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TERRORISM AND THE NEW SECURITY DILEMMA

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Since 11 September 2001, the primary focus of American foreign policy has ostensibly been the "war on terror," although the George W. Bush administration has also given priority to other objectives, such as Iraq and national missile defense. This emphasis on the threat of terrorism is extremely valuable for analytical purposes, because it draws attention to key aspects of security today—in particular the central paradox of how to deal with the increasingly diffuse character of threats with the means available to state actors, in what is still to a large extent an interstate system. There are at least two aspects to this problematic. The first is assessing the appropriate or most effective role of states and great powers in reacting to and dealing with terrorism and other direct forms of violence. The second is the relationship of contemporary forms of violence to wider social, economic, and political issues characteristic of the twenty-first century—issues that themselves are becoming increasingly transnationalized and globalized.

GLOBALIZATION AND INSECURITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

With regard to responding to threats of terrorist violence, on the one hand, terrorism is portrayed as a phenomenon unlike previous generalized threats. Although specific instances of terrorism in history are legion, they have been sporadic and geographically circumscribed. However, terrorism, like other security issues, has in the twenty-first century become a more and more *transnational* form of violence or warfare. Today it involves networks and patterns of violence that do not resemble the kind of "international" warfare among states that has dominated the international system since the seventeenth century. In

particular, the quasi-random targeting of civilians rather than military forces is widely seen as a fundamental, bottom-line element of the very definition of terrorism.[1] The development of terrorism as a cross-border, nonstate, network-based phenomenon goes contrary to the general perception in "realist" international relations analysis that the most significant threats to international security come from states rather than from nonstate actors. On the other hand, American policy makers today still see terrorism as depending crucially on states for its spread and impact—a perspective that fits with realist preconceptions and is seen to call for traditional national, great power–based military responses. As a recent authoritative analysis of contemporary American foreign policy has argued, the "link between terrorist organizations and state sponsors became the 'principal strategic thought underlying our strategy in the war on terrorism,' according to Douglas Feith, the third-ranking official in the Pentagon." Thus "while terrorists might be described as 'stateless,' they ultimately depended on regimes like the Taliban [in Afghanistan] to operate."[2]

At the same time, the underlying causes and principal motives of terrorist violence are framed by the identification by American policy makers of terrorists themselves as "evil," motivated only or primarily by a hatred of freedom and of America's role in spreading freedom.[3] Its state sponsors are seen to form an "axis of evil" and to have become the chief threats to world order. Therefore the underlying structure of the threat that terrorism embodies for international security is believed by key policy makers in the Bush administration to be fundamentally mediated through and determined by the structure and dynamics of the states system. Indeed, the "hegemonists" (as they have been called) in the Bush administration have integrated terrorism into a state-centric view of international relations and have prescribed unilateral, state-based American leadership as the appropriate response.[4]

In contrast, this article argues that terrorism is merely one dimension of a wider phenomenon that is transforming the international system and domestic politics too around the world—*neomedievalism,* a phenomenon that is leading to the emergence of a new security dilemma in world politics. Both of these concepts will be specified in more detail later in this article. However, broadly speaking, neomedievalism means that we are increasingly in the presence of a plurality of overlapping, competing, and intersecting power structures—institutions, political processes, economic developments, and social transformations—above, below, and cutting across states and the states system. States today represent only one level of this power structure, becoming more diffuse, internally split, and enmeshed in wider complex webs of power. This structure is fluid and fungible, feeding back and undergoing continual adjustments and ad hoc responses to a rapidly changing environment. In this context, the definition of

what is a "security" issue is also becoming more and more fluid and fungible—including the dislocations caused by economic development; the destabilizing effect of transitions to democracy; the undermining of traditional cultures, beliefs, and loyalties; threats to the environmental and public health; and the like.[5] The nineteenth and twentieth centuries experienced similar challenges, and these led to two world wars and the Cold War; however, the economic and political environment of that time actually strengthened the central role of nation-states and of the states system as the main providers of security. Today, they are making this role more and more problematic.

This transformation in turn gives rise to what I have called the "New Security Dilemma."[6] The idea behind the New Security Dilemma is that states are increasingly cut across and hedged around by a range of complex new structural developments and sociopolitical forces that, taken together, are leading to the crystallization of a globalizing world order—more correctly, a "durable disorder"—that in crucial ways looks more like the order of late medieval society than like the world of "modern" nation-states.[7] As analysts have pointed out, many recent international relations theorists have argued that globalization, "the growing economic, political, and social interconnectedness of nations that had resulted from increased trade and financial ties and the rapid advance in communications technology . . . was undercutting the authority of individual states, with power flowing to nonstate actors such as private corporations and transnational activist groups." However, "Bush and his advisors would have none of it."[8]

A new sense of generalized insecurity has emerged, reflecting the fact that the provision of security itself as a public good can no longer be guaranteed by the states system.

This article argues the converse, that the core problems of security in the twenty-first-century world profoundly reflect these globalizing and transnationalizing trends—and their underlying social, political, and economic causes—and that they can be addressed only by reassessing fundamental notions of security. In particular, there has been a clear shift in the dominant form of violence and conflict from one characterized by interstate wars to one in which civil wars, cross-border wars, and "low intensity" or guerrilla-type wars—including terrorism—increasingly predominate and proliferate.[9] Of course, civil and cross-border wars are nothing new, and terrorism has been with us throughout human history.[10] However, their interconnectedness and the way they are inextricably intertwined with other aspects of globalization—linkages that cut across states and crystallize below the level of states—is the key to understanding the nature of contemporary security and insecurity.[11] Terrorism reflects deeper and wider structural changes. In this sense, a war on terror

cannot be a simple war of armed forces but must be a sociopolitical process. Rather than a "war on terror," what is needed is to transform security itself, to make it less like war and more like what the social theorist Michel Foucault, writing in the tradition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social philosophy, called "police"—not merely policing in the sense of countering violence and imposing order but pursuing a civilianization of politics and society, stressing social development, welfare, and good governance.[12]

This interconnectedness, of course, reflects not only transnational economic interdependence, usually seen to be the root of globalization, but also a wide range of other related social and political developments. New information and communication technologies have intensified pressures resulting from the interaction of previously nationally compartmentalized social and cultural categories, with an emphasis on the sheer speed of that interaction.[13] The development of Marshall McLuhan's "global village" has been paralleled—or, for some, superseded—by a postmodernist fragmentation of cultures and societies.[14] In political terms, the reidentification of societies as "multicultural," emphasizing shifting identities and loyalties, is unraveling the consolidation of national culture societies that was at the heart of the modern nation-state project from Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* to postcolonial "nation-building."[15] Many major social causes and "cause" pressure groups, such as nongovernmental organizations, as well as sectoral interest groups, are becoming less concerned with negotiating direct benefits from the state and more focused on such crosscutting transnational issues as the environment, women's issues, land mines, political prisoners, sustainable development, and the like.[16] Furthermore, the end of the Cold War unleashed a huge number of social and political grievances that had previously been kept in ideological and political check through direct or indirect superpower control.

National-territorial institutions—states—are thus being overlaid, crosscut, and challenged by a range of less institutionally bound issues, demands, and groups, bridging the micro level, the meso (intermediate) level, and the transnational in ways the state cannot. In this context, those who believe that any one nation-state—even one like the United States that possesses several times the military capabilities of other major powers, let alone minor ones—is in a position unilaterally to provide security as a public good to the global system as a whole are living in cloud-cuckoo-land. Hegemony is not a feasible goal reflecting the realities of the twenty-first century but an attempt to reconstruct the history of the 1950s without the Soviet Union. In a neomedieval world, more complex political, economic, and social approaches are required to fill the basic security gap that results from the multilayered, crosscutting, and asymmetric global and transnational structures of the third millennium.

THE NEW SECURITY DILEMMA

The central dynamic mechanism of stabilization and ordering in the traditional realist states system has been called the "security dilemma."[17] This was the notion that perceived external threats generate feelings of insecurity in states that believe themselves to be the targets of such threats, and that these states take measures to counteract those threats (alliances, arms buildups, etc.). These countermeasures are in turn perceived as threatening by other states, leading to feedback in the form of counter-countermeasures, eventually undermining existing balances of power and creating a vicious circle of ever-increasing insecurity among states. The notion of the "arms race" is the best-known paradigm case of how the traditional security dilemma works. As occurred at the outbreak of World War I, this process can get out of hand.

But the traditional security dilemma is also what links order and change in the realist approach. Only by creating and recreating balances of power—whether through war, development and manipulation of power resources, or politically effective (strong-willed) foreign policy—can this tendency to system breakdown be counteracted and stabilized, at least for long periods, periods usually punctuated by system-rebalancing wars. The breakdown of one balance of power must be replaced by another if conflict is to be minimized. Such an analysis has been at the heart of both classical realism and neorealism.[18] But that dynamic does not work in the same way, if at all, in a more transnationally interconnected world. Changes in the character of the security dilemma since the end of the Cold War have not resulted simply from the breakdown of one particular balance of power—that is, of the bipolar balance between United States and the Soviet Union. Rather, recent changes profoundly reflect the increasing ineffectiveness of interstate balances of power as such to regulate the international system.

The failure of large powers in the 1970s and 1980s to determine outcomes in the Third World through traditional security means—the most salient examples being Vietnam for the United States and the Sino-Soviet split (and later Angola and Afghanistan) for the Soviet Union—was the first major shock to the balance-of-power system itself. The later demise of the Soviet Union did not result just from change in its relative overall power position vis-à-vis the United States. More accurately, the USSR collapsed because of the evolving configuration and interaction of both domestic and transnational pressures stemming from its technological backwardness, international economic interdependence, awareness of social and cultural alternatives by individuals and groups made possible by international contacts and communications, the growth of consumerism and other pressures for "modernization," etc.—with all of which the Soviet Union was less and less able to cope in a more interconnected world. Likewise, growing

complex interdependence in the West undermined the hierarchical alliance structures set up in the postwar period by the United States—for example, with the development of Gaullism in France.[19] Paradoxically, both superpowers became weaker in systemic terms, because traditional forms of power could not cope with the globalizing challenges of the late-twentieth-century international order.

Those challenges were and are particularly stark in the security arena. The lack of utility not only of nuclear weapons, increasingly seen as unthinkable and unusable, but also of limited, low-intensity (guerrilla) warfare—more and more costly and counterproductive for the big powers, as demonstrated in Vietnam and Afghanistan—means now that neither national nor collective security can any longer be reliably based on balances of power among nation-states, and great powers in particular, per se. A new sense of generalized insecurity has emerged, represented not only "from above," by the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction but also "from below," by the rise of civil wars, tribal and religious conflicts, terrorism, civil violence in developed countries, the international drugs trade, etc. This sense of insecurity reflects the fact that the provision of security itself as a public good—the very raison d'être of the states system—can no longer be guaranteed by that system.

In the New Security Dilemma, a new range of incentives is emerging for players—especially nonstate actors but some state actors too—to opt out of the states system itself, unless restrained from doing so by the as yet embryonic constraints of complex, especially economic, interdependence. The costs to remaining states are rising dramatically, as globalization increasingly enmeshes actors—and states—in complex, crosscutting webs of wealth, power, and social relationships. Indeed, to hijack the language of neorealist international relations theory, states are not concerned primarily with "relative gains," their place as states in the international pecking order vis-à-vis other states, but increasingly (thanks to the revolution of rising expectations linked with globalization) with "absolute gains"—better standards of living, individual security, human dignity, and the ability to participate freely in social life. These expectations are undermined by war and by the imperatives of national military organization.

International relations are therefore no longer dominated by holistic, indivisible national interests and collective fears for national survival but rather by divisible benefits pursued by pluralistic, often cross-national networks of individuals and groups, whether peaceful, as in the context of "global civil society," or violent, as in the case of terrorism. In an inversion of the famous quotation from President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address—"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country"—people are less and less satisfied with what their

countries can do for them. They are finding more and more alternative forms of identity and action—from the Internet to links with diasporas and "global tribes," from anti-globalization protests to religious fundamentalism, and from "epistemic communities" to terrorist networks.[20]

This situation has led not only to the rise of new actors and forces below and cutting across the level of the state but also to attempts to reinforce and rebuild state power and the interstate system, in futile attempts to turn back the clock. One manifestation of the latter is the U.S. attempt to counteract terrorism through a more focused and vigorous application of military force, as exemplified by the Bush administration and the long-contemplated war in Iraq.[21] A contrasting manifestation, however, is the attempt by some European states, especially France and Germany, to emphasize multilateral rather than unilateral power balancing, especially through the United Nations. Both of these responses essentially involve a process of "catch-up," lagging the development of micro- and meso-level processes and therefore highly vulnerable to "defection," as the game theorists say—to players quitting the game and heading off on their own. The postwar situation in Iraq abounds with examples of these processes in action, as fragmented groups with contradictory aims create insecurity for both the occupying powers and ordinary Iraqis, and as international alliances shift around reconstruction contracts, potential peacekeeping participation, the role of the American-supported interim government, etc. Cases in point include the 2004 elections in Spain and the emergence of the war in Iraq as the most contentious issue in the 2004 American presidential election campaign.

Rather than a "war on terror," what is needed is to transform security itself—pursuing a civilianization of politics and society, stressing social development, welfare, and good governance.

Perhaps most importantly, attempts to provide international and domestic security through the state and the states system—especially the U.S. attempt to use its power to regulate and control that system unilaterally—are becoming increasingly dysfunctional. They create severe and diverse backlashes at local, transnational, and hegemonic levels, backlashes that further weaken states and undermine wider security. Terrorism, the most extreme example of such a backlash, often actually gains sympathy, adherents, and momentum from the attempts of states to repress it.

Furthermore, these backlashes do not develop in a vacuum. They interact with economic and social processes of complex globalization to create overlapping and competing cross-border networks of power, shifting loyalties and identities, and new sources of endemic low-level conflict—the "durable disorder"

mentioned earlier. Indeed, the notion of a vicious circle inherent in the traditional security dilemma is transposed into the New Security Dilemma, but at an entirely different level. To begin with, attempts to address insecurities through traditional forms of state power, especially hegemony, create further insecurities that provoke backlashes. These backlashes in turn draw both states and nonstate actors farther into the quagmires of ethnic and religious conflict, warlordism, and tribalism, ineffective or collapsed states, and ever-increasing calls on military, political, and economic resources. Such responses simply provoke further resentment, frustration, and hopelessness, and breed endemic low-level conflict. Supposedly hegemonic powers are thus sucked into a widening security gap of their own making.

THE NEOMEDIEVAL SCENARIO

In order to understand the overall pattern and direction of these changes, it can be heuristically useful to reframe the problem through an unusual but suggestive historical analogy, an analogy that paints a wider picture. In this case, we start from the assertion that nation-states are simply not what they used to be. Rather than being able to make certain kinds of domestic public policy in ways that are insulated from "external" constraints and to support commonly held social values through centralized institutions—what neorealist theorists think of as the essential "hierarchical" character of the state—nation-state-based institutions and processes are increasingly being transformed into transmission belts and enforcement mechanisms for outcomes arrived at on myriad diverse levels across the wider global system. The line between the "inside" and the "outside" is increasingly blurred structurally and transgressed by all sorts of actors. At the same time, however, this global system is itself becoming more and more institutionally diverse and complex, characterized by attributes that echo features of a world apparently lost since the decay of feudalism and the early rise of the nation-state in the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries.

Today we live in an era of increasing speed, global scale, and the extremely rapid diffusion of information and technological innovation—characteristics that seem to be outgrowing the political capacities of the existing institutional order, just as analogous long-term trends outgrew the old order of the Middle Ages.[22] In an exercise of what is generally called "neomedievalism," we will be looking here at various widely noted features of the medieval world, especially the late medieval world, in order to draw lessons for the present. These features include:

- Competing institutions with overlapping jurisdictions (states, regimes, transgovernmental networks, private interest governments, etc.)

- More fluid territorial boundaries (both within and across states) and a lack of exogenous territorializing pressures
- The uneven consolidation of spaces, cleavages, conflicts, and inequalities, including both unevenly developing new spaces and the fragmentation of old spaces
- Multiple or fragmented loyalties and identities
- The spread of what have been called *"zones grises,"* gray zones, geographical areas and social contexts where the rule of law does not run.[23]

Neomedievalism as a concept is notable primarily for its metaphorical value. In contrast to "modern" notions of statehood or sovereignty, medieval societies were characterized by multiple, overlapping hierarchies and institutions; their structures were multilayered and asymmetric, involving diverse types of authority and social bonds, competing with each other within the same broad and generally ill-defined territorial expanse. As such societies expanded, they increasingly interacted, intersected, and overlapped. In many ways they were victims of their own success, as feudalism led over time to tremendous economic growth and social development. Smaller units like village and tribal/clan societies, unless highly isolated, were drawn into wider systems of competing landlord/warlord relationships, in which layers of hierarchy were permeable and territorial frontiers fluid; these were in turn pulled into wider monarchical and imperial systems, ranging from coherent, quasi-confederal empires to tributary and suzerain systems with little social unity from below. Religious hierarchies frequently crosscut such systems in complex ways; trade routes and fairs sustained a limited market economy, usually on the margins but with growing structural impact; and cities increasingly provided havens for groups that found themselves either on the periphery of, or able relatively easily to navigate across, the complex inner boundaries (and often external frontiers too) of the premodern world. Communications and transport systems obviously constituted a key set of technological constraints and opportunities within which such societies could evolve.[24]

Although the emergence of modern nation-states—and the states system—from this milieu was a complex (and today controversial) matter, that process was always far more than a mere shift from fluid, overlapping structures to rigid hierarchies inside and anarchy outside, as neorealist theory would have it. In contrast, national economies themselves evolved in the context of growing trade, an increasing global division of labor, and the spread of international markets for commodities and finance;[25] national societies provided the breeding ground for both the secular Enlightenment and the spread of modern

universalistic religions; and the emergence of the modern state gave rise to different yet analogous political systems based on bureaucratic rationality, economic modernization, and indeed, competition among themselves, both economic and military.[26] The states system is by no means therefore the antithesis of globalization but its precursor and progenitor. States—and the interstate system—have created the very conditions for their obsolescence or transcendence in an interdependent, crosscutting international and transnational system. The main problem is, of course, that the very success of the state as an embedded institutional structure is also its prison. The nation-state both creates and underpins globalization processes, on the one hand, and prevents those processes from effectively rearticulating governance at a "higher" level, on the other.[27]

In this context, states are losing their capacity to provide the public good of security, while collective governance institutions have a long way to go before they can develop that capacity. Several features of today's neomedieval world feed into this basic security deficit.

Multiple Competing Institutions

The first—and most important—characteristic of the medieval system, already mentioned, was that of competing institutions with overlapping jurisdictions. The early (or pre-) medieval order in Europe, often called the Dark Ages, was a period of extreme localism. Roman-era trade routes were abandoned, imperial legal norms forgotten, and political power fragmented and diffused. Village and local societies exchanged obeisance and sharecropping in return for military protection from relatively localized predators, giving rise to overlapping claims to power and territorial lordship. These arrangements nevertheless laid the groundwork for a basic social stability that enabled economic production to expand, trade routes and cities to grow, and political and legal institutions to develop at different levels.

The Roman Catholic Church developed an extensive, complex hierarchy to monitor and control its vast lands and activities, giving it a certain overarching authority that often conflicted with regional and local power centers. As more surplus goods came to be produced, expropriated, and exchanged, merchants, financiers, artisans, and laborers created guilds and urban corporations, which interacted with preexisting hierarchies. Territorial frontiers were overlapping and ill defined, giving rise to endemic low-level warfare over land and other resources, although the outcomes of such warfare increasingly created precedents of control that crystallized into more formal boundaries over time. The pyramid of wealth and control steepened, and the competing dynastic monarchies claiming to inhabit the apex consolidated; significant sectors of the feudal economy (urban production, moneylending and finance, long-distance trade, etc.) grew

in autonomy and interdependence; and military and taxation bureaucracies became institutionalized. In these ways the stage was set for the nation-state to emerge from the creative destruction of the warfare of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries.[28] The feudal nobility did not lose its power and wealth; rather, it was absorbed into the system.[29] These changes enabled more militarily, bureaucratically, socially, and economically organized nation-states to develop.

Today, this process of state consolidation is being, if not actually reversed, at least significantly modified and reshaped. Overlapping and competing jurisdictions and socioeconomic arrangements are creating a world that looks more and more like a medieval one. In the first place, states themselves are being transformed into structures that will be better able to survive in a multilayered/multitiered global context, that of the "competition state."[30] Monitoring and regulating economic activities are likely to differ from sector to sector, depending upon the scope and scale of the microeconomic and mesoeconomic characteristics of each sector—especially its degree of transnationalization—with the effective purview of states limited to those sectors the organization of which structurally corresponds to the requirements of effective promotion, monitoring, and control at a national/territorial level.[31] Nation-states will probably look more like American states within the U.S. federal system—with circumscribed remits but important residual policy instruments and the ability to exploit niches in the wider system through limited taxation and regulation. They will be analogous to what have been called "postfeudal residual aristocracies" in a more and more globally integrated capitalist environment, focusing on what is good for their own domestic estates—the benefits of globalization—while seeking not to lose too much power and prestige to the nouveaux riches or transnational elites and new transgovernmental bureaucracies of the global economy.[32]

Further, in the international political economy, transnational regimes, new forms of private economic organization, transnational strategic alliances, and the globalization of financial markets are forcing a convergence and homogenization of the rules, procedures, and outcomes of public policy formulation and of implementation across borders.[33] In addition to transnational interest group formation and the development of transgovernmental coalitions bringing regulators and policy makers in overlapping spheres into regular networks that cut across "splintered states," this rapid but asymmetric multilayering of political and economic institutions is leading to the emergence of quasi-public, quasi-private dispute-settlement regimes seeking to arbitrate competing claims for rights and privileges—the core of what has been called the "privatization of governance."[34]

Probably the most consensual and homogenizing dimension of globalization is the spread of Western, capitalist conceptions of property rights at both national and international levels. However, as has been argued, the lack of effective private-property-rights regimes in developing countries not only undermines their endogenous development but condemns those countries to continued predatory impositions by transnational economic actors, especially where the latter are allied to local and state elites.[35] In addition, it could be said that with regard to intellectual property rights in particular, capitalist society developed despite rather than because of the existence of an intellectual-property-rights regime, as the result of diffusion of ideas treated as public goods. If a strict intellectual-property-rights regime were to be constructed, it might actually prevent such diffusion in the future, leading to a new form of "enclosure" that would reinforce other social, economic, and political asymmetries in a neomedieval world.[36]

Therefore, the fact that the state is increasingly enmeshed in crosscutting economic, social, political, and indeed "transgovernmental" webs (where state actors are exposed to transnational pressures and linked into transnational networks) and that a range of complex, asymmetric, crosscutting authoritative institutions are being created or adapted to operate in a globalizing world are, in combination, leading to the crystallization of a global quasi-order that looks more like the medieval world than the "modern" nation-state system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even in the security area—the "bottom line" of the modern nation-state—the intersection of economic globalization, multiculturalism, proliferation of multilevel institutions, and the like, on the one hand, and the fragmentation of techniques, tactics, and strategies of warfare along the lines of low-intensity wars, civil wars, terrorism, and the "revolution in military affairs," on the other, looks more like the fragmented, multilevel warfare of the Middle Ages than like the "total wars" of the first half of the twentieth century. Clausewitz's dictum that "war is the continuation of politics by other means" refers today less to the clashes of nation-states than to the clashes of so many different social, economic, and political forces under, over, and cutting across the nation-state level and increasingly defecting from the states system itself.[37]

Fluid Boundaries and the Lack of Exogenous Territorializing Pressures

The main causal factor missing from this process today, one that was nevertheless crucial for the transition from feudalism to the nation-state, is that of exogenous systemic competition. Embryonic nation-states in the late and post-feudal periods consolidated domestically to a large extent because they continually clashed with other—comparable—pretenders to stateness, national wealth, and

autonomy. The institutionalization of competition and conflict between and among increasingly powerful European dynastic families in the late medieval period led to the expansion of state bureaucracies and their growing penetration into more and more exclusively territorialized—national—social and economic bases. However, just as the Chinese Empire, in Paul Kennedy's analysis, stagnated because it experienced no fundamental external threat for many centuries, so today's neomedieval international order faces no direct exogenous political or military pressures for institutional consolidation at a global or transnational level—unless something like a Martian invasion occurs, of course.[38] The United Nations, for example, has no external enemy to fight and therefore no way of turning a potential outside threat into a question of survival—a situation that constrains its capacity to institutionalize "collective security." Thus an increasingly dense, multilayered, and asymmetric set of competing institutions with overlapping jurisdictions—including and enmeshing, not breaking up, the residual nation-state—will stumble on, untroubled by exogenous pressures to consolidate.

In this context, nation-states will find—weaker states first, stronger states later on—that their territorial and authoritative boundaries will effectively become more fluid. Of course, legal sovereignty is not formally threatened, state borders still appear as real lines on the map, and guarantees of diplomatic recognition and of membership in certain international institutions remain. Substate ethnic and separatist movements, however, increasingly threaten the cohesion of collapsing states (like Lebanon and Somalia), "transnational territories" (such as those unevenly controlled until recently by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia), and so-called archipelago states like the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), at the same time that such states cling to existing borders for dear life, in the name of elite legitimacy and continued control.[39] Iraq in mid-2004 is an excellent example, where ethnic rivalries have led some actors—and even Western analysts—to call for the breakup of the country into Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish states, yet all three groups are aware that such a development would reduce their overall power both internally and externally. Therefore it is unlikely that the actual breakup of nation-states per se will be as significant a development as the exogenous and endogenous differentiation of their authority, as discussed above—especially for the older and wealthier nation-states of the North. Nevertheless, centrifugal pressures on "empire-states" like Russia and China are likely to grow in importance as the penetration of crosscutting sectoral and market pressures expands within those

States today represent only one level of this power structure, becoming more diffuse, internally split, and enmeshed in wider complex webs of power.

territories and as groups like Chechens and Uighurs develop a sense of being collective players in the wider game.[40]

At another level, the emergence of international or transnational regions is playing an increasing role in territorial organization. However, what is most interesting about these regions is not their institutional coherence or supra-statelike structural form; indeed, the European Union is the only region with that sort of quasi-state coherence (although even that is in doubt, with the recent travails of the proposed European Constitution). What is most interesting is that regions are themselves multilevel, asymmetric entities, with crisscrossing internal fault lines—subregions, cross-border regions, local regions, not merely "nested" but often conflicting, with national, transnational, and subnational rivalries poorly integrated—based mainly on the density of transactions that in turn reflect the complexity and circularity of wider globalization processes.[41] It is the diversity of their internal structures and external linkages that is most striking, not their similarity. The recent trend toward developing the concept of "multilevel governance" simply reveals the complexity and variance inherent in regional projects.

Finally, the main significance of the recent war in Iraq in this context is the fact that it long formed a crucial part of a project to counteract the kind of fissiparousness associated with globalization by militarily ratcheting up the United States into a hegemonic empire. On the one hand, despite overwhelming U.S. military spending and force levels—including the various technological developments usually brought together under the rubric of the "revolution in military affairs"—a number of problems stemming from the attempt to build new domestic structures in collapsed or defeated states, such as Somalia in 1992–93 and contemporary Afghanistan, imply the need for a strategy of reconstruction that can only be ongoing, interventionist, and well organized.[42] Other nation-states, although increasingly enmeshed in various global and transnational economic and social webs, are unlikely simply to cede the hegemonic ground to the United States and will increasingly seek to counterbalance American power, especially by other means.

Probably the most interesting potential aspect of such behavior is that it will not necessarily take the form of specifically military balancing, although there will be a certain new willingness to reverse the decline of military establishments in Europe, Russia, etc. Rather, we are witnessing the revival of an old idea from the 1960s, that of the emergence of a whole new category, the "civilian superpower," the strength of which comes from its economy and from the political clout that its economy brings.[43] The European Union has never aspired to be a military superpower, although military cooperation is increasing. American hegemonic pretensions are likely not so much to provoke further European

military consolidation as to accelerate attempts to develop and expand Europe's "civilian" influence on world affairs—an influence that is likely to be far more attractive in other parts of the world, too, when it comes to creating alliances and below-the-state networks of influence. Finally, international institutions such as the United Nations, the various international economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and political processes such as G-8 meetings and trade negotiations—often lumped together under the rubric of "global governance"—are likely to have been sidelined only temporarily by the war in Iraq.[44]

The Uneven Consolidation of New Spaces, Borders, Cleavages, Conflicts, and Inequalities

The main structural fault lines—political, social, and economic—in this complex world reflect not clear territorial boundaries enclosing hierarchical authority structures but rather new distinctions between different levels of economic cleavage and urban/rural splits. The academic literature on global cities, for example, reflects the concept that a range of "virtual spaces" in the global political economy will increasingly overlap with, and possibly even replace, the "real" space of traditional geographical/topological territories, in a process that has been called "denationalization."[45] These new spaces are embodied—and increasingly embedded—in transaction flows, infrastructural nodes of communications and information technology, corporate headquarters, "edge city" living complexes for "symbolic analysts," increasingly "dematerialized" financial markets, and cultural and media centers of activity (and identity).[46] According to Christopher May, control of new ideas and innovations will come to be increasingly concentrated in such areas, protected and secured by a growing panoply of international and transnational intellectual property rights.[47]

The specific spaces that people perceive and identify with are likely to become increasingly localized or micro-level in structure—in the Middle Ages, space was highly localized, of course. People may even lose their very perception of space as partitioned vertically and learn over time to "navigate" between different overlapping, asymmetric layers of spatial perception and organization, in a process of "fragmegration"—a dialectic of fragmentation and integration.[48]

On the one hand, there will be continual fragmentation of old spaces, in a process that will be both asymmetrical and episodic, giving rise to newly entrenched spatial inequalities. The poorer residents of such areas will find themselves increasingly excluded from decision-making processes. In areas where navigation among complex structural layers is more difficult—for example, where such nodes, infrastructure, activities, etc., do not exist within easy reach or perception, such as across large geographical spaces—many people will

simply be "out of the loop," country bumpkins or even roaming, deprived bands, "primitive rebels."[49] Consider contemporary Albania or, more starkly, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where those people mobile enough to escape the hinterland are forced once again to become predators or supplicants, this time in the cities, as in the Middle Ages.

On the other hand, there may emerge new levels of social organization that combine social identity and solidarity, common economic interests, and embryonic political organization—what have been called "spheres of authority."[50] However, it is unclear whether these spheres will be relatively consistent and uniform entities, on the one hand, or highly irregular, uneven, ad hoc political spaces, on the other. It is unclear even if they will be large and well enough organized to be effective—that is, whether they will enjoy sufficient economies of scale to pursue effectively common interests or provide public goods. Evidence seems to point to the increasing *in*effectiveness of such entities in the face of global and transnational pressures and structural trends, although the interaction of such new spaces with each other and with older structures of governance may serve to regularize them somewhat.

Both of these trends are likely to alter the way economic interests are articulated and aggregated. Changes in institutions, the fluidity of territorial boundaries, and the increasing hegemony of global cities will interact with new forms of "flexible" labor processes and economic organization to increase inequalities and turn downwardly mobile workers (especially the less skilled, the ghetto dwellers, etc.) into a new *Lumpenproletariat,* underclass, or subcaste—a process well under way in the First World and already dominant today in large parts of the Third World. In this context, it will not be primarily ethnic loyalties and tribal enmities that will undermine the community represented by the nation-state, although they have so far been the leading edge of cultural fragmentation. It will be the development of complex new inequalities of both real class and virtual geography. Such inequalities will be far more difficult to counterbalance and neutralize without effective or legitimate state institutions, and, especially when they are allied to other cleavages, they are likely to constitute an increasing source of civil and cross-border violence.

Fragmented Identities

Such a situation will not merely be one of fragmentation but one of *multiple loyalties and identities*.[51] As in the Middle Ages, occupational solidarity, economic class, religious or ethnic group, ideological preference, national or cosmopolitan values, loyalty to or identity with family, local area, region, etc., will no longer be so easily subsumed in holistic images or collective identities. Indeed, a neomedieval world will be one of social and political schizophrenia, with

shifting patchwork boundaries and postmodern cultural images. National identities are likely to become increasingly empty rituals, divorced from real legitimacy, "system affect," or even instrumental loyalty.[52]

On the other hand, the question of how such multiple identities can coexist in a stable fashion has led some observers to attempt to develop analogies for the unifying ideological and cultural role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. These writers have attempted to identify possible successors to this role in a neomedieval world—perhaps New Age philosophy or the environmental movement. However, any truly global cultural identity structure will have to be not homogeneous or unifying but intrinsically multilayered and amorphous.

Paradoxically, however, this shapeless postmodernity gives identity increased flexibility and resilience in a globalizing world, a chameleon-like adaptability to a wide range of differentiated contexts. Identities are not overarching and global—in the way, for example, that ecologists refer to "the planet," or *gaia*—but, like the institutions and spaces discussed earlier, seem increasingly to take a variety of different, often conflicting, forms. Identity and a sense of belonging have been identified throughout human history as crucial to coherent social bonds and therefore to political stability and effectiveness. As General Charles de Gaulle wrote in 1934, "Human passions, insofar as they remain diffused, realize nothing ordered, nor in consequence effective. It is necessary that they be crystallized in well-defined circumscriptions."[53] This implies a continual search for identity, not a mere postmodernist fragmentation but concrete attempts to restore old identities and to construct new ones. At one extreme, small-scale territorially based communities seek to break away from superimposed nation-state identities to insulate themselves and their ways of life from global trends; the peasants of Chiapas in southern Mexico, for all their use of international revolutionary slogans and images, correspond to this category (about which more below).

At another level, non–territorially based groups, especially widespread ethnic and religious groups, may organize in order to control territories of their own; these irredentist elements range from national liberation movements to those who claim the same historic territory, such as Palestinians and Israelis, or Bosnians of different ethnic persuasions. They may also expand to form a transnational movement intended to *extraterritorialize* their very identities. Terrorist groups usually involve some admixture of both of these characteristics, with both a territorial base (e.g., Afghanistan under the Taliban) and an extraterritorial database with extensive network connections (the original meaning of "al-Qa'ida"). However, there is also an increasing rediscovery of extensive cosmopolitan connections. One scholar perceives a historical spread around the world of "global tribes"—the Jewish diaspora, the British Empire and the

Anglo-Saxon legacy, the overseas Chinese, the Japanese, today's Indian diaspora, Latinos, and many others—all on the "road to Cosmopolis."[54] Others write in neo-Marxist terms of "transnational classes" and a newly embedded transnational hegemony of capital.[55] In this process of identity "fragmegration," the sociocultural face of a globalizing world looks very different from that of increasingly crystallized "national culture societies" of the nation-state era and more like a neomedieval one.[56]

The Spread of "Zones Grises"

Finally, in a neomedieval world, there will not only be "niches" for the maintenance of pluralist autonomy for individuals and groups to organize into Rosenau's spheres of authority or to pursue policy goals at multiple levels of governance, but there will also be increased escape routes—and organizational opportunities—for those operating more or less "outside the law." Exit from political society is likely to become a more viable option for a wider range of actors and activities. At one level, such phenomena involve more than just international (and domestic) criminal activities like the drug trade or the (semi-transnational) Russian mafia; they also involve the areas where excluded people live—especially urban ghettoes, at one geographical extreme, and enclaves in inaccessible areas (jungle, mountains, etc.), as noted earlier. Indeed, the toughest problem in this area is the intersection of different dimensions of extralegal activities with legal or quasi-legal ones. For example, the resources and networks of the drug trade not only create alternative power structures and social identities for members of the underclass physically located in ghettoes but extend into state bureaucracies and "legitimate" private firms, as mafias have always done. Another such gray zone arises from the inevitable constitutional conflicts created by the assertion of indigenous rights over what is legitimately local and what legitimately supralocal (provincial, national, regional, etc.), as in Chiapas.[57]

At another level, however, it is likely that many traditionally mainstream social and economic activities will expand as much through gray zones as through legitimate means, much as the so-called black economy has done in many parts of the world during the modern era. A transnationalized "black" economy constitutes a major challenge to the enforcement function of the competition state, and the inclusion or integration of such areas and activities into the complex governance structures of a globalizing world is likely to be extremely uneven. At a third level is a specifically security-based dimension of this phenomenon that cuts across borders and regions too—shifting the focus and locus of conflict and violence even farther away from the interstate pattern and toward the intractable complexities of the micro and meso levels.[58] The New Security Dilemma

means that as the reliability of interstate balances of power declines and as alternative possibilities for global and transnational security are found wanting—that is, as the security deficit grows—the growth of "insecurity from below" creates conditions in which increasingly intractable and complex civil and cross-border wars will become the norm. Backlashes in turn create new insecurities that states are ill suited to counter. Indeed, projects for a new American hegemony are likely merely to accelerate that spiral in the longer term.

DURABLE DISORDER AND THE SECURITY DEFICIT

As noted earlier, the medieval world was not a world of chaos and breakdown but one of relatively "durable disorder." This is also true of today's world. In this context, the development of some sort of coherent global security system is unlikely to come from nation-states or the states system as such. Nation-states are, first, too limited in the scope and scale of what they can do (especially in a post-hegemonic world), and second, too beholden to narrow domestic interests to be able to lead such a transformation process, despite the widespread belief in the United States in the universality of the American ideological message. States can, of course, play a facilitating role, especially as domestic enforcers of global norms and practices, and—paradoxically—in pushing forward a process of economic globalization in order to maximize domestic returns, a kind of barrier-lowering tit-for-tat. However, such developments will merely widen the security deficit, not fill it. The New Security Dilemma means that as the reliability of interstate balances of power declines, as alternative possibilities for global and transnational security are found wanting, and as the process of reshaping the political environment in reaction to complex globalization remains uneven and multidimensional in time as well as space, we can expect substate and cross-border destabilization and violence, including but certainly not confined to terrorism, to become increasingly endemic.

Nevertheless, such turbulence does not necessarily mean chaos. Indeed, the medieval order was a highly flexible one that created a wide range of spaces that could accommodate quite extensive social, economic, and political innovations—eventually laying the groundwork for the emergence of the postfeudal, nation-state-based international order. The twenty-first-century globalizing world order similarly provides manifold opportunities as well as constraints. In the world of global finance, multinational firms, multilateral regimes, and private authority, therefore, the emerging neomedieval world order is most likely, reflecting its medieval predecessor, to be a kind of durable yet fertile disorder—what organization theorists today would call a "heterarchical" order.[59] Nation-states will never regain their unitary, sovereign, hierarchical, multifunctional character, but neither will they be able to appeal to an authoritative world

government. In this sort of neomedieval world, therefore, the fundamental question is not whether American hegemony—or that of any other state or grouping of states—is inherently good or, indeed, bad. There is much to debate on that question. But no state or group of states *as such* are likely to meet effectively the challenges thrown up by the New Security Dilemma and so fill the global security deficit. In this environment, civil wars, ethnic wars, cross-border wars, warlordism, terrorism, and the like must be addressed not as military questions but rather as social, economic, and political ones. What is needed is not so much a war on terror as a political, economic, and social war on the causes of terror—uneven development, inequality, injustice, and, perhaps most importantly, the incredible frustrations engendered by the revolution of rising expectations in a globalizing world—if the vicious circle of the New Security Dilemma is to be broken.

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