

Globalisation, Security and International Order after September 11

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For a country whose power and influence is unprecedented in the modern period, and whose unipolar dominance is routinely compared to ancient Rome's,¹ the events of September 11 came as a profound shock. Not only were the intelligence gathering and defensive capacities of the United States revealed to be inadequate and inappropriate for the sorts of threats confronted by the dominant power in the post-Cold War period, but the depth of animosity directed towards American people and values provided an unsettling counterpoint to the destruction itself. The idea, put forward by Francis Fukuyama and others,² that American power might be encouraging an inexorable, global convergence around Western values, political practices and patterns of production and consumption increasingly looks like wishful thinking, liberal complacency, and the product of a failure to recognise the implications that flow from massive international inequalities of wealth and power. American hegemony is – rightly or wrongly – seen as responsible for a global order that entrenches the interests of a privileged Western elite whilst condemning a third of humanity to poverty. In such circumstances, where hundreds of millions of people consider themselves to have little stake in the prevailing order, 'ideologies of violence and mayhem' may enjoy a degree of support and even legitimacy.³

¹ See for example, Coral Bell 'American ascendancy; and the pretence of concert', *The National Interest*, Fall, 1999, pp 55-65.

² Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1993).

³ Benjamin R Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, (Ballentine Books, 2001), xiv.

A sense of inequality, powerlessness and impotence in the face of overwhelming power is hardly a new experience for the less powerful in any international system. What is distinctive about the contemporary period is that a growing sense of unease about the inherent inequality of the current system is occurring at a moment when there is a – frequently unfulfilled – expectation that such inequalities could, indeed *should* be addressed. The fundamental disconnect between the rhetoric of liberalism, democracy, human rights and security, on the one hand, and the reality of marginalisation and disadvantage on the other, fuels a growing chorus of opposition to an array of process subsumed under the rubric of ‘globalisation’. For all the imprecision that frequently accompanies this term, these processes are closely associated with an America-centric world order that is seen as doing little to alleviate economic deprivation or to develop more inclusive patterns of global governance and political representation. On the contrary, America’s political influence, military might and economic power are frequently accused of undermining local culture and autonomy for little tangible benefit.

Although there is some agreement about the sorts of underlying forces that gave rise to the events of September 11, the theoretical and policy implications that flow from them remain contentious - the US’s overwhelmingly military response notwithstanding. In contrast to much of the orthodoxy that characterises contemporary theoretical and policy debates, we argue that there should be a recognition that the pursuit of security is a complex, multi-dimensional enterprise. For scholars working in the field of international political economy it has become increasingly apparent that in an era of ‘globalisation’ some of the comforting conceptual certainties of earlier periods are simply incapable of providing either

plausible explanations of how an increasingly interconnected, multi-actor world works or a basis for public policy. Consequently, we contend that unless security studies and practice begins to incorporate a more complex understanding of the contemporary international system, it will continue to be incapable of addressing many of the potential threats that confront even the most powerful states.

The first part of this paper looks at the contested notion of ‘globalisation’, and the way that international society has been conceptualised in both the conventional security studies/international relations literature, and in the field of international political economy (IPE). One of the central claims we make here is that not only does the IPE literature help us to understand why many parts of the world feel disconnected from, and resentful about, the current international order, but some of the theoretical insights IPE has developed could usefully be adopted by security studies. At a time when state boundaries are becoming increasingly porous, and when the idea of discrete, self-contained nationally-based political and economic entities is becoming less sustainable, a conceptual and policy framework that continues to be informed by rigid national demarcations is unlikely to recognise, let alone respond to, threats that transcend or subvert national boundaries. The second part of the paper looks at the continuing influence of statecentric security discourses and highlights their inability to provide a conceptual framework for security provision in a global era. Consequently, we argue that any serious attempt to address the underlying causes of terrorist threats cannot rely primarily on the efforts of the US – the country most closely associated with their development. We suggest that rather than continuing to build security by constructing and defending boundaries between states or ‘us and them’ in an era when ideational and material boundary maintenance is all but impossible, a globalised

conception of security depends upon the construction of transnational security communities predicated on more widely accepted norms, values, interests and identities.

Globalisation and Security

One of the most striking aspects of September 11 was the coming together of worlds that IR scholars and policy practitioners tend to see as separate. At both a theoretical and a policy level, there has been a tendency to assume that it is possible to distinguish between distinct geographic spheres, be it core and periphery, First and Third Worlds, or some other such schema that attempts to compartmentalise communities and reify the boundaries between them. Such discourses tell us who ‘we’ are (Western, democratic and free) and who ‘they’ are (Eastern, extremist, undemocratic and misguided). They also tell us how we should act.⁴

The great danger in constructing such ‘different worlds’ is that it lends intellectual support to simplistic sloganeering. George W. Bush’s attempt to demonise countries and regions as part of an ‘axis of evil’ is a clear example of the way in which language can be utilised to self-consciously construct or give shape to what might otherwise be frustratingly nebulous and elusive security threats. Indeed, it is also important to point out that the attacks on the symbolic centres of American power

⁴ One of the statistical anomalies of the liberal democratic peace thesis is that whilst it is certainly true that democratic states (our ‘we-group’) tend not to fight each other those same states are much more likely to fight non-democracies (the ‘they-group’) than any other type of state. On the democratic peace thesis see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). For a strident critique of this position, emphasising the militarism of liberal democracies and their proclivity to war see Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (eds.), *Democracy, Liberalism, and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

reflect a similar process of identity construction: American hegemony is associated with a morally corrosive world order that actively works against the interests of the Third World generally and the Arab world in particular.⁵ While both of these constructions may be little more than self-serving caricatures, they highlight the manner in which such discourses are mutually constitutive and construct powerful pictures of international society.

Yet at a time when the ontological status of discrete national economies has become less certain as a consequence of pervasive transnational processes that are eroding national borders and control,⁶ IPE-oriented scholars have recognised that deciding ‘who is us’ has become an increasingly problematic exercise.⁷ In both the practice and conceptualisation of security, by contrast, the increasingly uncertain and contested nature of nationally based identities is not only frequently ignored, but the active construction of distinct and opposed groups is a self-consciously pursued discursive strategy. Defining who ‘we’ are not only helps shape ‘our’ values, interests and behaviour, but it inevitably defines who ‘they’ are as well, and the sorts of policies that might be appropriate as a consequence. Even this kind of simplistic discursive bifurcation has become inherently more problematic and implausible, however.

One of the most noteworthy shortcomings of much strategic theorisation and practice is that it remains overwhelmingly state-centric. According to some observers, the US is currently enjoying an unprecedented ‘unipolar moment’, with the potential ‘to last

⁵ Michael Mann ‘Globalisation and September 11’, *New Left Review*, 12, 2001, pp 51-72

⁶ See Mark Beeson ‘Globalisation and international trade: international economic policies and “the national interest”’, in Boreham, P., Stokes, G. and Hall, R. (eds.), *The Politics of Australian Society: Political Issues for the New Century*, (Frenchs Forest: Longman, 2000), pp 213-31

⁷ See Robert B. Reich. (1990) ‘Who is us?’, *Harvard Business Review*, January/February.

for many decades'.⁸ The preservation of America's dominant position is predicated upon 'reassuring and engaging potential challengers', who are invariably conceived as other *states*.⁹ However, such analyses ignore some of the most striking qualities of the contemporary 'global' era. First, in a world characterised by malleable borders and transnational networks, military might alone has been revealed as a blunt instrument incapable of achieving desired outcomes in conflicts as diverse as Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Somalia. Second, and more fundamentally, opponents of the contemporary world order include transnational networks (such as the 'anti-globalisation' network and Al'Qaida) that make use of the products of globalisation (the internet, porous borders, cheap travel and communication) in order to oppose it. The state-centric ontology that informs traditional ways of thinking about and pursuing security fails to recognise that states are embedded in a complex web of institutions,¹⁰ which while delivering them tangible benefits, places constraints on their autonomy and exposes them to new systemic vulnerabilities. The responsiveness of global stock-markets to security issues in the wake of September 11th highlights just how inter-connected more traditional security issues are with a deeply interconnected, but surprisingly fragile, international economic system.

There are other compelling reasons for questioning whether a state-centric focus remains analytically or pragmatically useful. In a post-Cold War era in which direct conflict between the major powers is unthinkable,¹¹ any recourse to the sorts of military challenges that have shaped Realist analyses of international contestation are

⁸ William C. Wohlforth 'The stability of a unipolar world', *International Security*, 24 (1) 1999, p 37.

⁹ Michael Matsanundo 'Preserving the unipolar moment: Realist theories and US grand strategy after the Cold War', *International Security*, 21 (4), 1997, p 83.

¹⁰ G.J. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*, (Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹¹ See John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

quite simply redundant.¹² What the events of September 11 demonstrate with devastating clarity is that in the contemporary era threats against the US and its allies will not emanate primarily from other states (not even 'rogue' states like North Korea or Iraq) but from an array of forces that operate outside of conventional state boundaries and auspices. The September 11 terror was not delivered by missiles or armies. The perpetrators arrived in the US quite legally on scheduled international flights. The tools they used were American. Although commentators have argued that only an organisation with state sponsorship would be capable of such an attack, the subsequent collapse of the Taliban made it clear that Al'Qaida was not dependent on the Taliban regime but that the Taliban regime (i.e. the Afghan state) was in fact dependent on Al'Qaida (a transnational network). Indeed, it has also become apparent that one of the more effective ways of combating such sub-state networks is by 'following the money trail' and targeting the economic, rather than the military capacity of such organisations.

Theorising global transformation

The desire to impose analytical, and by extension political order on the world by constructing and reifying boundaries is not an exclusive preoccupation of so-called realists in particular, or traditional security studies more generally. In IPE, world systems theorists have long claimed that the appropriate level of analysis should be global, and that the world is characterised by fundamental structural divisions between 'core' and 'periphery', which are a product of the inexorable expansion of

¹² For one of the more influential and inaccurate predictions of state behaviour based on such assumptions, see Kenneth N. Waltz 'The emerging structure of international politics', *International Security*, 18 (2), 1993, pp 44-79.

capitalism.¹³ While this sort of demarcation may seem too crude to capture the complexity of either contemporary production structures, or the fact that some regions of the world have managed to escape from the ineluctable logic of dominant centres and exploited margins (and that centres and margins exist *within* as well as between societies),¹⁴ it does alert us to the fact that the international order is distinguished by enduring inequalities of economic, as well as political and military power. Moreover, it alerts us to the idea that the sources of those inequalities lay in transnational processes and relations rather than in competitions for power and prestige between securely bounded states.

One way of attempting to conceptualise the post-Cold War order in which traditional great power rivalries appeared to have been, if not rendered redundant, then at least transmuted into economic and political contestation,¹⁵ was Singer and Wildavsky's depiction of 'zones of peace and turmoil'. In this formulation zones of peace were composed of the 15% or so of wealthy, democratic nations found predominantly in Western Europe and North America, while the rest of the world's population lived in zones of turmoil, where 'poverty, war, tyranny and anarchy will continue to devastate lives'.¹⁶ Important as this recognition of global inequality and complexity was, it lends itself too readily to the sorts of simplistic depictions of insiders/outside, 'us' and 'them' that have come to characterise post September 11 discourse, and which have long been staples of much strategic theorising. On the one hand the boundaries

¹³ See, Chris Chase-Dunn *Global Formation: Structures of the World Economy*, (Rowan and Littlefield, Lanham, 1998); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

¹⁴ See Saskia Sassen (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, (Princeton University Press).

¹⁵ James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul 'A tale of two worlds: Core and periphery in the post-cold war era', *International Organization*, 46 (2), 1992, pp 467-91

¹⁶ Max Singer and Aaron Wildavsky *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace/ Zones of Turmoil*, (New Jersey: Chatam House Publishers, 1993).

that this analysis is predicated on are empirically problematic. More people are murdered each year in the US by other Americans than die violent deaths in most of what Singer and Wildasky describe as a 'zone of turmoil'. On the other hand, this bifurcation of the globe implies that agents within the 'zone of peace' are not implicated in constructing the turmoil that characterises the other world.¹⁷

Supposedly peaceful liberal democratic states, institutions, and non-state actors are deeply implicated in this turmoil. The diamonds fuelled war in Sierra Leone is driven largely by De Beers' willingness to buy cheap diamonds from warlords. The wars of Yugoslav succession and the collapse of the Somali state were caused in significant ways by the prior collapse of their economies that was in turn caused by IMF and World Bank demands for 'economic restructuring'. Furthermore, the peace loving democracies of the West may inhabit a 'zone of peace' but constantly use their armed forces to fight wars in the 'zone of turmoil'. Since 1945, the US has invaded more states than anyone else, only occasionally with the approval of the UN. Each year, the US and its allies drop thousands of tons of ordnance on Iraq without international authorisation. Dividing the world into zones of peace and turmoil may help us to escape the fallacy of state-centrism by drawing attention to global transactions, but it does so at the cost of simply redrawing and reifying boundaries between 'zones', boundaries which are—like all boundaries—both conceptually and practically insecure.

This is not to suggest that there are no discernible, enduring demarcations between the fortunate few and the marginalised majority. Plainly, there are. What it does suggest,

¹⁷ This point is developed further in Alex J. Bellamy, 'Humanitarian Responsibilities and Interventionist Claims in International Society', *Review of International Studies*, (under review)

however, is that if we hope to understand the complex forces that shape and ultimately threaten the contemporary world order, we need to develop conceptual frameworks that allow us to identify the sources of inequality - and by extension, resentment – that currently threaten to undermine it.

Even the more sophisticated frameworks noted above have difficulty accommodating some of the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary international system subsumed under the rubric of ‘globalisation’¹⁸. Although a systematic treatment of debates about globalisation is not possible here, a few points are worth briefly noting as they highlight the need for new thinking about security in particular and public policy more generally. First, and contra Martin Shaw’s claim that globalisation ‘does not easily define an other’,¹⁹ one of the most striking qualities about globalisation is the persistence of difference and the continuing centrality of notions of ‘we and they’ in the construction of identity, values, interests, norms and hence appropriate action. Despite the undoubted importance of global media and the increasing sense of ‘time-space compression’ that accompanies it,²⁰ we are a long way from seeing the emergence of a global culture or community. Indeed, media themselves are often used to propagate and reify bifurcated identities. It is important to remember that most of the world’s population continues to live a predominantly agrarian existence that is only connected to wider global processes in intangible and attenuated ways. The connections that do exist are predominantly political-economic and invariably

¹⁸ See Held, David McGrew, Anthony, Goldblatt, David and Perraton, Johnathan *Global Transformations*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Martin Shaw *Theory of the Global State: Globality as an Unfinished Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

²⁰ See David Harvey *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

negative. One of the paradoxical features of globalisation, therefore, is a concomitant process of fragmentation and an emphasis on difference and heterogeneity.²¹

The second feature of globalisation to briefly note at this stage is the impact of global processes on state sovereignty – the enduring conceptual bedrock of much strategic thinking. As economic processes become increasingly transnational, and as new centres of political authority and power emerge in the inter-governmental institutions that are part of new patterns of transnational governance,²² the independence of states is inevitably compromised. It is also worth noting that many of the world's states, described by Robert Jackson as 'quasi states', have never had the freedom of action (both internal and external) and institutional capacity that are generally associated with statehood.²³ More fundamentally, 'political space for the development of effective government and the accountability of power is no longer coterminous with a delimited political territory'.²⁴ In other words, one key element of globalisation is the shifting of authority 'upwards' towards supranational authorities, and 'sideways' to an array of non-state, frequently transnational actors that are assuming an increasingly prominent position in regulating cross-border activities.²⁵ Significantly, and quite contrary to what much realist international relations scholarship might lead us to believe, therefore, the international system is not 'anarchical' – far from it. The system in which economic and political actors are currently embedded has arguably

²¹ Ian Clark *Globalisation and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

²² See, James N Rosenau 'Governance in the Twenty-first century', *Global Governance*, 1, 1995, pp 13-43

²³ See Robert Jackson, *Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Mark Beeson (forthcoming) 'Sovereignty under siege: Globalisation and the state in Southeast Asia', *Third World Quarterly*.

²⁴ David Held and Anthony McGrew 'The end of the old order? Globalization and prospects for world order', *Review of International Studies*, 24, p 235.

²⁵ See, Susan Strange *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); A.C. Cutler, V. Haufler, V., and Tony Porter, (eds.) *Private Authority in International Affairs*, (New York: State University of New York, 1999).

never been more regulated – despite the prevalence of free market rhetoric.²⁶

However, the capacity of actors to shape the rules and institutions that are part of new structures of global governance varies dramatically. Unsurprisingly, the countries of rich, developed world, led by the US are the principal architects of this international order.

Thus, although the notion of globalisation may be somewhat imprecise, it does alert us to processes and patterns of behaviour that are at once both distinctively contemporary and contradictory, and which need to be incorporated into security practices if effective analyses and responses to contemporary threats are to be developed. Although the governance of the international system is beyond the control of any country, no matter how powerful, one country is – correctly – seen as having much more influence in the construction and operation of the emergent global system than any other. For globalisation's discontents, who take the emergent global order to be synonymous with American order, attacks on the US – be they rhetorical or actual – are the all too predictable consequences of American hegemony.

The Paradoxes of American Hegemony

To suggest that the US is the most powerful country on earth and the lynchpin of the contemporary international order is hardly controversial.²⁷ And yet, in a 'global' era,

²⁶ It is important to note that the spread and operation of global capitalism depends on an accommodating regulatory environment that provides predictably, legality and the protection of private property rights. The contemporary period is characterised by new forms of regulation, not 'deregulation'. See Philip G. Cerny, 'The limits of deregulation: Transnational interpenetration and policy change', *European Journal of Political Research*, 19, 1991, pp 173-96.

²⁷ This is not as anodyne an observation as it might seem given the predictions of US decline that were so prevalent in the 1980s. See, Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage, 1989).

even such an apparently unremarkable and bland assertion needs to be accompanied by a number of important caveats. First, there is an analytical question to be asked about precisely which 'United States' we might have in mind when we consider the impact of US-based interests on the international system. Second, whether or not it is possible for 'the US' to impose its collective will, it is plainly seen as being primarily responsible for the construction of a particular sort of world order, one that is judged by many outside of the privileged core of wealthy democracies to discriminate against those in the periphery. In other words, there are plainly costs as well as benefits associated with hegemony, especially in an era where the capacity of non-state actors to attack the emblems of American military and economic power is greatly enhanced. Third, in a global and interdependent era, the military, economic and political might of the US is - to some extent, at least - constrained. As the persistence of communism in Cuba shows, even a global hegemon cannot simply coerce its opponents through force of arms.

Such caveats notwithstanding, the world order that America currently dominates attracts a good deal of hostility. To understand why, we need to look more closely at the institutional structures that have emerged under US auspices since the Second World War. Although it is customary to make an analytical distinction between the political, economic and strategic dimensions of this order, we argue that this is a mistake for three reasons.

First, security encompasses a range of issues that transcend simple military capacity. An important debate in security studies at the beginning of the 1990s showed that even if we accept that security means 'freedom from fear or harm' it encompasses a

much broader set of issues than merely military security against invasion by neighbours. As early as 1983, Barry Buzan's seminal *People, States and Fear* pointed to five domains of security: the military, social, economic, political and environmental.²⁸ This opening of security studies has turned our attention towards the fact that military and statist solutions do little to address the threats that make most people insecure.²⁹ Focusing on human security rather than state security highlights issues that actually make people insecure - poverty, malnutrition, and people's own states being the most important - and suggests strategies for overcoming them.³⁰ 'Fetishising' the military and the state³¹ does not offer strategies for overcoming human insecurity. Indeed, the appropriation of resources for military spending redirects resources away from the sorts of human development projects that do offer the possibility of alleviating insecurity. Read this way, the provision of military security is more often part of the problem than the solution.

Second, American power, especially but not exclusively during the Cold War period, has been associated with the consolidation of a particular neoliberal economic order, an order critics claim systematically disadvantages the developing world.

Significantly, the economic dimension of American hegemony is interwoven and interdependent on its military, political and ideational elements. The so-called 'American way of war', for example, combines high technology and the use of

²⁸ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold-War Era*, 2nd edition (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

²⁹ For an overview of the many different strands of security studies in the 1990s see Steve Smith, 'The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years', in Stuart Croft and Terry Terriff (eds.), *Critical Reflections on Security and Change* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 72-101.

³⁰ This argument is put forward by Alex J. Bellamy and Matt McDonald, 'The Utility of Human Security: Which Humans? What Security? A Reply to Thomas and Tow', *Security Dialogue*, 2002.

³¹ This term is Richard Wyn Jones'. See Richard Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

economic power with liberal ideas about precision and efficiency.³² More importantly, global compliance with this neo-liberal order is not just about coercion and force. Rather, as Karl Deutsch pointed out in the 1970s, any system of rules depends upon ‘habitual voluntary compliance’.³³ Although the international order is underpinned by the threat of coercive measures (be they military, economic or political), an essentially rule-based system depends upon high levels of voluntary compliance. Consequently, one of the most important and defining qualities of US hegemony and the neo-liberal order it supports are the complex web of military, economic and political institutions and organisations that promulgate and reinforce the ideas, practices and norms of the contemporary era.³⁴

Third, the interweaving of more narrowly conceived strategic questions with wider systemic issues revolving around issues of development and equality highlights the fact that security concerns can no longer be confined within national borders. In a ‘global’ era in which an array of processes routinely transcend national borders in ways that have undermined the very utility of ‘the national economy’ as a discrete conceptual entity, and at a time when the actions of other states *and* non-state actors impinge more directly on ‘national’ affairs, security policy needs to reflect a much wider range of factors if it is to underpin order and predictability. Security issues are no longer the preserve states, militaries and their accompanying ‘zero sum’ logic, as recent events vividly remind us. And yet such traditional approaches to security have

³² See Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of the Military* (London: Macmillan, 1975).

³³ Karl Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), pp. 19-22.

³⁴ Stephen Gill, (1995) ‘Globalisation, market civilisation, and disciplinary neoliberalism’, *Millennium*, 24 (3): 399-423.

been central components of the international system American hegemony helped to create.

The post-war international order

The post-World War II international order that the US played such a fundamental part in helping to construct created the conditions within which a more deeply integrated international system could develop. Although a detailed consideration of this period and the consolidation of American power associated with it is not possible here,³⁵ it is worth emphasising some important characteristics because they continue to shape contemporary events and help us understand both US hegemony and the resentment it engenders.

The post war global economy was shaped by an international consensus on the need for international economic management. However, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, coupled with the increased influence of American dominated inter-governmental institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation, has led to a growing chorus of criticism from within both the 'developed' and 'developing' economies. Critics argue that powerful agencies like the IMF are dominated by the US, and actively promote a neo-liberal agenda that favours American economic interests.³⁶ Some writers, for instance, argue that Western aid to Third World countries is often designed in such a way that the only interests they serve are those of the donors and the local elites.³⁷

³⁵ See, Robert Latham, *The Liberal moment: Modernity, Security, and the Making of Postwar International Order*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

³⁶ Ngare Woods 'Order, globalization, and inequality in world politics', in Andrew Hurrell and Ngare Woods (eds.), *Inequality, Globalisation and World Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp 8-35.

³⁷ Rita Abrahamsen, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2000).

Similarly, it is claimed, the WTO fails to take the specific concerns of the developing world seriously, consistently allowing the US and the European Union to dominate a reform agenda that allows continuing protectionism in the wealthy world, while simultaneously forcing open markets and imposing new regulatory regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America.³⁸ Although there is no simple causal relationship between American trade policy – despite its increasingly unilateralist style – and the attacks on the World Trade Centre in particular or anti-Americanism more generally.

Nevertheless, there *are* identifiable and enduring structures in the global political economy that systematically disadvantage countries that are either attempting to break into more lucrative economic niches or, in more desperate situations, simply escape from grinding poverty.³⁹ In either case, a connection is frequently made between continuing deprivation and the existence of a global economic order dominated by the US.⁴⁰

It is not being claimed here that the US is either intentionally seeking to cause or prolong the immiseration of the developing world. Although die-hard realists might argue that in a zero-sum game of international competition it may be wise to constrain the economic development of potential rivals, the dynamics of an increasingly transnational economy are not amenable to the systematic control of any single state, no matter how powerful. America's 'national interest' is socially constructed, highly contested, historically contingent and reflects an array of domestic influences that

³⁸ Martin Khor, 'The World Trade Organization and the South: Implications of the emerging global economic governance for development', in Jomo, K.S. and Nagaraj, S. (eds.), *Globalization versus Development*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp 59-84.

³⁹ See Mark Beeson and Stephen Bell 'The strong and the weak in world capitalisms: Structures, institutions and agency in the international political economy', in Phillips, N. (ed.), *Globalising IPE*, (London: Palgrave), forthcoming.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Natasha Bitu 'Poorest nations fight US on trade', *The Australian*, June 12th, 2002, p 9.

make the construction of a consistent, coherent and inclusive foreign policy inherently problematic.⁴¹ A variety of non-state actors like financial markets, ratings agencies, private sector regulatory authorities, to say nothing of ‘American’ multinational corporations that may privilege profit over patriotism, mean that even US policymakers may find their autonomy constrained in ways that complicate the construction of policy.⁴²

Such caveats are not, however, meant to imply that particular interests primarily based in the US are not the principal beneficiaries of new global regulatory regimes that privilege the interest of an increasingly global transnational elite. Clearly, they do, and increasingly so. Yet, the emergence of a transnational governing elite is a complex and pervasive process, and one that is not confined to, or exclusively controlled by, the US.⁴³ The key point to emphasise, then, is that the US has found itself blamed for a variety of ills that have complex transnational antecedents. Ironically enough, therefore, in a world in which states are still taken to be the ontological bedrock of an increasingly integrated system of international relations, the US finds itself targeted as the embodiment of an order that is – rightly – seen as doing little to alleviate international inequality.

A second key feature of the post war international order was the Cold War and the rise to dominance of realist and neorealist conceptions of international relations. The early, ‘classical’, realism of Hans Morgenthau, Thomas Schelling and others was

⁴¹ Trubowitz, P (1998) *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

⁴² For an overview of the new transnational regulatory order, see John Braithwaite and Peter Drahos *Global Business Regulation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴³ William Robinson, and J. Harris ‘Towards a global ruling class? Globalization and the transnational capitalist class’, *Science & Society*, 64 (1), 2000, pp 11-54.

explicitly concerned with understanding how best to secure the US and its democratic way of life from the Soviet threat.⁴⁴ For Morgenthau, the legitimacy and efficacy of a realist world view was predicated on two assumptions. First, it was assumed that the American way of life was better than other ways of life, particularly communist and fascist ways. Second, Morgenthau and other realists assumed that the world beyond state borders was an ungovernable anarchy in which power and military force were the only currencies. A state that was not able to protect itself militarily by being self-sustaining would soon come under attack from irredentist states and would cease to exist. Given that the American state was the guarantor of the American way of life, the challenge for US security studies in the Cold War was to devise ways of protecting the state from the Soviets. In the 1970s and afterwards, realism was supplanted by neo-realism as the dominant discourse in American security circles.⁴⁵

Neo-realism replaced the idea that the pursuit of power was necessary to preserve a particular way of life, with the notion that it was an objective and inevitable product of an anarchical international system. States simply had to act in particular ways (maximising power, seeking balances, engaging in deterrence), in accordance with the laws of international anarchy, because failure to do so would bring about their destruction. This logic emanated not from the contingencies of a particular historical epoch or from the exigencies of protecting a particular way of life but from a scientific and objective assessment of the fundamental laws of international relations.

⁴⁴ See Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 1985) and Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁴⁵ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Relations* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

Although neo-realist logic has been exposed as being deeply flawed⁴⁶ it shaped American security thinking in the Cold War. US security policy-making underwent a brief neo-liberal interlude during the Clinton era, evidenced by subtle shifts toward humanitarianism and multilateralism in security affairs, but neo-realism is evidently one of the key influences on George W. Bush's security policy making entourage. The neo-realist view of the world shapes the way that the US sees itself, sees other people, and sees the scope of appropriate action in world politics. Although it is a product of the Cold War, its logic can still be seen shaping US policy today.

If the world is an ungovernable anarchy inhabited by estranged foreigners, as neorealist thinking suggests, the best way to provide security is the acquisition and use of military force. During the Cold War this fuelled the terrifying ideas of nuclear deterrence and 'mutually assured destruction' which were predicated on the belief that without nuclear weapons the Soviet Union would have inevitably invaded western Europe. The same logic has continued after the Cold War. Whilst many Europeans have begun to ask what the armed forces are for, concluding that today they should be as much about responding to global humanitarian emergencies as the defence of the state,⁴⁷ the US responded to the very new type of threat posed by September 11 by increasing its expenditure on defence. In 2001, US defence spending stood at \$329 billion and by 2003 it will be \$396 billion.⁴⁸ The lion's share of this will be spent on conventional military items, including an increase for the National Missile Defence budget.

⁴⁶ Not least, see Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organization*, 38 (2), 1984, pp. 225-286 and Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organisation*, 46 (2), pp. 391-426.

⁴⁷ See Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster (eds.), *Democratic Control of the Military in Postcommunist Europe: Guarding the Guards* (London: Palgrave, 2002).

⁴⁸ Michael O'Hanlon, 'Rumsfeld's Defence Vision', *Survival*, 44 (2), 2002, p. 108.

Neo-realist logic is also sceptical about the benefits of international cooperation and multilateralism, a perspective that has directly influenced the approach of the Bush administration on a number of issues. Because states only ever pursue a narrowly conceived notion of self-interest, cooperation is only possible in the short term and in relation to particular issues, neorealism implies. According to this view, cooperation always risks attracting free riders and offers the opportunity for other states to secure relative gains, therefore states should be very wary of multilateralism. Thus, the US under Bush has backed away from the Kyoto environmental protocol, the International Criminal Court, and the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. Somewhat ironically, however, the perceived necessity of constructing a coalition to fight the 'war on terror' has demonstrated the limits to and potential costs of unilateralism for even the most powerful states

Two key aspects of the post war international order generally, and the US role in it in particular, are worth highlighting as they help us unravel the relationship between security and globalisation after September 11. On the one hand, IPE teaches us that US hegemony is bound up with, dependent on, and to some extent constrained by, a complex array of institutions, ideas, relationships and practices that define the contemporary international order.⁴⁹ Thus, rather than enjoying direct and unproblematic hegemony over its dominions, as ancient Rome did, its authority and influence are embedded in interdependent increasingly transnational networks of power and interest. Even the exercise of its overwhelming military power is dependant on a series of other relationships. The US cannot claim legitimacy for its military actions on the basis of self-referential imperial glory, as the Romans or more

⁴⁹ For a provocative and original analysis of American power, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) *Empire*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).

recently the British did. Instead, it has to justify its use of force by recourse to justificatory discourses constructed over time by international society. Although the US played a key role in constructing those discourses, which include discourses of humanitarianism, self-defence and just war,⁵⁰ it finds itself constrained by them.

A second feature of the post war international order is the continuing influence of realism and neo-realism on American security politics. Realism and neorealism have shaped the way that policy makers see the world, teaching them to view it in terms of states that can be separated into ‘we and they’ groups inhabiting an anarchical environment. Such security discourses are predicated on the construction of threats which emanate from outside⁵¹ and the vilification of the other.⁵² According to this realist logic, the most appropriate way to respond to the threats inherent in the international system is to secure the sovereign boundaries that form the objective bedrock of international life. Such boundaries are best secured through military power. Yet such thinking looks increasingly *unrealistic* given the nature of threats to the contemporary international orders, of which the events of September 11th are the quintessential expression.

Rethinking Security in a Global Era

There are, then, a number of paradoxes and contradictions that characterise the contemporary ‘global’ system that merit emphasis because they have implications for

⁵⁰ See Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian War in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Ward Thomas, *The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁵¹ On the social construction of danger and threat as a prerequisite for building security policy see David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, 2nd edition (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)

⁵² Matt McDonald, ‘Sovereignty, Identity, and Security’, paper presented at the 2002 APSA conference.

the way that security is both conceptualised and operationalised. The first point to emphasise is that despite the US's undoubted unique capacity to shape the security and trade regimes that are central parts of contemporary governance mechanisms,⁵³ there are limits to, and costs associated with American hegemony. On the one hand, resistance to US power and the neoliberal order it is implicated in reproducing is not confined to dramatic incidents like September 11. On the contrary, the growth of what has been described as 'transnational civil society' is not simply a function of a more pervasive process of boundary erosion and transnational integration, but has in part been fuelled by a desire to promote alternative agendas and circumvent what are taken to be unrepresentative and ineffective political structures.⁵⁴ While there may be doubts about the efficacy of such alternative political movements,⁵⁵ and little reason to suppose that international non-governmental organisations will necessarily be 'progressive',⁵⁶ it is important to recognise that processes of globalisation are simultaneously undermining the legitimacy of existent order and placing further constraints on the ability of even the most powerful states to act unilaterally.

Likewise, the possible costs of the ill-conceived application of American power were apparent even before September 11. In this regard, Chalmers Johnson's book *Blowback*, although either generally derided or ignored when released, looks remarkably prescient in retrospect. 'Blowback' was a term coined by the Central Intelligence Agency to describe 'the unintended consequences of policies that were

⁵³ See, Mark Beeson 'The construction of international regimes in post-crisis Asia: Coercion, consensus and collective goods', in Sargeson, S. (ed.), *Shaping Common Futures: Case Studies of Collective Goods, Collective Actions in East and Southeast Asia*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp 25-40.

⁵⁴ See, M.E. Keck and Katherine Sikkink *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁵⁵ A. Clark, et al 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World Conferences on the environment, human rights, and women', *World Politics*, 1998, 51: 1-35.

⁵⁶ Tessa Morris-Suzuki 'For and against NGOs', *New Left Review*, 2000, 2:, pp 63-84.

kept secret from the American people'.⁵⁷ As Johnson points out, the chief suspect in the World Trade Centre attack – Osama bin Laden – was largely a creation of the US's own secretive geo-political manoeuvrings designed to drive the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. Even if it is argued that the US's grand strategy during the Cold War was ultimately vindicated by the collapse of its principal adversary, there are clearly significant long-term costs and unforeseen consequences that flow from such actions. Recent events suggest a return to Cold War style practises with the division of the world into implacably opposed camps – this time based on 'good' and 'evil' rather than political ideology – with a concomitant support for regimes of any sort as long as they either acquiesce to, or actively support American policy.⁵⁸ At a time when the US is developing a new, unilateral security doctrine based on pre-emptive strikes against perceived enemies this is an especially troubling prospect.⁵⁹

To avoid recreating the Manichean divisions of the Cold War and entrenching a global order associated with enduring inequalities, it is necessary to fundamentally re-think the way that security is conceived and achieved in a global era. Rethinking the theory and practice of security after September 11 needs to be based on an acknowledgement that 'security' is a normative goal rather than an instrumental object. 'Securitization' politics⁶⁰ (the politics of making a political issue a 'security' issue warranting special measures) depends upon identity (who or what are 'we' trying to secure?), the construction of threat (what is it we are trying to secure

⁵⁷ Chalmers Johnson *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, (London: Little, Brown).

⁵⁸ George W Bush's insistence that countries are either 'for' or 'against' America and the 'war on terror' has seen a surprising, some might say cynical, willingness to establish closer relations with the likes of Russia, China, Malaysia and the strategically significant countries of central Asia. See Murray Hiebert and Susan Lawrence 'Hands across the ocean', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 14, 2002, pp 20-21.

⁵⁹ *The Economist* 'America the still-vulnerable', June 15th, 2002, pp 23-25.

⁶⁰ The idea of 'securitization' is expanded in Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1997).

ourselves against?) and delineation of appropriate measures to deal with the threat. All too often after September 11, the US administration has reached for neo-realist answers to these questions, seemingly oblivious to the fact that it is a combination of its hegemonic position within the neo-liberal world order and the politics of estrangement produced by neo-realist security practices that made the US the symbolic and actual focus for opposition to various aspects of globalisation. In order to pursue a security politics more appropriate for a global era it is important to move away from the assumption of objectivism that lies at the heart of neo-realism. Instrumental security policies which assume a world of unchanging objective variables cannot recognise, let alone address the sorts of threats that are emerging from non-state actors and opponents of American power.

The neo-realist security politics adopted by the Bush regime excludes *politics* by making the existence of threat and the appropriate solutions appear somehow natural. The world, as they see it, is full of 'intractable security dilemmas'.⁶¹ But just as the 'balance of power' only exists if states believe it exists and act as if it does, so the existence of threat and the level of appropriate response is socially constructed and malleable.⁶² Consequently, neo-realist security practices exacerbate (and in some cases create) the very problems they claim to be addressing: the politics of estrangement, boundary construction, and militarism contributes to the creation of self-fulfilling prophecies. In its 'security dilemma' form⁶³ the US builds up its

⁶¹ William Tow, 'Alliances and Coalitions' in Marianne Hanson and William Tow, *International Relations in the New Century: An Australian Perspective* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 33.

⁶² Neo-realist security politics makes assumptions about a world that does not exist and never has, generating predictions about a post Cold War world of collapsing institutions and global anarchy that have proved wrong. See Waltz and Wohlforth.

⁶³ Nicholas J. Wheeler and Ken Booth, 'The Security Dilemma', in John Baylis and N. J. Rengger (eds.), *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 29-60.

military forces because it believes itself to be militarily threatened by other states, particularly so-called ‘rogues’. But American militarism makes likely targets such as Iraq and North Korea feel insecure prompting them to develop their own defensive military capacities in whatever way they can. Paradoxically enough, therefore, US policy is implicated in exacerbating conventional state-based security threats, whilst simultaneously paying insufficient attention to increasingly important ones that emanate from outside the conventional state-based order.

Thus, neo-realist security practices have a limited capacity to comprehend or provide strategies for dealing with the types of problems encountered in a world of complex networks and ‘transversal’ relationships.⁶⁴ Neo-realist security practices are predicated upon a conceptualisation of international order that remains centred on sovereign boundaries and clear distinctions between ‘self’ and ‘other’. What September 11 demonstrated is that not only are those boundaries theoretically and practically insecure, but so is the security politics that is based on them.

Concluding remarks

A number of key insights flow from the foregoing analysis that can help us begin rethinking the way security is pursued in a global era. Most fundamentally, we need to recognise that the contemporary international order is irredeemably post-Westphalian, and that the international is a socially constructed space in which the pursuit of security is as much normative as it is instrumental. What the events of September 11th demonstrate, however, are the limits to both American hegemony and

⁶⁴ A transversal phenomenon is ‘a political practice that not only transgresses national boundaries but also questions the spatial logic through which those boundaries have come to constitute and frame the conduct of international relations’. See, Roland Bleiker, *Popular Dissent, Human Agency and Global Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.

security. The values and norms that constitute international society and drive processes associated with globalisation clearly remain contested and resited. In such circumstances, three issues are central to any re-thinking of security.

First, it needs to be recognised that globalisation is not just about increased flows between territorially distinct units, but also represents a more fundamental challenge to the spatial logic of international relations. The ‘weapons systems’ of September 11 were launched from the eastern seaboard of the US, not from across its borders. The perpetrators and their supporters were citizens of numerous countries. Most of the perpetrators had been educated in the US and some were even US citizens. The target was not the military capacity of the US but the symbols of its global hegemony. The fact that so many victims were non-American also reminds us that US power is embedded in transnational networks that transcend national boundaries. A new security politics needs to recognise the increasingly meaningless separation of the ‘domestic’ and the ‘international’ that informs so much conventional security thinking.⁶⁵

Secondly, security needs to be pursued in ways that do not reify identity in terms of ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘us’ and ‘them’. Much of what makes people insecure, such as malnutrition and environmental degradation, cannot be dealt with by a single political community and cannot be attributed to the deliberate actions of a single ‘other’.

Rather than ‘us and them’, ‘good and evil’, we need to appreciate that the world is tied together by complex networks and transactions that transcend or subvert borders,

⁶⁵ For a more extensive discussion of these issues in an Australian context, see Mark Beeson (2002) ‘Issues in Australian foreign policy: July to December 2001’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 48 (2), pp 210-224.

and which render simple binary oppositions redundant. Thus, the insecurity we feel as a result of September 11 is intimately linked to the sense of insecurity we create in other people. Continuing to ignore the mutually constitutive aspects of security only exacerbates this problem by increasing the insecurity of others and hence ourselves. Because security is subjective, comprehensive security can only be built on the basis of inter-subjective agreement about what makes us insecure and how we can deal with it. The wider the agreement—in terms of the breadth and depth of a global dialogic security community—the ‘better’ the knowledge claims it would produce. Ideally, such knowledge would be based on free and open dialogue between agents and the construction of transnational, indeed *transversal*, moral communities.⁶⁶ Only in this way can we escape the perpetual construction of bifurcated identities that foster insecurity.

Finally, the provision of sustainable security would seem to require approaches that go beyond traditional militarism and the zero-sum logic of neo-realism. When the most powerful military apparatus ever assembled is incapable of protecting its citizens from attack, it is hardly radical to question its efficacy or the appropriateness of the strategic doctrine that underpins it. Similarly, it is hardly controversial to suggest the new threats that confront the US are generated in large part by enduring disparities of economic opportunity that American power is seen as having helped create.

Strategies that attempt to respond to such threats without addressing their complex, multi-dimensional sources will consequently prove ineffective. At the economic level, therefore, the challenge will be to *increase* the degree of interdependence across the world, so that it resembles the wealthy western world’s in both intensity and outcome.

⁶⁶ These themes are developed further in Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Pragmatic Solidarism and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Intervention’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 31 (3), 2002, forthcoming.

Paradoxically, economic globalisation may not have gone far enough. But unless the integration of hitherto marginalised parts of the international system occurs happens on a more equitable basis, and unless the same logic of interdependence can be extended to the construction of new regimes of security, which recognise that security is mutually constitutive and interdependent, then security is unlikely to prove sustainable.