperation and collectively manage conflict; given America's central role in the international economy, and its undoubted military predominance, international institutions are unlikely to work effectively unless it is US policy that they should do so. Similarly, if the promotion of liberal values in the world, the protection of human rights (or at least the prevention of wholesale 'human wrongs') is part of the liberal approach to international relations, then, in the last resort, this will only happen if the US is prepared to make it happen; economic pressures only work when the world's largest economy is behind them, and only the US possesses the logistic capacity, military infrastructure and hardware to engage in humanitarian interventions on any serious scale.

In effect, this means that the liberal nature of contemporary international relations is at the mercy of the contingencies of US policies and politics. This is an uncomfortable situation; at best the American political system is vulnerable to pressures from special interests (the various groups which have consistently distorted US policy towards the Middle East in favour of Israeli interests are an obvious example) while at worst, a President and Congress obsessed with the most recent opinion poll are incapable of developing a consistent attitude towards the rest of the world. The various US foreign policy failures of the last decade nearly all relate to the unwillingness or inability of her leaders to persuade the American people to take a long view of their interests. Such short-termism, unless checked, will eventually undermine Ikenberry's 'constitutional' world politics. Moreover, the unwillingness on the part of American Presidents to place US soldiers 'in harm's way' places a serious constraint on the use of force whether in defence of the national interest or in situations where threats to liberal values would seem to demand a military response. The liberal world is curiously vulnerable to threats which ought, in principle, to be easy to deal with. The world's only superpower possesses military might that far surpasses that of its potential enemies, but is prepared to use only those dimensions of this force that do not put more than a few of its soldiers' lives at risk,

[18] This is a more fruitful use of notion of hegemony than in the standard 'hegemonic stability' debate—e.g. Robert O. Keohane, 'The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes 1967–77, in *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).

[19] See e.g. Susan Strange, 'The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony', *International Organisation*, 41 (1987), pp. 551–74 and S*tates and Markets* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988).

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which means, in practice, cruise missiles and air-power. A state with a military establishment which, while prepared to kill, is not prepared to risk the lives of its soldiers is morally compromised and highly vulnerable to political leaders who are not so constrained.

The unfolding events in the Balkans in the Spring and Summer of 1999 put these points into perspective. Far more than the Gulf War of 1990–91, does it seem likely that NATO's war with Yugoslavia over the fate of Kosovo will be seen as a defining event of the post-Cold War era. NATO, here, has been fighting a liberal's war; that is to say, a war fought predominantly in response to gross human rights violations and threats of genocide, although it is fair to say that, as the conflict has progressed, NATO's own credibility as an organization also became an issue. The war was opposed in the United States and Western Europe by those who believe that foreign policy decisions should be made on the basis of a narrow definition of the national interest, and supported by those who believe that the Western alliance has a duty to prevent wholesale breaches of humanitarian law, most notably the New Labour government in Britain, the Social Democrat/Green coalition in Germany and most democratic shades of opinion in France.[20] It would seem that NATO's campaign was a qualified success, although exactly why Milosevic agreed to withdraw his troops is likely to be debated by future historians and our evaluation of the war will have to await the test of time. In any event, some general points about the conflict can be still be made.

First, the crisis underlined the extent to which the fate of liberal internationalism is tied up with American domestic politics. President Clinton's capacity to ask for the kind of sacrifices from the American people that it seemed a successful prosecution of the war would probably require was seriously compromized by his recent political troubles, and it is noticeable that all of the main contenders to succeed him in office were rather more circumspect about the aims of the campaign than the main NATO leaders in Britain, France and Germany.

Second, the war emphasized the surreally inappropriate understanding of the nature of warfare, whether modern or postmodern, by most contemporary liberals on both sides of the Atlantic.[21] This is not simply a matter of expecting to fight a war without sustaining casualties; equally striking is the apparent belief that *inflicting* casualties is, in almost all circumstances, morally unacceptable, irrespective of the overall justice of the action or the intentions of the participants. Judging by the reactions of the media, the liberal expectation is that it is possible to fight a war without accidents, errors or misjudgments and while preserving at all times the reality of non-combatant immunity; the Yugoslav ability to manipulate that media, especially television, by providing ample access to NATO 'atrocities' while ensuring that there were no photo-opportunities of the crimes committed by its own police and paramilitaries, fed off and reinforced this absurd expectation and might well have undermined the campaign as a whole—in which case the killing fields of Kosovo would have remained forever closed to prying eyes.

[20] Of course, some who share the liberal aspirations of the latter have, not unreasonably, questioned NATO's strategy and tactics in this particular case (albeit usually without suggesting plausible alternative ways in which liberal values could be defended), and those who oppose American policies as a matter of course, more or less irrespective of content, have found ways of describing NATO policies as yet one more example of US imperialism.

[21] See, for a diagnosis and corrective, Christopher Coker, *War and the Illiberal Conscience* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

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Third, and most significant, if, as at one time seemed likely, NATO had failed to achieve its prime objective (that is, the reversal of the deportation of the population of Kosovo by the Yugoslav government) the institutional structure upon which liberal internationalism has been based would have been placed under extreme pressure, the post-Cold War expansion of NATO halted or reversed, EU expansion put on hold and, *in extremis*, the link between US and Western European security forged over the last half century broken. Had that happened the development of a European defence identity would not have been impossible, but John Mearsheimer's prediction of a return to the traditional, pre-1914 pattern of international politics would have been a more likely outcome—that is to say, although we may have had a world predominantly composed of 'liberal' states, these states would conduct their international relations not in accordance with the principles of liberal internationalism, but by responding to the alleged imperatives of national interests shaped by international anarchy. This fate has probably been avoided (or at least deferred) by NATO's victory.

The end of history, or the end of *a* history?

After this digression on the fate of liberal internationalism, it is now appropriate to return to the main narrative of this essay, and consider Fukuyama's account of liberalism's triumph. So far, this discussion of the consequences of the end of the Cold War has addressed mainly the question of how things stand between the two ideological parties which fought out that conflict. This parochialism must now be overcome, and the wider question asked—what is the significance of the ending of the Cold War, and particularly of the terms under which the Cold War ended, for the rest of the world, for those countries who were touched by the great conflict but did not consider themselves to be directly involved, for those cultures whose underlying principles differ radically from those of either liberalism or communism? One answer to this question was given quite early on, in 1989, by Francis Fukuyama in his 'End of History' article.

So much has been written about Fukuyama's thesis—much of it on the false, and rather silly, assumption that the 'end of history' means that there will be no more events and that in the future nothing will happen—that the core of the argument has, effectively, been lost sight of; Fukuyama aided this process by expanding the article into a book in which his original Hegelian thesis was swamped by what was originally no more than a sub-text, namely a Nietzschean fear that the era of the 'last men' was about to be established.[22] Once this diversion is removed, what remains is a thesis of considerable strength and subtlety. Fukuyama argues that recent events have demonstrated yet again that the basic liberal model—the rule of law, political equality, representative democracy, the market economy—is, apparently, neither capable of being improved upon, nor vulnerable to external attack. The elements of this package have been around for approximately two centuries (Hegel first declared a kind of end to history in 1806) and have developed considerably since first formulated—thus, equality is now seen to encompass women as well

[22] For the 'last men' see the Prologue to Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra.*

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as men, the working class and non-whites are no longer excluded and so on—but they have not been superseded. Attempts to transcend the limits of representative democracy, and critiques of the rule of law in terms of its bourgeois origins, whether launched from left or right, communism or fascism, have simply paved the way for tyranny. There is no viable form of emancipatory politics except that which takes place within the basic liberal model. Perhaps equally significant, is the fact that liberal states have proved more than capable of defeating tyrannies even on the grounds that the latter have chosen as consonant with their values; liberal states have been as effective in war as in peace—the martial spirit associated with autocracy and fascism has been unable to overcome the material and organisational superiority of states organised on liberal principles.[23]

In short, the big political questions have all been decided, and the age of romantic political heroism is over. Politics in the sense of struggles over who gets what, when and where remain and there is no reason to think that the international politics of the future will be characterized by the kind of cooperation that is envisaged by liberal internationalists; the point is that this kind of politics, unlike the heroic struggles of the past, is devoid of any kind of deep meaning. It is in this sense that history 'ends', and it is for this reason that the tone of Fukuyama's work is wistful rather than, as so many have assumed, triumphalist. Much of this is no more than a reworking in Hegelian language, modified by Alexandre Kojève, Allan Bloom, and Leo Strauss, of ideas that writers such as Havel have expressed in somewhat less flamboyant terms.[24] However, what does come through very clearly in Fukuyama's formulation is the strong universalist spin given to the triumph of liberalism. It is not simply that liberalism has outlived authoritarianism, fascism and communism: rather there is now no systematic alternative to liberalism in any part of the globe. Authoritarian ideas may persist, nationalism is still a potent force, religious 'fundamentalism' of one kind or another is not going away, but, Fukuyama argues, none of these forces provides the kind of package for handling modernity that liberalism provides. Globalization means the global spread of western liberalism, albeit not in any overt sense, and neither immediately nor without provoking often quite strong reactions; still, over the longer-run, it is only the liberal package that can provide other cultures with the resources to cope with the problems of legitimacy and effectiveness that globalization brings in its wake.

One response to this thesis—to be discussed in the next section of this article—puts a different spin on globalization altogether, arguing that far from creating uniformity, globalization encourages the expression of difference. Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' is one of the best known Western reference points for this position. However, as interesting, and perhaps more to the point, is a rather less well known text produced by a bureaucrat in the Japanese Ministry of Finance, Eisuke Sakakiba, whose article 'The End of Progressivism' was published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1995.[25] Progressivism, for Sakakiba is the belief that there is only one ideal end, a unique path for all human beings; both socialism and neoclassical capitalism are

[23] Always assuming, of course, that the liberal states in question are truly committed to the struggle and prepared to make the kind of sacrifices needed for victory; it is this commitment which appeared at one stage to be lacking in Kosovo.

[24] The source for many of Fukuyama's ideas on Hegel is Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

[25] 'The End of Progressivism: A Search for New Goals', *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (1995), pp. 8–15.

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progressivist ideologies, and the former Soviet Union and the United States, experimental progressivist states. *Pace* Fukuyama, the demise of socialism—the ending of the Cold War which was a civil war within the Western ideology of progressivism—has not produced a victory for political liberalism and 'neoclassical capitalism'; instead it is progressivism as such that is under threat, made outdated by more fundamental issues, the need to control environmental pollution and establish the peaceful coexistence of civilizations.

As to the first of these points—the dream of neoclassical capitalism that the problems of consumption could be solved on a long term basis, and that the appeal of progress and the spread of mass consumption would perpetuate the domination of one kind of civilization on a long-term basis—this has proved an illusion in the face of problems of economic management, experienced in different ways by all the advanced industrial societies, and the emergence of environmental constraints to continued growth. What is required today is an ending of the belief that there can be a technological fix for these problems, the development of a less anthropocentric approach to nature, and, most of all, the recognition of the worth of different civilizations. The West must abandon sectarian progressivism in favour of respect for the environment and tolerance for other civilisations. Coexistence of civilizations is possible and existed in premodern times—'the clash of civilizations is not the unavoidable result of coexisting civilizations, but rather the result of contact with Western progressivism'—a point directed, of course, as much at Huntington as at Fukuyama, as is the thesis as a whole.[26]

Sakakiba's renaming of liberalism as one variant of Western sectarian progressivism constitutes a rather more basic challenge to Fukuyama's position than is customary. On this account it is not simply the case that liberalism fails to provide a universal model for the rest of the world—rather it is the very idea that there could be such a model that is under attack; the suggestion is that not only is liberalism not a suitable model for the rest of the world, it is not in fact a suitable model for the West itself. The problems of environmental degradation to which Sakakiba refers are taken to provide a general challenge to contemporary capitalism, not simply a comment on the future of capitalism in the non-western world.

On Sakakiba's account, Fukuyama has traced not the end of history, but the end of one particular history. Although Sakakiba does not use these terms, both liberalism and Soviet communism, in their different ways, were ideologies of the Enlightenment, and the victory of the first is a victory for the Enlightenment over itself rather than over some external enemy. On a wider stage the issue remains open. Sakabira's use of the term 'progressivism' seems somewhat reductionist—both liberalism and communism mean rather more than simply the assertion of one unique path for humanity—and a critic willing to use *ad hominem* arguments might well point out that the Director General of the Japanese International Finance Bureau is actually rather well placed to see exactly how far the liberal package of ideas had penetrated Japan and how attractive those ideas have been to the Japanese people. The real issue is whether the universal message Sakakiba deplores is inextricably built into this liberal package.

[26] Sakakiba, 'End of Progressivism', p. 13.

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Globalization and the clash of civilizations

The relationship between globalization, westernization and universalism is complex and difficult to visualize, largely because each of these terms can be defined in a number of different ways, and the relationship is highly sensitive to which definitions are chosen. If we think of globalization in terms of the existence of a world economy in which production and finance are integrated by the new information technologies, and accompanied by common consumption patterns and socio-cultural trends spread by the 'infotainment' industry those technologies have spawned, then it would indeed be possible to assert that globalization goes together with westernization and universalism. A world in which everyone watches MTV or CNN while eating a Big Mac and wearing Nike trainers may not be a particularly attractive result of westernization but it can hardly be seen as the product of any other culture. However, as has often been pointed out, this is a picture of the emerging world that, precisely because it is so unattractive and devoid of food for the human spirit, stimulates powerful antibodies. Often these antibodies take the form of the kind of cultural and political movements that, because they frequently draw upon religious roots no longer taken seriously in most of the West, are termed by the latter 'fundamentalist', although other 'anti-systemic' movements take a different and less regressive form.[27]

The broad idea that the great world civilizations will be able to cope with globalization without becoming westernized is given one expression in Samuel Huntington's influential account of the 'clash of civilizations'. The burden of Huntington's thesis is that, with the end of the Cold War, a new basis of division has emerged in the world; the ideological conflicts of the past will be replaced by conflicts between 'cultures' or civilizations. Huntington identifies as the major contemporary civilizations the Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic and Western, with Orthodox and Latin American civilizations as possible derivations of Western civilization with identities of their own, and Africa (perhaps) making up the list. There is, to put it mildly, a certain element of the *ad hoc* about this, as Huntington concedes. In any event, on his account, there are three civilizations which are likely to generate serious potential problems in the near future—the declining West, the rising Sinic, and the unstable Islamic.

As this formulation might suggest, the first two components go together—economically, demographically and, ultimately, militarily, the West is losing power to the Asian civilizations and in particular to China (Huntington anticipates that China will come to dominate Japan and that the Japanese are likely to accept, tacitly, a subordinate status). This was, of course, written before the recent collapse of the Asian economic boom, but it is a moot point whether this would change the basic argument here. An increasingly successful and powerful China will not accept a world in which its values are regarded as inferior to those of the West and will not accept global socioeconomic institutions which limit its possibilities—and Huntington acknowledges that the existing structure of international institutions is indeed a product of Western/American hegemony and reflects Western values. Only by the West adopting a policy of coexistence and recognising the legitimacy of the

[27] See Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements* (London: Verso, 1989).

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Confucian way will violent conflict be avoided between these two civilizations. Chinese civilization will pose, indeed is posing, problems (particularly for the West but also for Japan) because of its success; the world of Islam will pose, indeed is posing, problems for all its neighbours because of its failure. Demographic pressures in Islam and the lack of any core Islamic state with the potential of China, or even the 'baby tigers' of south-east Asia, will lead to frustrations; moreover, Islam is a proselytising religion and Islamic civilization has borders with most of the other world civilizations. These borders ('fault-lines') will be, indeed already are, the site of many cross-civilizational conflicts, from Bosnia and Chechnya to Kashmir and the Sudan. Ending such conflicts may be virtually impossible, and certainly is far more difficult that the daunting enough task of promoting coexistence between Chinese and Western civilizations.

It is easy to pick holes in Huntington's work, especially the book-length version of his argument, which, precisely becomes it contains so much more detail is much more open to criticism—broad generalizations which pass muster in the enclosed context of a short article are less tolerable when more space is available.[28] Right from the outset his account of 'civilization' is *ad hoc* and muddled; civilizations are systems of ideas, and, as such, it is difficult to see how they could clash, although individuals and groups claiming to represent these ideas certainly can. Moreover, these systems of ideas are not now, nor have they ever been, self-contained or impermeable, a fact that Huntington acknowledges, but the significance of which he, perhaps, underplays. On the other hand, he deserves considerable credit for attempting to break up what was becoming in the early 1990s a rather sterile debate about the post-Cold War world. In his response to critics 'If not Civilizations, What?', Huntington suggests that the only alternative models for what he is interested in are the old statist paradigm and a new 'un-real' vision of one world united by globalization; this is to put the matter rather starkly, but there is some justice to this claim.[29] In effect, Huntington is providing a non-statist, but nonetheless realist, account of the world, which is an interesting addition to the conceptual toolkit of contemporary international relations theory. Part of the problem with Huntington's analysis, though, is that, although not statist, it remains spatial/territorial.

The prevailing metaphor in that book is that there are physical 'fault-lines' between civilizations. There are two problems with this notion; first, the analysis underplays the extent to which key dividing lines are man-made and recent—in former Yugoslavia, for example, the recurrent crises of the 1990s owe more to the success of Milosevic in mobilizing political support behind the nationalist cause of Greater Serbia than they do to largely spurious ethnic and religious differences, much less historical divides that go back to the Middle Ages or earlier. Such differences and divides certainly exist and have always existed, but their current political significance is the result of contingency rather than some inevitable process. Second, and rather more important, the 'tectonic' notion of civilizations does not recognise sufficiently the extent to which civilizations are already interpenetrated. The clash of civilizations, in so far as it exists at all, is more likely to take the form of the politics of multiculturalism and recognition in the major cities of the world than

[28] Much the same could be said of the relationship between Fukuyama's article and book, although, unlike Huntington, Fukuyama does actually develop a somewhat different line of argument in his longer work.

[29] Huntington, 'Response: If not Civilizations, What?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993).

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violent clashes on the so-called 'fault-lines'; policing problems in London are, thankfully, more characteristic of this politics than ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, horrifying though the latter may be.

Bearing this latter point in mind, it may be worth examining another, more culturally oriented, notion of globalization, that offered by Arjun Appadurai, an Indian critic domiciled in the United States.[30] Appadurai suggests that the key features of globalization are the combination of mass migration and mass mediation. The large scale movement of peoples whether as refugees, migrants or guest workers, which is not in itself unique, creates a situation which is genuinely new when it is combined with revolutions in information technology and the mass media. Large-scale diasporic communities have formed throughout the world, no longer isolated from their homelands and destined to merge with the majority population, but now directly connected to these homelands by satellite television (both the globally owned networks and local stations), fax machines, cheap telephone calls, imported video-tapes and, most recently, the Internet. Using these resources diasporic communities are able to participate in homeland politics, and indeed, may, on occasion offer a political lead ; the role of the Sikh diaspora in Canada, the US and the UK in creating the Khalistan movement is a case in point. However, the change in sensibilities that globalization has brought about is not necessarily characterized by such dramatic doings; more significant in the longer run is that, for the first time in history, virtually everyone in the world is capable of imagining that they might *be* somewhere else, indeed might almost become *someone* else. So-called fundamentalists (religious and political) may not wish to admit this latter point, but the very violence with which contemporary fanatics express their viewpoints is an indicator of the extent to which they are aware that there are alternatives.[31]

This potential for mobility does not, Appadurai suggests, open the way to homogenization, but neither does it leave things as they are. Diasporic communities now have the ability to be as closely in touch with their places of origin as they wish to be, but neither community is unchanged by this intercourse. And, of course, host communities are changed by the presence of diaspora communities in their midst, and change those communities in turn. There is always a potential conflict between the images conveyed by local community-controlled media and the world of Baywatch, MTV and McDonald's, and Appadurai is sensitive to the ways in which various homogenizing images and practices become dispersed throughout the globe; his point is that these images and practices change in the process. One of his most interesting extended analyses of this process concerns the 'decolonization of Indian cricket', the ways in which a game introduced to India as a way of conveying British

[30] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1996).

[31] A remark made by an Islamic radical during a television debate on the Rushdie affair, to the effect that the Enlightenment had destroyed Christian belief and he and his followers were not going to allow it to destroy Islam, sticks in the mind (although, unfortunately, the exact reference does not). The point is that this remark indicates that the battle is already lost; clearly the speaker could envisage an alternative to his religion in a way that his forefathers could not, and traditional belief was, thus, no longer open to him. Once religion becomes something that one has chosen, its nature changes irretrievably.

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imperial values has become an expression of Indian nationalism.[32] It is difficult to believe that anything remotely similar will happen to cultural practices such as looking at television pictures of scantily clad Californian life-guards, but the general point holds—it is a big mistake to think that the forces of globalization are unambiguous in their effects, or that different people in radically different environments read the same images in the same way. Equally it is a mistake to think of the effects of globalization in either/or terms—either McWorld or Jihad, universalism or particularism; the actual politics of globalization may involve both or neither.

Conclusion

Throughout this article—and following most of its sources—the issue of the nature of the post-Cold War international order has been posed in terms of oppositions: the end of history or the end of progressivism, liberal dominance or a clash of civilizations, Jihad or McWorld. This set of choices does indeed convey some sense of what is going but on the whole it obscures more than it illuminates. What is particularly damaging about the way in which these oppositions are set up is that they tend to define the most important questions about the future in terms of a choice between universalism and particularism, with the underlying assumption that the former is the progressive option, while the latter, though possibly unavoidable, is regressive and not to be desired. Even where universalism is given a somewhat sinister or troublesome connotation (McWorld or the 'End of History') the alternative is usually portrayed in even less favourable terms. Sakakiba and Appadurai are, of course, exceptions here, but it is noticeable that the discourse of contemporary international relations has made less of these figures than of their more Manichean counterparts.

This tendency to see things in either/or terms is particularly unfortunate because it misses some of the most important features of the actual debates on these issues. For example, in the field, as it were, it can be seen that some of the most effective moves made by critics of triumphalist (neo)liberalism actually draw on liberal and universalist thinking, most obviously the notions of global distributive justice and the idea of universal human rights. Such moves are not unproblematic; Immanuel Wallerstein catches the point nicely here in *Geopolitics and Geoculture*—universalism is 'a "gift" of the powerful to the weak' which places them in 'a double-bind: to refuse the gift is to lose; to accept the gift is to lose'.[33] The language of universal rights and justice is, on the one hand, a powerful resource in resisting the undesirable effects of globalization, but, on the other, is itself an agent of a particular kind of homogenization. To employ the language of global justice in order to deliver a

[32] *Modernity at Large*, ch. 5. 'Playing with Modernity: the Decolonization of Indian Cricket'; it is noteworthy that during the recent Cricket World Cup most of the television advertising on Sky Sports was oriented to British Asians, even when, in the best matches of the competition, South Africa played Australia. Cricket is now a Sub-Continental game with adherents in the rest of the Commonwealth rather than an English game with Sub-Continental followers.

[33] Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 199. Fred Dallmayr develops a similar line of argument (citing this passage), in *Alternative Visions: Paths in the Global Village* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

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critique of neoliberal economic policies in the South may involve accepting premises which entail agreeing that sometimes 'there is no alternative' to such policies. What possible response can there be to this dilemma? Wallerstein, and those who think with him on this, looks to the growth of antisystemic movements which will preserve difference but gradually grow into a global consciousness and, finally, restore the 'universal reality of liberty and equality'. Whether or not such a route to a new kind of liberal universalism is viable, this millenarian vision does at least have the merit of addressing the issues in terms which are frequently employed by the actual participants in contemporary political disputes, in a way that formulations such as the end of history or the clash of civilizations are not.

This latter point can be generalized, and in the process some notions that were set aside at the very beginning of this article can perhaps be partially rehabilitated. As noted then, realists are resistant to the idea that anything fundamental has changed over the last decade, and insist on our ability to understand the international system without reference to grand (or grandiloquent) formulations. As the rest of this article has attempted to show, this general approach is mistaken, but there are some elements of the realist package that it would be unwise to discount. The context under which state-power is exercised has changed dramatically in recent years, but states are still important entities in global politics, and political power has not been abolished, much less politics itself. One of the striking features of so many of the models for a new world order is the extent to which they are apolitical, to which they assume that the forces they identify will work themselves out in the world without reference to political power. It is not necessary to be a realist of any denomination to regard this as implausible. The future of America's liberal hegemony is not simply a function of the future of liberalism as a set of ideas; as suggested above, it is also, perhaps mainly, a function of political decisions made in Washington and elsewhere and made for contingent rather than principled reasons. Equally, whether 'civilizations' clash along particular fault-lines is going to depend on how the inhabitants of those key areas, and their neighbours, near and far, choose to define themselves or allow political entrepreneurs to define them, and this is a political process, not one that follows a cultural recipe book. More generally, the future of globalization will be a product of political practice rather than cultural or economic theory. In short, one way or another, the major questions about the future of world order which this article has addressed will be answered in the years to come, but they will not necessarily be answered in their own terms; the contingencies of political power may have the last word, as so often in the past.

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