Another 'double movement': the great transformation after the Cold War?

IAN CLARK

This collection of essays grapples, historically, with the complex issues involved in understanding system transformation. Often these transformations have taken the form of a shift along the spectrum of independence-centralization, and it is within the framework of such declining or emerging imperial systems that the degree of change has tended to be measured. The task of this contribution is to locate the specific case of the end of the Cold War within the broader reflections on these themes. It will respond to this challenge by applying a different litmus test for change from that already found in the existing literature about the significance of the end of the Cold War. Instead, it will broach the topic by an examination of prevailing concepts of legitimacy within international society.[1] In short, it argues that a study of the role of legitimacy might be a useful way of documenting and measuring the kinds of changes taking place within an international system. Moreover, while the end of the Cold War might be thought to have nothing to say about the issue of empire as such (beyond recording the expiry of the Soviet version), it will additionally be suggested that the resultant extension of shared concepts of international legitimacy can be understood as a defining attribute of the contemporary imperial project.

This argument is itself couched within a broader claim. As a counterpart to Polanyi's[2] analysis of the 'double movement' created by the exposure to the market, and the reactive quest for forms of social and political protection, there is another Great Transformation that needs to be documented by the historians of international relations. For Polanyi, the great formative force during the nineteenth century was the vulnerability of society, under industrial capitalism, to the full effects of the unregulated market. As a reaction to this, forms of state welfarism and interventionism were developed by the middle twentieth century to cushion its effects. The 'double movement' thus consisted in the fact that 'markets spread all over the face of the globe', but then, in response, 'a network of measures and policies was integrated into powerful institutions designed to check the action of the market'.[3]

A parallel development took place in international relations, and the logics of both should be understood as connected, not coincidental. In international relations,

---

[1] This article forms part of a larger study that will be published as *Legitimacy in International Society* by Oxford University Press.

[2] K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944).

[3] Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, p. 76.

the first movement took the form of the creation during the late nineteenth and first two-thirds of the twentieth centuries of an international society that had finally become fully global in scope. However, as a 'double movement' associated with this expanding formalistic society, there also emerged, from within, a thicker version, committed to a set of particular economic and political values. An alternative vision has, at least since 1919 but more vigorously since 1945, sought to fashion a more intense style of international society. This was developed as a form of social and economic 'protection' for the bloc of Western states that found itself exposed to the vagaries and inconveniences of the increasingly open political 'market' of the global state system, as it developed in the twentieth century. The logics of both sets of movements were thus being driven by a single process. While society had to be protected from the unregulated global market, in the interests of restoring domestic and international political stability, so the core states of the international system sought to guard their existing privileges in the unregulated global state system by deploying the institutions of the embedded liberal solution at the international level also. It is important to understand, however, that this was not simply the working out of any natural liberal progressivism, but was intended also to shape a new international society best suited to preserving the advantages already enjoyed by the Western states.

The end of the Cold War needs to be understood in this context, not as the inculcation of any new set of principles, but rather as an important stage in the advancement of this 'double movement' towards a more overtly normative style of international society, as defined by the core states within it. This has been wrought by the direct application of a revised standard of civilization, as the appropriate test for membership. In short, the 'expansion' of international society that accompanied the zenith and subsequent decline of the imperial age has evoked a second and counter tendency in the shape of an 'intensification' of international society emanating from its imperial core. This 'double movement' is now far advanced and has become coextensive with significant sections of the global state system. In that sense, international society is undergoing a process of 'reinvention',[4] and the end of the Cold War marks a critical phase in that development.

The key argument set out here is that, as part of this process, the principles of international legitimacy should be considered not to have changed with the end of the Cold War. In fact, they were to be substantially reaffirmed. These legitimizing principles revolved around three central and interconnected ideas: principles of multilateralism and a commitment to a global economy; a collectivization of security; and adherence to a set of liberal rights values.[5] These principles had pervaded the post-1945 international order but, in the context of the Cold War, had operated as a principle of 'exclusion', rather than of inclusion.[6] With the end of the Cold War, these self-same principles became agents of admission to the inner international society, justifying the changes that had been made *via* the post-Cold War settlement, but also legitimizing the induced changes in the economic and political structures of

---

[4] T. Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1998).
[5] I. Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order: The Spoils of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[6] P. W. Schroeder, 'A New World Order: A Historical Perspective', in B. Roberts (ed.), *Order and Disorder after the Cold War: A Washington Quarterly Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

the former East. In that respect, they served a similar function to earlier applications of the standard of civilization. The role of that principle has been depicted in the following terms:

By the turn of the century, the standard had emerged sufficiently to define the legal requirements necessary for a non-European country like China to gain full and 'civilized' status in 'civilized' international society. Included in these requirements were the ability of the country to guarantee the life, liberty, and property of foreign nationals; to demonstrate a suitable governmental organization; to adhere to the accepted diplomatic practices; and to abide by the principles of international law.[7]

Thus construed, the principles of legitimacy have operated as a second standard of civilization, and as part of the 'double movement' accelerated by the end of the Cold War. They permit 'full membership' within all aspects of international society to those members of the former communist bloc that had hitherto been semi-detached from important aspects of it, particularly in the economic sphere, but also with regard to adherence to liberal democratic norms. These principles did not change as a result of the end of the Cold War. The key question is whether or not they have been used to legitimate new practices, such as in Wheeler's suggestion that there is now greater acceptance of an entitlement to, not to mention a duty of, humanitarian intervention.[8] The principles might also be thought to have legitimized a practice of encouragement of democratization, as an acceptable dimension of international intercourse.[9]

But are any such changes to be understood as the natural development of solidarist norms within international society, or simply as structural principles inculcated for the advantage of particular interests? What this raises is the key, and problematic, relationship between legitimacy and power. Entailed by this is the basic issue of whether or not legitimacy is a separate way of understanding international society and its workings, or merely an expression of power and interests. At the very least, some claim, 'power and legitimacy … are not conflicting concepts but rather are complementary ones'.[10] We need to do more to understand, internationally, 'the role of power … in making an institution legitimate'.[11] As is often noted, actors can comply for three basic reasons: coercion, self-interest, or because 'they think the norms are legitimate and therefore *want* to follow them'.[12] Posed in these terms, what is the contemporary status of principles of international legitimacy? Are they symptomatic of a gradual universalism that is tightening the normative bonds of international society, and is it for this reason that the end of the Cold War symbolizes the transformations currently underway? Or, more cynically, are these

---

[7] Gerrit W. Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', in H. Bull and A. Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 179.

[8] N. J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[9] M. Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and T. Inoguchi (eds.), *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[10] M. N. Barnett, 'Bringing in the New World Order: Liberalism, Legitimacy, and the United Nations', *World Politics*, 49:4 (1997), p. 544.

[11] I. Hurd, 'Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics', *International Organization*, 53:2 (Spring 1999), p. 402.

[12] A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 268–73; Hurd, 'Legitimacy and Authority'.

principles simply a reflection of current power plays, and an instrument for encouraging the compliance of other states with the West's own preferred rules of the game?

Assessing the end of the Cold War

How then might an examination of principles of international legitimacy assist in the task of mapping the degree of change resulting from the end of the Cold War? Before this train of thought can be pursued, we need to reflect upon the existing debates about how fundamental have been the post-Cold War transitions, and how such assessments have been reached. This will set the scene for the specific framework within which the remainder of this argument is set.

The confidence with which the end of the Cold War was initially greeted as marking a fundamental watershed in world affairs was soon matched only by a profound uncertainty as to what it was, after all, that had changed as a result. As such, that transition offered a good test case for exploring wider theoretical issues about systems and systemic change.[13] The case was particularly apposite as an illustration of the problems in distinguishing between fundamental systemic change, on the one hand, and varying degrees of lower level change, on the other. In summary, part of the fascination with the end of the Cold War resided in its intimation that we might possibly 'be on the brink of another transformation of the international system'.[14] And yet, by many other theoretical measures, the end of the Cold War seemed to betoken much more modest forms of change than this implied. According to these, its implications were confined to uncertain adjustments to the system's polarity and stability. Occupying the middle ground between these two verdicts, there was a position that, although falling some way short of the apocalyptic, the end of the Cold War remained nonetheless *symptomatic* of other, much wider, processes of transformation that were already underway. If not itself the cause of these changes, it could nevertheless be understood as symbolic of their potency in general. The end of the Cold War thus represented these changes, even if not itself the precipitant of them.

The pervasive assessment at the time was that the end of the Cold War should be counted as one of history's great 'punctuation points',[15] and that it marked a 'clear and pronounced break'.[16] It was understandable that this should have been the reaction when viewed from close up to the tumbling walls. However, once we had gained some distance from, and perspective upon, these events, commentators became less persuaded that the world had, indeed, been turned upside down. Since a number of important features had palpably *not* changed, we were reminded that the

---

[13] R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 39–49; G. John Ikenberry and M. W. Doyle, 'Conclusion' in Doyle and Ikenberry (eds.), *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 274.

[14] B. Buzan and R. Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 349.

[15] J. L. Gaddis, 'The Cold War, the Long Peace, and the Future', in M. J. Hogan (ed.), *The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 22.

[16] B. Hansen and B. Heurlin, 'Introduction', in Hansen and Heurlin (eds.), *The New World Order: Contesting Theories* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 2000), p. vii.

'landscape in 1999 may look very different to 1989, but there are still some very familiar landmarks'.[17] The issue of whether to be more impressed by what had changed, or by what remained constant, revealed itself, on closer scrutiny, as an instance of the generic problem of theory-dependence. 'The changes which occurred during "the end of the Cold War"', Patomaki observed early in the development of this debate, '… can be analysed only within a theoretical framework. … Hence, every theory of international relations defines what the world is, what it is like, and what its *possible* transformations are'.[18] The end of the Cold War, for that reason, became inextricably caught up in the theoretical webs spun around it.

So what was to be the relevant theory for this particular purpose? The desultory debate about the character of the post-Cold War order soon clarified the full nature of the problem as one of seeming 'incommensurability'.[19] It largely took place within the territory marked out by Buzan and Little as referring to two of the three types of systems change, namely 'process' and 'structure',[20] and was in large measure about the relationship between them. The border between these two spheres was sometimes respected and treated as inviolate (as in the debate about power, balancing, polarity and unipolarity); it was regarded by others as being still important, but increasingly permeable (as in debates about collective security, concerts, humanitarian intervention, and the constructivist challenge in general); or it was elsewhere widely dismissed as largely irrelevant (as in many of the presentations on globalization). There could be no agreement on how significant was the end of the Cold War without reaching a prior agreement on the theoretical framework within which the discussion was to be conducted, or without at least some 'truce' in the internecine theoretical warfare.

Such a claim is scarcely controversial, but its significance for this essay needs to be further clarified. If, in terms of the Buzan and Little tripartite scheme of systems transformations,[21] the last radical change—one resulting in the modern sovereign state system—occurred some five hundred years ago, then it seems clear that the end of the Cold War, narrowly conceived, scarcely registers on the radar for consideration as a change of this magnitude. Whatever the resultant polarity and/or degree of state co-operation, other essential systemic frameworks remain in place despite the passing of the Cold War. Accordingly, the argument that the end of the Cold War is worth thinking about at all as an historical landmark needs to be attached to a wider set of claims about the passing of the age of the modern sovereign state system. This, in turn, yields its own tripartite framework: we must assess the end of the Cold War within a frame of reference that links this to *modernity, sovereignty,* and the *state system.* It is in terms of its impact on such wider themes that the significance of the end of the Cold War deserves to be explored. Williams[22] indirectly makes the first connection, albeit in the negative:

---

[17] M. Cox, K. Booth, and T. Dunne, 'Introduction: The Interregnum: Controversies in World Politics, 1989–99', *Review of International Studies*, 25: Special Issue (December 1999), p. 4.

[18] H. Patomaki, 'What is it that Changed with the End of the Cold War? An Analysis of the Problem of Identifying and Explaining Change', in P. Allan and K. Goldmann (eds.), *The End of the Cold War: Evaluating Theories of InternationalRelations* (Dordrecht, Holland: Martinus Nijhoff, 1992), p. 180.

[19] C. Wight, 'Incommensurability and Cross-Paradigm Communication: "What's the Frequency Kenneth?"', *Millennium*, 25:2 (1996).

[20] Buzan and Little, *International Systems*, pp. 11–12.

[21] Ibid., p. 4.

[22] M. C. Williams, 'Modernity, Postmodernity and the New World Order', in Hansen and Heurlin, *New World Order*, p. 82.

From a postmodern position, thinking about the NWO cannot be limited solely to a consideration of the end of the Cold War. As important as this transformation is, it needs to be placed within the broader context of a shift from modern to increasingly postmodern intellectual, social and political forms. If we look to the end of the Cold War as a 'revolutionary' turning point, we will undoubtedly be disappointed.

Waever voices the second of these wider perspectives when he opines of the recent changes taking place in the international system that the 'strongest elements of systems change are elements of change in relation to sovereignty and not least the relationship between sovereignty and territory'.[23] This viewpoint might be taken as representative of the entire 'post-Westphalian' family of arguments that have gained wide currency in the past decade or so. In turn, this overlaps with the third perspective—the demise of a states system—because of the emergence of diverse actors, and its replacement by some alternative order, be it neo-medieval or globalized in form.

The point about each of these three positions is that, if the theoretical bar for measuring change is set too high, the end of the Cold War is unlikely to come anywhere close to clearing it, *unless* the end of the Cold War is understood to refer to wider sets of developments than the mere ending of the struggle between the two superpowers alone. Thus transmuted, that *ending* becomes but a shorthand device for encapsulating other seismic shifts in one or all of the three constituents of the pre-existing system. In other words, the end of the Cold War only registers on the Richter scale of systemic change at all if it can be demonstrated to be symbolic of, or associated with, one of these more profound changes. Otherwise, it must be demoted to one of history's rhythmic, and relatively frequent, punctuation points (1648, 1713, 1815 and so on). Whilst these are of some arcane interest to the historian of the modern sovereign state system, they give rise to no particular pause on the part of the grand theorist of system transformation.

Starting from this more modest position—that the end of the Cold War be viewed as something less than the end of the modern sovereign states system—there are many studies to suggest that we can still sensibly discuss significant degrees of change 'within' an existing system. Examples of this genre include the following. Osiander[24] traces the evolution of consensus principles within the state system from 1648 to the present. It is his argument that the degree of stability in the international system at any one point in time is related to the nature and extent of these principles. There have been many of these and they have evolved over time. They include principles of autonomy, custom, equilibrium, equality, great powerhood, and national self-determination. On this kind of basis, we can tell a compelling story of the evolution of the international system, crafted around the changes in the substance of these consensus principles.

Although differing in his organizational scheme, and working with a more refined set of conceptual categories, Reus-Smit[25] likewise tells a story of change predicated

---

[23] O. Waever, 'Power, Principles and Perspectivism: Understanding Peaceful Change in Post-Cold War Europe', in H. Patomaki (ed.), *Peaceful Changes in World Politics* (Tampere, Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 1995), p. 259.

[24] A. Osiander, *The States System of Europe 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the Condition of International Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[25] C. Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

upon the 'constitutive structure' or 'moral purpose' of the state. His is a narrative of changing international societies, the change from one to another being traceable through the deeply embedded constitutional structures that lie at their base. What is so innovative about his argument is that, when this is done, sovereignty becomes less of a test in its own right for measuring the extent of change. A key part of his argument is the salient change during the nineteenth century when, for all the seeming continuities of the sovereignty game, the international system nonetheless underwent radical transformation in accord with shifts in that moral purpose. The age of revolution then takes centre stage in this transformative tale.[26] According to it, we move less confidently and directly from 1648 to the present. As a consequence of our obsessive preoccupation with sovereignty as the basic norm, we have been prepared to see evidence of dramatic change only towards the end of the twentieth century, on the grounds of the multiple threats to sovereignty that were believed to be emerging by that time. However, if we look beyond sovereignty, tell-tale signs of transformation can be found much earlier. The changing practice between the Vienna settlement and the Hague conferences becomes, for Reus-Smit, a landmark that has been unduly neglected by the historians of system transformation.

Similar in general concept, but differing in specific details, is Hall's narrative of shifts in the international system as reflections of changing national collective identities.[27] Hall depicts a tripartite scheme of development from the medieval to the dynastic-sovereign system (Augsburg, 1555), from thence to the territorial-sovereign system (Westphalia, 1648), and finally to the national-sovereign system (French Revolution, 1789).[28] Critically, in terms of the argument developed below, Hall contends that changes in 'individual and collective identity result in changes in the legitimating principles of global and domestic social order'.[29] While there is here a close family resemblance to the evolution mapped by Reus-Smit, Hall's account is formulated in terms of shifting sovereignty norms, and not on some moral purpose that is more fundamental than sovereignty. Significantly, however, his history once again undermines any notion of the 'timeless wisdom' of behaviour within a state system. The prime evidence of this flux is to be discovered in the system's evolving legitimating principles: these form the geological deposits by which the passing of distinct ages can be detected and mapped in time.

Finally, and from a quite different perspective, there is the engagingly robust position advanced by Krasner in this volume and elsewhere.[30] In his distinctive way, he also enjoins us to look beyond sovereignty for evidence of system change, because sovereignty has been honoured in the breach ever since Westphalia. The idea that we can measure change by pointing to the erosion of sovereignty is, for that reason, highly suspect.

But if not to sovereignty, to what is the historian of change to direct attention? A different framework for making such assessments has recently been deployed by

[26] Reus-Smit, *Moral Purpose*, pp. 152–3.
[27] R. B. Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
[28] Hall, *National Collective Identity*, p. 6.
[29] Ibid., p. 29.
[30] S. D. Krasner, 'Compromising Westphalia', *International Security*, 20:3 (1995/6); *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

John Ikenberry,[31] and by the present author.[32] Although there are substantial differences between these two approaches, they share a 'peace settlement' perspective, and within that frame both make similar arguments about the continuities and discontinuities embodied in the post-Cold War order. Both challenge the notion of a 'clear break' in 1989–91. Both approach the end of the Cold War by regarding it as equivalent to one of the great peace settlements that have come in the aftermath of major wars. The reason for doing so is that the style and content of peace settlements tend to be profoundly expressive of the norms of international society at any period of time.[33]

As with Osiander, the starting point for both these accounts is the assumption that attempts to reconstruct post-war international systems are likely to be revealing of fundamental norms and consensus principles. As with Reus-Smit, both go beyond Osiander's relatively narrowly defined 'structural' agenda. Osiander had claimed that there is a distinction to be found in peace settlements between 'structural principles' and 'procedural rules'. The former he specifies as the basic assumptions of the system about 'the identity of the international actors, their relative status, and the distribution of territories and populations between them'. The latter he sees as prescribing the 'way that relations between the actors are conducted'. He is of the opinion that the former is more important to the stability of the system than the latter[34] and, accordingly, most of his study is concentrated upon this aspect. In contrast, and reflecting the intent to broaden the constructivist agenda, both Reus-Smit and Hall encourage us to go beyond the structuralist aspect, and to seek out instead the rules of the game in the deeply embedded purposes of the state, and its shifting identity.

These changes are often clearly revealed in the kinds of peace settlements that the victors seek to establish in the aftermath of war. Ikenberry's important contribution to this debate is couched in his general survey of the strategy of 'institutionalization' pursued by victors since 1815. After victory, the winners may choose simply to take all, and to enforce the peace thereafter. But this is a costly strategy. Alternatively, they may choose to trade in some of the 'returns to power' by settling for less, and by creating instead the wider norms and institutions that provide incentives for others, including the lately defeated, to comply with the terms of peace:

> Beginning with the 1815 settlement and increasingly after 1919 and 1945, the leading state has resorted to institutional strategies as mechanisms to establish restraints on indiscriminate and arbitrary state power and 'lock in' a favorable and durable postwar order.[35]

According to this analysis, the kind of settlement sought at the end of the Cold War is powerfully reflective of the moral purposes of the key victor states, especially the United States. In my own overlapping interpretation, I have set out an alternative framework, but equally focusing upon the story of change that can be told on the basis of historical exercises in peacemaking.[36] As with Ikenberry, it leads to the

---

[31] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[32] Clark, *Post-Cold War Order*.
[33] See Krasner, 'Compromising Westphalia', p. 140; Osiander, *States System of Europe*, p. 14.
[34] Osiander, *States System of Europe*, p. 5.
[35] Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 4.
[36] Clark, *Post-Cold War Order*.

conclusion that the best way to think about the post-Cold War order is in terms of traditional notions of warmaking and peacemaking, and this places the legitimating principles of the settlement at the heart of our concerns.

As is by now clear, many studies of change in international systems have explored the issue in terms of changing norms, and indeed this is a substantial part of the existing investigation into the extent of change in the post-Cold War system.[37] However, much of this discussion has been narrowly framed by the norm of sovereignty, and what, if anything, might be happening to it. While there are obvious reasons for coming at the question from this angle, given the centrality of sovereignty within the 'Westphalian' system, this is open to the objection that Krasner[38] has raised, namely that if we use sovereignty as the test, we are likely to find substantial evidence of change all along the line since 1648. So is there an alternative route down which we might head?

What follows is an attempt to develop the argument that the norms of international society are a good place to locate the argument, but that we should focus on concepts of legitimacy, rather than upon sovereignty alone. How might this develop, and with what benefits to understanding system change? We need to begin with some analysis of international legitimacy.

Legitimacy, change, and the end of the Cold War

It may seem odd to begin any discussion of the significance of the end of the Cold War by reference to principles of legitimacy. Some commentators have gone so far as to cast doubt on the existence of a post-Cold War international society itself, let alone of its agreed rules of legitimation. 'The dilemma of these times', it has been remarked, 'is that there is no international society to make the rules of a post-Cold War world'.[39] As against this, others have insisted that the 'issue of legitimacy is likely to grow in significance as the twenty-first century unfolds', in part because of the 'growing call that the *world order itself* is not legitimate, especially at the economic level'.[40] This suggests that what is happening to legitimacy itself might tell us important things about the nature and significance of the changes underway as part of the end of the Cold War.

The role of legitimacy is one of the fundamental, but as yet inadequately theorized, components of international society. In that respect, this article responds to the challenge of a recent authoritative study that 'there are few works that explicitly interrogate the idea of legitimacy at the international level'.[41] It needs briefly to explore the functions that legitimacy performs in relation to international society.

[37] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*; G. M. Lyons and M. Mastanduno (eds.), *Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty and International Intervention* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995).

[38] Krasner, 'Compromising Westphalia', passim.

[39] R. Steel, 'Prologue: 1919–1945–1989', in M. F. Boemeke, G. D. Feldman and E. Glaser (eds.), *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 34.

[40] P. Kennedy, 'Conclusions', in G. Lundestad (ed.), *The Fall of Great Powers: Peace, Stability, and Legitimacy* (Oslo and Oxford: Scandinavian and Oxford University Presses, 1994), p. 378.

[41] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, p. 4.

There is a substantial literature within political science as a whole, largely dealing with 'domestic' legitimacy. In contrast, while legitimacy in its international aspects is discussed in a number of works, these remain scattered rather than consolidated treatments. The idea is explored specifically in the likes of Armstrong, Butler, Barnett, Hurd, Kissinger, Watson Wheeler, Wight, Williams,[42] as well as in passing mentions in a host of more general texts, especially within the English School. It is also widely discussed from a distinctively international legal perspective.[43]

The common assumption that appears to run through many of these writings is that legitimacy is related to the stability of international society. Specifically, international society is thought to be more stable at certain historical periods to the extent that its norms and institutions enjoy reasonable levels of legitimacy. This assumption, and the reasoning underlying it, needs to be analysed more explicitly. Is legitimacy a factor that independently influences degrees of stability? Is there some kind of causal relationship between the two? If so, why, and how does it work? The worry is that in some existing accounts, there is a complex tautology at work: once decoded, legitimacy emerges less as an independent factor in its own right, and merely as a transcription of stability in other terms. Were this to be the case, legitimacy would not be a cause of stability, but simply another way of describing it.

The treatment of this in the existing literature does not build up to a single, coherent picture. At the level of definitions, approaches span from the very narrow (a criterion for membership of international society[44]), to the extremely wide (a value judgment about what is right[45]). All along the spectrum in between, a host of competing perspectives and organizational categories are to be found. Some attest to the importance of legitimacy, but limit its scope to the great powers alone.[46] Elsewhere, it remains unclear whether it is something objective or subjective, procedural or substantive. If there are pluralist and solidarist[47] accounts of international society, does this mean that there are pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international legitimacy, and must one preclude the other? Or might both operate simultaneously, but at different 'constitutive' levels? Is legitimacy

---

[42] J. D. Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); P. F. Butler, 'Legitimacy in a States-System: Vattel's *Law of Nations*', in M. Donelan (ed.), *The Reason of States* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978); Barnett, 'Bringing in the New World Order'; Hurd, 'Legitimacy and Authority'; H. Kissinger, *A World Restored: The Politics of Conservatism in a Revolutionary Era* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1957) and *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); A. Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992); Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*; M. Wight, 'International Legitimacy', in H. Bull (ed.), *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977); and J. Williams, 'Nothing Succeeds Like Success? Legitimacy in International Relations', in B. Holden (ed.), *The Ethical Dimensions of Global Change* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1996).

[43] Principally in T. M. Franck, *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[44] Wight, 'International Legitimacy'.

[45] Williams, 'Nothing Succeeds like Success?'.

[46] For example, Kissinger, *A World Restored;* R. Gilpin, 'The Cycle of Great Powers: Has it Finally been Broken?', in Lundestad, *The Fall*.

[47] I use these terms in the sense developed by Hedley Bull. Pluralism refers to a view of international society within which shared norms extend only to procedural goals, whereas solidarism reflects an international society that shares 'substantive' or 'purposive' values. See Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', in H. Butterfield and M. Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966); and *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

something that 'makes' international society, or something that international society, once made, attempts to enforce (in the same way that it has been claimed that Bull had a Grotian view of the very existence of international society, but additionally a distinctively Grotian view of the types of norms that society could sustain)?[48] In effect, this is an instance of the general distinction often made between constitutive and regulative types of rules.[49] This issue arises directly out of Wheeler's[50] formulation: 'The rules that this book is interested in are those that constitute international society and the focus is on how far the society of states recognizes the legitimacy of using force against states who grossly violate human rights'. Are the latter rules the same as the former, or might they be of different orders? Finally, is legitimacy an expression of universal beliefs, or merely a disguise and rationalization of interests, especially of those of the strongest? Watson himself advised that the major powers might need to 'cloak hegemonial decisions in the legitimist rhetoric of independence for every member of international society'.[51]

As an instance of this generic issue, what we need to explore now is the nature of legitimacy since the end of the Cold War. The thesis of *The Post-Cold War Order* was that the strength of the principles of legitimacy derived from the pre-existing 'successes' of the Western system during the Cold War itself. Given this, it is not at all surprising that, as Williams[52] has claimed, the 'end of the Cold War … has seen the standard of legitimacy move towards the concerns of liberalism'.

Principles of international legitimacy after the Cold War have been notably attached to the global economy, a form of collective security, and a broadly liberal rights order. Each of these has played an instrumental part in legitimizing what I have called the 'regulative' aspects of the post-Cold War peace. In many respects, the Cold War—objectively speaking—was a war fought on behalf of the global economy, even if that was not the only issue at stake. The lessons about the need for an integrated and multilateral economy had been profoundly learned by 1944, and already formed an important element within the abortive peace of 1945, as a set of principles to which all states were invited to subscribe. The apparent victory of capitalism in 1989 served only to further entrench the appeal of this doctrine, especially in those many parts of the world that had hitherto been excluded from it. As an accompaniment to this multilateralism in the economic sphere, the end of the Cold War also saw obeisance paid to a more self-conscious adherence to multilateralism in the realm of security. Again this was not new, but sought to realize the potential of the system that had prematurely been set in place in 1945. This might now be thought capable of working in the absence of significant centres of power resistant to the wishes of the dominant 'coalitions of the willing'. Finally, the key principle of legitimacy was specified in terms of adherence to certain liberal forms, with due respect for human rights. Once more, this was scarcely a novel programmatic departure. What was potentially new about it was the seemingly heightened prospect of some measures towards its implementation.

---

[48] K. Alderson and A. Hurrell, 'Introduction', in Alderson and Hurrell (eds.), *Hedley Bull on International Society* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 2000), p. 9.
[49] See J. G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 22–5.
[50] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, p. 6.
[51] Watson, *The Evolution*, p. 323.
[52] Williams, 'Nothing Succeeds like Success', pp. 60–1.

In that earlier work, I suggested the argument that what was unusual about the post-Cold War settlement was that these regulative provisions fashioned a legitimacy based on continuity rather than change. Traditionally, the legitimizing principles attached to peace settlements have fostered change, rather than continuity. Of course, peace settlements are not the only statements about legitimacy in international society and, given their peculiar nature, one can understand that they might normally be more concerned to facilitate change than preserve the past (since change is what hegemonic wars are supposed to be about). This does, nonetheless, invite the question why the aftermath of the Cold War should yield an outcome that was appreciably different. The plausible answer to this might be that the post-Cold War order privileged a degree of conservatism, since it resulted from a war of hegemonic reaffirmation, rather than from one of hegemonic change.

It is equally instructive to examine the role played by legitimacy at the end of the Cold War from the perspective of earlier moments of historical transition. Some counsel that legitimation itself becomes most important when 'the rules of the game are in flux'.[53] This echoes the similar point made much earlier by Inis Claude, who had identified 'the crucial periods in political history' as being those 'transitional years of conflict between old and new concepts of legitimacy, the historical interstices between the initial challenge to the established concept and the general acceptance of its replacement'.[54] Osiander himself had recognized that those principles that generally operate in the 'collective subconscious' would tend to be brought to the surface 'when they are challenged in some crisis'.[55] Accordingly, it is not at all surprising that a debate about legitimacy has become indicative of the uncertainties generated by the end of the Cold War.[56]

The obverse side of the assumption that legitimacy enhances stability is the notion that instability is increased when legitimizing principles and international practice become too far separated from each other. This was certainly Adam Watson's view. 'Legitimacy usually lags behind practice', he averred. 'But a conspicuous and growing gap between legitimacy and practice causes tension and the impression of disorder'.[57] This suggests a complication, but also an interesting avenue of exploration. If we are to apply a legitimacy test to detect the degree of change within the international system, what is it that is being measured by the test? Are we attempting to assess the gap between practice and principle, on the assumption that the content of the principles has not altered? Are the punctuation points of international history instances of this kind of disjunction? Alternatively, does the test imply that the great historical transformations in the international system are those where the actual principles of legitimacy have themselves undergone a radical shift? Which test it is that is being applied has important implications for our understanding of the significance of the end of the Cold War.

---

[53] Barnett, 'Bringing in the New World Order', p. 548.
[54] I. L. Claude,'Collective Legitimization as a Political Function of the United Nations', *International Organization*, 20:3 (1966), p. 369.
[55] Osiander, *States System of Europe*, p. 14.
[56] Williams, 'Nothing Succeeds like Success', p. 40.
[57] Watson, *The Evolution*, pp. 323–4. On the 'crisis of legitimacy' caused by a gap between principle and practice, see also Hall, *National Collective Identity*; A. Claire Cutler, 'Critical Reflections on the Westphalian Assumptions of International Law and Organization: A Crisis of Legitimacy', *Review of International Studies*, 27:2 (2001).

For all its criticality, it would be naïve to imagine that we can make a simple and straightforward distinction between these two situations. This can be illustrated with reference to two interconnected developments in the historical evolution of international society. It might be thought, first of all, that there is a good example of 'crisis' in the disjunction between the legitimating principles of a European-based state system, and an actual practice of the increasingly globally-based international relationships, resulting from the transitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But even this distinction is itself more blurred than it might appear to be at first sight. Tellingly, two erudite commentators upon this very issue were led to reach the following circumspect conclusion:

This European international society, it should be noted, did not first evolve its own rules and institutions and then export them to the rest of the world. The evolution of the European system of interstate relations and the expansion of Europe across the globe were simultaneous processes, which influenced and affected each other.[58]

For that very reason, the separation between principles and practices is by no means a straightforward one to make. In the same way, a second illustration can be found in one commentary upon the application of the 'standard of civilization' in late nineteenth-century international society. Referring to Gong's analysis of this, Roland Robertson points to the mutuality that was involved in these 'encounters between civilizations' and the extent to which, as Gong had suggested, there were resulting changes both in European international society *and* in those new non-European members of it.[59] In these circumstances, it is casuistic to assert a clear division between legitimating principles and international practices, since both were constantly interacting with each other.

And yet, if not precisely in terms of principles and practices, *some* kind of distinction seems appropriate between changes in the content of the legitimating principles themselves, as against a continuity of these principles which might nonetheless allow new practices to be observed. At some historical periods, the changes have been predominantly of the former kind, whereas at others a basic continuity in principles has been accompanied by significant innovations in the actual conduct of international relations. Into which of these two broad categories should we place the transitions associated with the end of the Cold War and, by doing so, what would have been clarified about the nature of this transition?

The point can be further developed by recalling earlier stages of the discussion. Changes to the existing frameworks of legitimacy have traditionally been those that have established new membership criteria for inclusion within international society. These have often been articulated as new principles of legitimacy, either at the end of the great wars of modern history, or at other equally revolutionary moments. Examples are the shifts towards sovereign absolutism, then towards popular sovereignty, and finally to nationalism and self-determination. These are the stereotypical landmarks in the changing substance of international legitimacy, viewed as a criterion of 'fit' membership of international society. As against these, and following on from Reus-Smit, there have been those shifts that do not derive from any pronounced shift in the framework of legitimacy, or at least not from any major

---

[58] Bull and Watson, *The Expansion,* pp. 6–7.
[59] R. Roberston, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 124.

reworking of the principle of sovereignty itself. Nonetheless, and although couched within a framework of continuity, those legitimizing principles may allow for a variety of innovative, and often radically transformative, state practices. Reus-Smit's revolution of the nineteenth century would be an example of this latter kind.

On this basis, the suggestion here is that the end of the Cold War is best understood as falling into this second category: a constancy of principle but with the potential for a revolution in practice. The content of its prime legitimizing principles did not change. On the contrary, what enhanced their authority was precisely the degree to which they embodied the sound principles already set in place in 1944 and 1945, and which appeared to have been even more thoroughly vindicated by the experiences of the 1980s. To be sure, those principles might now be appealed to in an attempt to legitimize new activities (as in the case of humanitarian intervention). They were also to be appealed to as part of the process by which the often radical adjustments wrought by the end of the Cold War were set in place.[60] But this was not because of any change in the fundamental content of the principles themselves. At this level, they stood for a basic continuity with the Cold-War past, even though they had now become more deeply entrenched and more extensive in their ambit. Accordingly, if we look at the end of the Cold War for a revolution in the basic principles of international legitimacy, the episode is bound to disappoint: it was much more conservative than it was radical. However, that by itself is no reason to minimize the profound changes that accompanied the end of the Cold War, as these were often legitimized in the name of these same conservative principles. It is this central paradox—and one that is explicable in the above terms—that has led to so much confusion about whether or not the end of the Cold War marks a point of radical departure, or one of marked continuity. In reality, it was both.

The end of the Cold War and the imperial project

It is at this point that the analysis of the principles of legitimacy in post-Cold War international society invites a deeper reflection upon the character of that society itself. While much of the rhetoric of that New World Order had been avowedly about self-determination, there comes a point when the 'solidarist' dimensions of an international society might also be regarded as a veiled form of hegemony or empire. In short, the question that needs to be addressed is the extent to which it is these very principles of international legitimacy that define the nature of the contemporary imperial project. Imperial rule, as Lundestad reminded us, may have lost its legitimacy,[61] but might legitimacy be the new form of imperial rule?

The discussion here reverts to the earlier theme of the relationship between legitimacy and power. Unless legitimacy adds value to our understanding of political behaviour, it is redundant. The general assumption is then that an order that enjoys legitimacy is one that is distinct from one that relies upon power alone. According to theorists like Kissinger, it is the very legitimacy of an order that is the key to its

---

[60] Clark, *Post-Cold War Order*, Part 2.
[61] 'The Fall', in Lundestad, *The Fall*, p. 385.

stability, and hence to its durability, as after 1815. The same idea is very much present in Ikenberry's rendition of the 'institutionalized peace' after the Cold War. His strategy of institutionalization is clearly to be understood as one that is different from reliance upon coercive power alone. Even if he eschews the concept of legitimacy as such, it is fundamental to his understanding of the post-Cold War order that, however hegemonic American power might be, it resides in institutional bases that generate high levels of willing compliance on the part of other actors in the system. 'It is not the preponderance of American power that keeps the system intact', he suggests, 'but its unique ability to engage in strategic restraint'.[62] I have elsewhere questioned the tenability of this argument[63], on the grounds of Ikenberry's own admission that the ability to engage in strategic restraint is a 'type of power'.[64] This is assuredly so, but it calls into question the meaningful distinction between the returns to power and strategic restraint.

A good example of this tension can be provided by the post-Cold War treatment of the former Soviet Union. It is certainly arguable that the West pursued two types of policy towards Russia and that these became increasingly incompatible with each other. In the period until 1992–93, the United States continued to attach high priority to its Russian policy, and to the continuance of its residual partnership with it. However, after that period, the policy became much less mindful of Russian sensitivities, and less concerned to implement only those policies that met with some kind of consent from Russia. The sequence of policy squabbles that developed over the issue of NATO enlargement, and intensified with reference to the war over Kosovo, is illustrative of this degenerative trend. In the wider scheme of analysis, this picture might also be thought to confirm a drift away from a consensual—and hence legitimate—post-Cold War order, and towards one that was more expressly reliant upon the West's power. There was less strategic restraint as the decade of the 1990s unfolded, and the returns to power were more overtly garnered in.

In part, this reflected a deep-seated tension in policy objectives with regard to Russia. As in all post-war situations, the victors seek for a strategy that will remove the risk of a recurrence of threat from the vanquished. This can be done by punitive military, territorial, and economic measures designed to eliminate any resurgence on the late enemy's part. It can also be done by transforming the political complexion of the defeated state, so that it will willingly comply with the new order. In these terms, the West embarked initially on a policy of co-opting Russia as a reformed democratic and market system, thereby establishing the bases of a legitimate order for the post-Cold War world. However, by way of insurance, it also took measures (such as NATO enlargement) that had the unfortunate side effect of contributing to Russian disenchantment with its own accommodative policy, thereby undercutting its willing compliance. In this respect, we can again witness the succumbing of a policy of strategic restraint to the temptations of a more direct exaction of the returns to power. The more coercive the post-Cold War order has become, the less legitimate it is seen to be (not in the eyes of Russians alone), and the worse are its resulting prospects for stability.

[62] Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 270.
[63] Clark, *Post-Cold War Order*, p. 249.
[64] Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 259.

In a nutshell, is the stability of the present order to be derived from its legitimacy, or from the quasi-hegemony that underpins it? There is now a substantial literature that develops a range of concepts—security community, global or western state, and empire—all of which have substantial overtones of hegemony associated with them. So is the latest iteration of principles of legitimacy for international society to be construed as a set of norms for a genuinely pluralistic society of states, or is it taking on significant dimensions of a more imperial nature? Is the final irony of the end of the Cold War that the explicit rejection of one imperial vision (the Soviet one) has simply initiated the beginning of a new cycle that will push us back towards to the imperial end of the spectrum? If, as Watson insisted, the Westphalian settlement 'established a definitive anti-hegemonial legitimacy for the European society of states',[65] do contemporary developments suggest a weakening of this phase? While conceding that the 'collapse of imperial governance in our time is indeed impressive', William McNeill nonetheless cautioned against assuming that 'the forces that so persistently restored polyethnic empire after periods of disruption in the Eurasian past have lost their cogency'.[66] Is the paradox of contemporary principles of legitimacy that they underwrite a pluralistic conception of international society only as a means to its further centralization through an orthodoxy of values?

Such a suggestion has been around for some time, in embryonic form, in much of the liberal peace literature, and even more so in recent exegeses of the concept of 'security community'.[67] However, its most direct referent can be found in versions of the global or Western state, particularly as expounded in the work of Martin Shaw. He contends that 'the singularity of state is already partially realized in the dominance of a single set of new norms and institutions, which more or less governs the various state centres'.[68] This global layer 'simultaneously depends on and transforms the power of the West'.[69] Most interestingly of all, we are informed that the 'first and most important element of the global layer is the institutional framework of legitimate global political power and its enforcement'. The suggestion here is neither of any form of world government, nor of global governance as conventionally understood. Nor is it any replication of more traditional imperial structures. This is a new hybrid category that obfuscates the distinction between single global state and multiple pluralistic states. At its core is an articulation of values, emanating preponderantly from the West and ultimately reliant upon Western power, but attaching itself to and colonizing wider structures of global legitimacy.

It is precisely some such image that is to be found in other recent reformulations of the liberal peace argument. These reject any idea that the democratic peace prevails because of any inherently pacific quality within democratic states. They also chastise those liberal theorists for making a false initial assumption that the peace is produced by the character of these several and separate states at all. There is instead a more profound explanation for the condition of peace:

The use of force between these states is unlikely because they are embedded in geostrategic and political economic relations that buttress international state and capitalist power in

[65] Watson, *The Evolution*, p. 315

[66] In Lundestad, *The Fall*, p. 7.

[67] E. Adler and M. Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[68] Martin Shaw, *Theory of the Global State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 214.

[69] Shaw, *Global State*, pp. 214–5.

hegemonic, i.e non-violent, ways. Beginning with a set of liberal democratic *states* rather than an emergent Western or transnational *state* means that the democratic peace debates remain caught in the territorial trap.[70]

What this highlights is the notion that peace is not a property of the individual democratic state, but of the larger collectivity within which the core states are increasingly submerged. While this should not be construed as an 'empire' in any strict historical sense, it operates nonetheless as an increasingly solidarist society in pursuit of certain common ends. Such peace as prevails within it is a function of these shared norms, not of common democratic practices. Moreover, the core states employ their privileged position both to make appeal to global legitimating institutions, and increasingly to define the content of those principles. Legitimacy is part of the imperial project to the extent that it cannot sensibly be understood in separation from the global distribution of power.

In combination, these various notions help make sense of one of the seeming developments of the past decade or so, and this is with regard to the legitimacy of the use of armed force. The trend towards increasingly 'collective' forms of legitimation of the use of force should not be understood, simplistically, as the effect of globalization in hollowing out the security functions of the state.[71] Instead, it should be approached through the more complex prism of shifting state-societal bargains. Whereas in the past, the state's use of force was legitimized by its being the provider of essential social goods to its citizens (who in turn owed the state a debt of military service), many of these services are now no longer provided on a 'national' basis. Accordingly, the state no longer enjoys exclusive legitimacy in this sphere. Simultaneously, it is the wider 'global state' that sanctions the resort to force, presumably in return for its now being the ultimate provider of many civic and economic goods to 'its' citizens. The unbundling of the state thus finds its natural counterpart in the accretion of legitimacy by the wider social group that does most to sustain and succour an increasingly transnational citizenship. Unsurprisingly, Shaw himself locates the military enterprise at the heart of his global state. He describes it as an 'integrated and authoritative organization of violence', and, above all, as functioning as a 'single centre of military state power'. Even more importantly, however, he is insistent that its 'authoritative deployment of violence' is reinforced by its attachment to global symbols of legitimacy, such as the United Nations.[72]

Conclusion

How deeply do the post-Cold War changes run, and how does legitimacy help us to comprehend them? Is legitimacy, in Watson's terminology, simply the oil that makes possible a change within the existing international society? Or do the shifts legitimize the wider changes betokened by a move outside the existing framework of the modern state system? To return to the opening reference to Buzan and Little,

---

[70] T. Barkawi and M. Laffey, 'The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force and Globalization', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:4 (1999), p. 419.
[71] Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 6.
[72] Shaw, *Global State*, pp. 199–200.

what evidence does this provide that helps us think about whether or not we are 'on the brink of another transformation of the international system'?

The short answer is that the evidence at least points to the potential of, if not the explicit intention behind, the post-Cold War settlement—and its legitimizing principles —to contribute to a movement in this direction. This point can be made by drawing a contrast with Reus-Smit. Although his is by no means a narrowly 'state-centric' book, the very fact that a key element of the constitutional structure of the system should be depicted in terms of the 'moral purpose of the state' is itself revealing. As a legitimizing principle, this might be thought to be reproductive of a state system at some basic level. As against this, the legitimizing principles canvassed above, and which seem to have played a significant role in facilitating the end of the Cold War, all point in directions that are open-ended as regards the system's structure. They concentrate upon certain global economic principles, security orders and liberal values, but are neutral as to the structures within which these principles are to be implemented. To be sure, it is contrary to the above argument that these regulative aspects of the post-Cold War peace be understood as revolutionary principles, since their main intent was to be conservative, buttressing the prevailing order instead. But part of their ambiguity—and, indeed, the reason why they seemed relevant to such an apocalyptic moment—was that they were at the same time in keeping with the *potentiality* for such radical transformation. While they did not, in fact, inaugurate a new world order, they set out an agenda that could serve as the legitimizing rationale for one. Albeit that the purpose was fundamentally conservative, these principles, once unleashed, might in the end exceed the wishes of those who were their original sponsors. It would not be the first time that ideas about future international orders,[73] once set free into the public domain, have gone on to legitimize changes far in excess of the original intentions of their authors.

In the meantime, we are left with a double movement in the evolution of international society. In the first of these, there was an expansion of international society into a global state system. This was in the limited sense, captured by Bull and Watson, that 'it was the European dominated international society of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that first expressed its political unification'.[74] At that time, principles of legitimacy imposed a test for membership of international society by application of European standards of statehood, clothed in wider standards of civilization. This was at one and the same time an expression of European dominance, and an intimation of a future diminution of European control. Ever since, the rules of this global state system have diluted, if not eliminated, the traces of its specifically European origins. As a result, there has been a greater diffusion of power throughout the twentieth century, most obviously in the relative decline of Europe itself. However, in the second stage, the wider West—incorporating most of Europe but led by the United States—has struck back at the very pluralism that the global state system had generated, and of which the World Wars and Cold War were symptomatic. It has sought to reassert a greater central control of the international system. Its chosen instrument has been the forging of a new international society— adhering to a thicker set of legitimating principles embracing democracy, liberal

---

[73] A. Williams, *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[74] 'Introduction', in Bull and Watson, *The Expansion*, p. 2.

values and capitalism—that has been progressively formed from within the original. The end of the Cold War has been a critical formative stage in this latter process whereby a second international society has emerged from within the confines of its Western Cold-War phase, and begun more self-consciously to articulate its legitimating values as being appropriate for the wider international system as a whole. It was thus a culminating point in that 'double movement' that is currently leading to the reinvention of international society.

That process of reinvention did not, however, begin with the end of the Cold War. It had been underway for much of the twentieth century, and 1945 was a more conspicuous landmark in its realization than was 1989. What the end of the Cold War represented was the fuller working out of this logic, and one which had been implicit all along in the problems created for the West by its own actions in expanding international society in the first place. While an international society of sovereign states was the outcome of the first stage of this movement, a more intense international society of semi-sovereign states of a particular *type* has been the goal of the second. The elaboration and implementation of principles of international legitimacy have been central to this latter endeavour.