Chapter 1
States

Let us imagine a newly appointed US Secretary of State being briefed by a senior adviser on her first day in office.

In the US system, unlike the UK, there is a role for the Senate which has to formally approve of any new appointment to the post of Secretary of State and it would be the normal expectation that the appointee would be able to satisfy the Senate regarding their expertise and experience in dealing with foreign affairs. In Britain's parliamentary democracy the only qualification needed for appointment as Foreign Secretary is the willingness of the Prime Minister to offer you the job. In some cases, Prime Ministers prefer to take all key foreign policy decisions themselves or with their 'kitchen cabinet' of unelected personal advisers. In these circumstances, the Foreign Secretary's job will simply be to implement the Prime Minister's policies. In any event, and whatever the personal relations of the Prime Minister with his Foreign Secretary, and even if both these politicians are new to foreign affairs, the senior officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have such a combined weight of knowledge and experience derived from service in diplomatic posts all over the world that they can more than compensate for weaknesses at ministerial levels. Under the US system the State Department has a similar wealth of expertise, but again may find that the President's main interest is in foreign

affairs and that the Secretary of State is expected simply to implement loyally White House policy. A complication of the US system is that rival departments, especially the Department of Defense and the National Security Council, may disagree with the State Department and seek to promote their own preferred policy.

One of the first things a very inexperienced new UK Foreign Secretary will need to be briefed about is states, for we live in a world in which states are still the key actors in international relations. As there is no world government and no system of world law and law enforcement, and no sign of any such systems being established, knowledge of states is likely to remain a necessary, though of course not a sufficient, requirement for any serious understanding of international relations for the foreseeable future. It is mere wishful thinking to pretend otherwise.

It was not always thus. Anthropologists have described in fascinating detail human societies based on tribal or clan membership where nothing resembling a state existed (Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 1929, for example). In such societies, which still survive in places such as Central Africa and the Central Amazon basin, there are certainly tribal rulers or chieftains and elders but there are no full-time officials and in many cases, because tribes can be nomadic, there is no fixed territory with recognized borders or tribal jurisdiction. It is in the ancient empires of Egypt, Persia, China, and Rome that we find some of the key characteristics of the state emerging. Rulers employ retinues of officials to implement and enforce their decrees. Armies of full-time soldiers are deployed for the purposes of further imperial conquests and to repel external and internal enemies. Often quite complex legal codes and criminal justice procedures are developed and employed (with varying degrees of efficiency and consistency) throughout the territories of the empire. One only has to consider the huge influence of

Roman law on the legal systems of contemporary Europe to see the importance of these developments for the emergence of the modern state.

At the opposite end of the spectrum so far as scale is concerned were the small city-states of ancient Greece, so brilliantly caught in Aristotle's *Politics*, and the Italian city-states of the early modern period. In his classic writings on the latter, Niccolo Machiavelli provides a fascinating realist insight into the strategies and tactics used by the successful Prince or ruler to seize and retain power and the techniques of statecraft needed to conduct a successful foreign policy in the constant power struggles and rivalries between different city-states, principalities, and republics of Renaissance Italy. In the Italian city-states of this period we should note one of the most important precursors of the modern state: the growing assertion of the secular over the religious life.

Indeed it is with the Reformation in Europe and the clear and irrevocable separation of church and state that the conditions emerge for the development of a truly modern state system in Europe in which no single state is recognized as the legitimate hegemony or dominant power, and in which all member states *in principle* agree to mutually recognize each other's right to sovereign rights and jurisdiction over their own territories.

The true beginning of the modern state system in Europe was the Peace of Westphalia (1648) which marked the end of the Thirty Years War. The war had not simply been a struggle between Catholicism and Calvinism. It was an international conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the powerful sovereign states such as France, which sought to ensure that they obtained strategic and defensive frontiers. The power and authority of the Holy Roman Empire was drastically curtailed by the Peace of Westphalia.

The sovereign authority of the Austrian Habsburgs (traditionally the family from which the Holy Roman Emperor had been elected) was effectively restricted to their hereditary Austrian duchies and Bohemia. The empire was no longer permitted to raise troops, declare war or make peace, or raise taxes without the consent of the members of the state system. And the 300 or so states into which Germany was divided became true states in the modern sense: that is to say they were recognized as sovereign independent states and were therefore free to form alliances with other states not only within but also outwith the imperial league. Moreover the essentially secular basis of the new state system was strongly reaffirmed when the principle, *Cujus regio, ejus religio* (Such government in a state, such religion in a state) first enunciated at Augsburg in 1555, was enshrined in the Peace of Westphalia and extended to cover Calvinism in addition to Lutheranism. Henceforth, the major inter-state conflicts in Europe were about power and territory and not about seeking religious dominance. The state, the basic unit of our modern global state system, is a complex political and legal concept of crucial importance in the study of international relations. According to international law, all states have a legal personality and even the smallest and least powerful state has to meet certain basic criteria in order to obtain recognition as a member of the state system by other states in the global system of states. It must have a defined territory, a permanent population, and a government which is capable of maintaining effective control over its territory and conducting international relations with other states.

In the real world of international relations there is enormous variation in the degree to which states meet these criteria. For example, many states struggle to maintain effective sovereign control over even part of their defined territory. Many states do not have a monopoly of control of armed force within their frontiers and find themselves confronted by civil wars and insurgents, which leave whole areas of their countries under the

control of rebel leaders and war lords (for example, Afghanistan, Angola, Burma, Colombia, Somalia, and Sudan). Yet despite experiencing such fundamental challenges to their sovereignty such states still receive international recognition, sign agreements with other states, send delegates to the United Nations and other international bodies, and enjoy the outward (if only symbolic) appearance of full membership of the global community of states, now numbering almost 200.

Even external recognition is not an absolute criterion of statehood. For decades US governments withheld diplomatic recognition from communist China, and many countries refused to recognize the state of Israel. Thus it is clear that external recognition does not have to be universally accorded before the status of statehood can be achieved. Generally we can say that it is enough to have external recognition from a considerable number of states, including most major powers, and most important of all, from the United Nations. Recognition by the United Nations is today the sine qua non of achieving full statehood.

The term 'nation-state' is often used to designate the state as described above. This is helpful for two main reasons: (i) it immediately differentiates the states which are sovereign and part of the global states system from those which are, in effect, units of regional or local government within sovereign states, such as the states that comprise the United States or the State of Amazonia in Brazil or the State of Tamil Nadu in south-east India; and (ii) almost all sovereign states, even those which comprise a variety of ethnic and religious groups, seek to foster a sense of national identity and loyalty which is coterminous with the entire population and hence it is possible to observe an Indian nationalism which transcends local loyalties, an American nationalism which, despite the 'melting pot' of diverse origins of the population, instils a fierce loyalty to the Union, and in the United Kingdom, which is comprised of English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, Afro-Caribbean, and other ethnic identities, there

is still a strong current of British nationalism rooted in a shared monarchy, a common central government, and long experience of close political, economic, and social interaction in times of peace and war.

It is obvious from the maps of multi-ethnic states such as Russia, India, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Myanmar (formerly Burma) that it would be foolish to assume that states and nations are coterminous. Many ethnic minorities are ruled by states they never chose to join, some (for example, the Kurds in the Middle East) have found their populations divided by political frontiers created in the period of European colonization, only to be reaffirmed by new elites in the decolonization process. Hence, although the 'nation-state' is in common usage and almost every state in the global states system engages in some form of 'nation-building' activity, we should be aware that there is a huge amount of tension, hostility, and outright conflict between 'state' and 'nation' in modern international relations. It is just as important for us to study non-state movements, such as separatist groups and national liberation movements, as it is to investigate the policies and activities of the states which so often find themselves challenged by these phenomena. Accepting the reality that states are the most significant and influential units in the global international system does *not* imply that international relations should be studied in a purely state-centric mode. To do so would be to fall into one of the most serious errors of recent so-called international relations theory. I will return to some of these problems in Chapter 3.

The limits of the US superpower

Since the implosion of the Former Soviet Union in 1989–90, the United States has been the world's only superpower, and the Secretary of State's adviser will remind her that the US greatly valued the support of NATO allies in the cold war and will hardly need to stress the importance of maintaining the 'special

relationship' with the UK born in the Second World War alliance and close relations with the other NATO alliance countries, which continued throughout the cold war and into the post-cold war era.

Statistics on the world economy show that the US has by far the biggest economy, with a GDP over twice the size of its nearest rival and the greatest purchasing power of any state. It also has the largest inventory of nuclear weapons and the most advanced high-tech weaponry in the world. America's superpower status depends on this vital continuation of huge economic strength and incredibly high levels of military expenditure, only made possible by America's unique wealth. Moreover, as demonstrated convincingly in the conflicts in the Balkans and in the Middle East since the end of the cold war, the US has a unique capability for the rapid deployment of its forces deploying both airlift and sealift assets with remarkable speed.

Hence, what differentiates the US from other major powers in purely military terms is not just their unrivalled investment on research and development for the military, but also their ability to *project* military power into any part of the world with unrivalled speed.

Our newly installed Foreign Secretary, on the other hand, will constantly be reminded by his senior officials and advisers of the importance of maintaining and, where possible, strengthening the 'special relationship' with the US. The Minister will be made aware of the enormous assets the US brings to the North Atlantic Alliance and the damage that would be inflicted on British interests around the world if the relationship with the US were to be put at risk through British failure to act in accord with US foreign policy. The Suez Crisis of 1956, when Prime Minister Anthony Eden conspired with the French and Israelis to invade Egypt with the aim of forcing Nasser to rescind his decision to nationalize the Suez Canal, provoked an angry response from the then US President, Dwight Eisenhower and his Secretary of

State, John Foster Dulles. They threatened to pull the plug on the pound sterling. Eden was forced to resign. In the eyes of the British establishment a key lesson of the Suez Crisis was that, in the words of Tony Judt in his excellent study, *Postwar*: 'the UK must never again put itself on the wrong side of an argument with Washington'.

However, a wise Permanent Under-Secretary with a good knowledge of recent history should surely caution against the idea that the UK should automatically fall in with the wishes of its most powerful ally. There is a difference between mere subservience and genuine alliance. The UK is an independent sovereign state and British national interests do not always coincide with those of the US. If Britain had blindly followed US foreign policy when Hitler invaded Poland the Nazis might well have succeeded in occupying the whole of Europe before the US woke from its isolationist slumbers. It would have been a total catastrophe. In more recent history we have the interesting example of Prime Minister Harold Wilson who turned down US requests that Britain provide military contributions to assist them in their war in Vietnam. The British government's decision to abstain from that tragic and protracted war turned out to be extremely wise. It took the US years to extricate from that unwinnable conflict, and Americans paid a huge price in terms of lives lost and treasure expended. Vietnam suffered huge loss of life of soldiers and civilians on both sides and huge economic destruction. Cambodia, which provided convenient routes for the North to move troops and military equipment to the South, also suffered much destruction from massive US aerial bombardment.

In embarking on the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the US leaders appear to have entirely forgotten the lessons of their recent history. They appear to have really believed the claims of Iraqi exiles that the people of Iraq would greet the US troops as liberators and garland them with flowers. The White House and the Pentagon did not allow for the possibility of serious and

prolonged resistance to the US occupation and chose to take no notice of warning from the State Department, the CIA, and other parts of the US government where there was expert knowledge on Iraq and the Middle East generally. This tells us a great deal about the importance of well informed leadership in foreign policy and the need to utilize expert judgement in decision making.

It is even more extraordinary that Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged unhesitating and unconditional support for the plan to invade Iraq and that large numbers of British troops found themselves deployed to Iraq where their major task was to maintain order in Basra and the Shi'ite region of Southern Iraq. Both President Bush and Prime Minister Blair claim to have embarked on the invasion in Iraq in good faith. President Bush and his neo-conservative advisers told the American public that Saddam Hussein had been involved in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Prime Minster Tony Blair told the British Parliament that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and that his missiles posed a threat to the United Kingdom. Both these justifications turned out to be entirely bogus, and by spring 2006 sizeable majorities of the US and UK populations opposed their governments' policies on Iraq. By May 2007 over 64,000 civilians had been killed in the conflict in Iraq, in addition to over 3,400 US servicemen and 148 UK military.

Perhaps, the most important lesson that the US government and the rest of the international community should draw from the searing experience of the invasion and occupation of Iraq, and from the 9/11 attacks, concerns the *limits* of superpower. Even a great power with all the resources and global military reach of the US cannot control the entire political and strategic environment. In circumstances sadly reminiscent of the Vietnam War, the US has proved unable to secure its strategic objects even when confronted with relatively small wars and insurgencies. Just as the US governments of Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson were

unable to secure the survival of a non-communist state in South Vietnam, it appears that the Bush administration is not going to be able to suppress the insurgency in Iraq or to prevent that country from descending into the nightmare of all-out civil war. From a strategic perspective one clear lesson is that the war in Iraq has been counterproductive in the struggle against Al Qaeda. The invasion was an ideological and propaganda gift to the Al Qaeda network of networks. It provided them with more recruits, more donations from wealthy Muslims, and a tempting array of military and civilian targets from coalition countries just across the borders of states where they have many militants and sympathizers. When Iraq was invaded in March 2003 it was a hostile area for Al Qaeda. Saddam Hussein was ideologically and politically the kind of leader that bin Laden and his followers loved to hate. Now, Iraq has become a major base for Al Qaeda and it is clear from the propaganda messages of bin Laden and his deputy, Zawahiri, that Al Qaeda is making a major effort to derail the fragile new Iraqi government and to establish a base in Iraq from which to launch terrorist attacks on neighbouring regimes, for example, in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which they allege are 'Apostate' regimes because of their cooperation with the West and refusal to follow the 'true Islam' as proclaimed by bin Laden and his followers.

US superpower has serious limits not only because of the way it can overstretch its military and economic resources but also because it often lacks the quality of political leadership and statesmanship that would enable it to deal more successfully with its big security challenges, and to manage conflict and crisis situations effectively without rushing to resorting to war at the first opportunity. Many of the limits on the US superpower are to a large extent self-inflicted, but they are all too real. If America's friends and allies recognize this there is a chance that they may be able to persuade the US government to adopt a more genuinely multilateral and multi-pronged strategic approach to foreign policy.

It is hardly surprising that the US superpower attracts a great deal of hostility in the international community. This has always been the fate of great powers. However, there is a big difference between general attitudes of anti-Americanism and support for terrorist attacks on Americans at home and abroad. It would surely make good sense to make one of the key foreign-policy aims the improvement of influence and friendly relations with the majority populations in the Muslim world and also more widely.

A change towards 'civilian' foreign policy by the US, using the 'soft power' of trade, aid, and cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation would do much to dissipate the image of a superpower reacting to challenges and problems in international relations with a heavy-handed over-reliance on military power and intervention.

US foreign policy, 9/11, and the swing to unilateralism

During George W. Bush's presidential election contest with Al Gore and in the early days of President Bush's first term, it appeared that the new administration intended to retreat from the global activism and intervention policies followed by President Clinton. George W. Bush won the election by the narrowest of margins after a campaign fought almost entirely on domestic issues.

It was the events of 11 September 2001 which led to George W. Bush declaring a War on Terror, transforming his foreign policy into one of global power projection and interventionism on a scale not seen since the height of the cold war confrontation with the Soviet Union. 9/11 gave the President's posse of neo-conservative advisers a golden opportunity to provide the White House with a new foreign-policy agenda which was a radical departure from the foreign policies of multilateralism and conflict management mediated through the United Nations. The American public

2. President George W. Bush declared a 'War on Terror' after 9/11. Al Qaeda had previously declared a 'global jihad' against the US and its allies.

was shocked by the scale of the death and destruction caused by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in which nearly 3,000 were killed, and by a new sense of vulnerability of the US homeland to what seemed to them to be a new kind of war. Hence, President Bush's declaration of a 'War on Terror' captured the public mood. There was a widespread yearning to strike back at America's perceived enemies (even if most Americans were not too sure who they were), and to restore national pride, a mood symbolized by the display of the American flag in the streets of every city and town and in the windows of thousands of private homes and businesses around the country.

The initial US response to 9/11 did not at first appear to presage a seismic shift in US foreign policy. The formation of the Coalition Against Terrorism and the swift actions of the UN Security Council, NATO, and OSCE in support of the US seemed to indicate a promising future for multilateral cooperation against the international terrorism of the Al Qaeda network. The swift

US military intervention in Afghanistan in collaboration with the Northern Alliance, which led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime, seemed justified in the eyes of most of the international community because, after all, the Taliban rulers had given safe haven and protection to bin Laden's Al Qaeda movement, the terrorist network responsible for planning and carrying out the 9/11 attacks.

But the neo-conservatives' project, which was adopted so readily by the President, was in reality far more ambitious. Their central idea was to use United States superpower capability – military and economic – to impose regime change and actively promote democracy and market economics. With hopeless overconfidence in their own power, reminiscent of the leaders of the British Empire in the Victorian era, the neo-conservatives appear to have believed that they could reshape the world in their own image. Clear evidence of the neo-conservatives' willingness to defy the norms of multilateralism and the constraints of the UN Charter and customary international law came with the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, carried out with the assistance of the UK government in defiance of the UN Security Council. The lurch towards unilateralism and aggressive nationalism on the part of the sole remaining superpower had serious consequences for international relations generally. Hopes of a concert of the major powers emerging in the UN Security Council to develop multilateral, political, and diplomatic solutions to problems of conflict in the post-cold war world were quickly dashed.

The US government introduced a new national security doctrine of pre-emptive military action to justify the invasion of Iraq. In reality, Iraq under the Saddam dictatorship did not constitute a threat to US security or even the security of the nearest neighbours in the Middle East. It was one of the most contained states in the world: it was subject to 'no-fly zones', it had been weakened by sanctions, and if the US had been willing to wait for

Dr Hans Blix, former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, and his weapons inspectors to finish their task in Iraq before the US/UK invasion, it would have been shown that the Iraqi regime did not have the weapons of mass destruction which the US and the UK governments claimed it had. The neo-conservatives' claims that Saddam was somehow involved in plotting the 9/11 attacks and that he was in league with bin Laden were sheer nonsense. The harsh truth is that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair, America's major ally and supporter in the invasion of Iraq, took their countries to war on a bogus prospectus. Who could deny that the Saddam regime was cruel tyranny and that it had committed major crimes against the Kurdish and Shi'ite populations of Iraq? But if we were to intervene in every dictatorship which violates human rights we would constantly be at war with brutal regimes all over the world.

A key lesson of the Iraq conflict is that political leaders should be made aware of the practical limitations and dangers of this pre-emptive military action doctrine. There are apparently some hard-line hawks who believe that a military intervention either by the US or Israel to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities would be justified because of the danger that Iran's successful enrichment of uranium may lead to the development of Iranian nuclear weapons. The hatred and desire for revenge that this would generate not only in Iran but in the Muslim world generally would almost certainly fuel an increase in international terrorism by jihadi groups around the world, just as the invasion and occupation of Iraq served as a huge propaganda boost and recruiting sergeant for the Al Qaeda network of networks. Quite apart from this, there is the danger of another war in the Middle East in which thousands more innocent civilians would be killed.

The increased danger of war and terrorism emanating from US foreign policy in the Middle East is of course only one manifestation of US unilateralism: unwillingness to sign up to the Kyoto agreement on the emission of greenhouse gases

and to support the International Criminal Court, designed to deal with major crimes against humanity and war crimes, were also depressing evidence of the effects of arrogant nationalist rejections of multilateral cooperation to deal with major global problems.

The balance of power and the security dilemma

The weakening of multilateralism is by no means the fault of the US government alone. China has been pursuing its expansion of both its nuclear weapons programme and its conventional military forces with a single-mindedness that worries many of its neighbours. Russian foreign policy under President Putin has been characterized increasingly by revanchism, that is by the aim of regaining control, or at least dominance, over lost territories. Putin came to power in Russia partly on the promise that he would use Russian military force to prevent Chechnya from breaking away from the Russian Federation. More recently Putin's government has clashed openly with the Ukraine, doing its best to assist Mr Yushchenko's opponent in the Ukrainian elections and suspending gas sales and causing an energy crises not only in the Ukraine but in Europe generally. Putin has also supported two breakaway regions in Georgia, much to the fury of the authorities in Tbilisi. Growing hostility between Moscow and the governments of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, the Ukraine and Moldova, seem likely to lead to the break-up of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), set up in 1991 as a framework for maintaining links between Russia and the newly independent states. Indeed in May 2006 it seemed likely that the pro-Western states of Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and the Ukraine would form their own regional organization to promote democratic values.

President Putin has also embarked on a major rearmament programme. The Russian government has clearly worried about the extension of NATO membership to embrace East European

states and by the US decision to site anti-ballistic missiles in Eastern Europe.

What we are seeing in all these trends is evidence that, far from witnessing a strengthening of multilateral institutions and global political integration, what we are really seeing is the enduring reality of our system of independent sovereign states: rivalry and conflict between the major and even the medium and minor powers; continuing effects of the security dilemma; and perpetuation of the balance of power as a central feature of the system, both at global and regional levels.

Balance of power analysis inevitably involves assessing a constantly changing situation as membership of alliances and acquisition of military, economic, and scientific and technological capabilities constantly changes. However, it is certainly still the case that there are important global balances between Russia and its allies and the United States and its allies, and between China and the United States and its allies. At the regional level there are key balances between China and Japan, China and India, India and Pakistan, and between Israel and the leading states of the Muslim world (Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia).

An inevitable corollary of an international system of states which is inherently anarchic, with no single power capable of controlling the world in a kind of global empire, is that states will experience the *security dilemma* and by reacting to it will perpetuate insecurity and conflict. In inter-state relations, a security dilemma will occur when states pursuing policies to enhance their own security (for example, by rearmament programmes or by forming alliances) unintentionally create feelings of increased insecurity. This leads to a vicious circle, security–insecurity, when states that feel increasingly vulnerable and insecure then decide to invest in enhancing their own security, in turn provoking a reaction by their perceived rival, leading to the enhancement of their new security.

The security dilemma provides at least a partial explanation of *arms races*. The most original thinking about the security dilemma in the international relations literature is to be found in Robert Jervis's *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* (1976), where he uses game theory to show that, if war is costly and cooperation is beneficial, there will be a possibility of breaking out of the security dilemma: if it can be shown that war is very expensive and risky, policies designed to reduce rather than increase inter-state tension and overcome mistrust and fear may be adopted. The concept of the security dilemma can usefully be applied to relations with non-state actors and this will be discussed in Chapter 2.

In the light of these perennial features of our international state system, the UK Foreign Secretary and his colleagues would be well advised to support a policy of sustaining a support of sufficient armaments and armed forces to defend the realm against any potential aggressor, even if there is no actual aggressor currently engaged in threatening UK security. The US government spends huge sums on defence, but even they are suffering from severe overstretch in terms of personnel and finance due to the huge costs of the Iraq War and occupation.

This is most certainly the defence policy that any wise government will be encouraged to adopt when it seeks advice from the chiefs of the armed services. This is the major lesson to be drawn by the UK foreign-policy makers from the experiences of both the Second World War and the cold war. Pacifism would have been useless in the face of the threat from Hitler in the Second World War and in response to Stalin's bid to expand the borders of his Soviet Communist Empire across Europe after Hitler's defeat.

It is salutary to remember that the Allies were only able to win the Second World War by the skin of their teeth, and the UK could not have done it without the help of the US. Similarly with the cold war: without the support of the US allies with their

impressive ability to project their military powers and their lead in atomic weapons technology, large areas of Europe might well have suffered the same fate as Czechoslovakia and East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the other countries of Eastern and Central Europe. They would have been swallowed up by the Russian bear.

The wisest rule of statecraft was stated by Vegetius writing in the 4th century AD. He wrote: *Qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum* (Let him who desires peace, prepare for war).

As we shall observe in the following section, the mere possession of large quantities of weapons and large numbers of troops does not necessarily mean that such a well protected state will become an aggressor. Much will depend on the statesmanship shown by a state's leaders and on the way they respond to the pressure of events. And while it is true that dictatorships and tyrannical one-party regimes have by their nature a greater propensity for coercive violence, especially against their own citizens, it is not necessarily the case that democracies distinguish themselves by their absence of coercive violent behaviour. Indeed, as we shall see in the following section, the powerful democracies have a track record of considerable coercive intervention in their foreign and security policies in recent years. Democracies do have a well deserved reputation for avoiding the use of force against fellow democracies. On the other hand, they have a track record of frequent military interventions in third states, often employing massive firepower and causing huge 'collateral damage', that is, death and destruction to civilian populations.

Coercive and liberal states

Coercion is the use or threat of physical force to compel, persuade or restrain. All states are inherently coercive because all government and regimes need to use force to enforce the law, to maintain internal order, and to defend the state against any perceived external threats. The only movement which is opposed

in principle to the powers of government and the state's use of legal systems, implicitly backed by coercive power, is anarchism.

A survey of current political systems in the modern world shows that there are huge differences in the degree of coerciveness employed by states. At one end of the spectrum are states characterized by strong elements of liberalism and democracy where legislatures and governments are chosen by the people in free elections, governments and legislatures are accountable to the citizens and where basic human rights and liberties are upheld and the rule of law is maintained under an independent judiciary. In these liberal democratic states the coercive capabilities of the government and its security forces are not, in normal times, an intimidating and ever-present aspect of daily life on the streets. The police are trained to use minimum force and the military are generally deployed mainly for external defence rather than for internal coercion. Although the War on Terror waged since 9/11 has led many democracies to introduce stronger anti-terrorist measures, in no case has this led to the overturning of democratic institutions and the abandonment of liberal values.

Orwell's *1984* is an invaluable morality story for our times but in reality the citizens in liberal democracies still enjoy a huge amount of personal freedom. This is not to say that all liberal democracies have impeccable records in upholding liberal democratic values and in keeping their coercive powers under effective constraints with totally reliable procedures of scrutiny and accountability. There have been numerous instances of the abuse of coercive powers. Acton's famous dictum, 'all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely', is as true today as it was when he coined it. Even the world's greatest democracy, the United States of America, has a record of serious abuses of the coercive powers of the state, especially in the conduct of its foreign policy.

For example, in the late 20th century the US was involved in propping up numerous unsavoury dictatorships in Latin

America, not only turning a blind eye to the large-scale human rights violations by these regimes, but in many cases rendering them substantial financial, logistic, and military assistance in perpetuating their abuses of human rights. More recently there have been instances of clear abuse of international human rights standards, for example, the long-term detention without trial of prisoners alleged to have been involved in crimes of terrorism, abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the rendition of suspects for questioning to regimes where torture is habitually practised.

On the other hand, we need to bear in mind that the US has been a major champion of the democratization process and the strengthening of human rights protection in many countries. During the cold war, US leadership of the democratic countries in defence of their values and institutions liberated millions from the misery of life under one-party Communist rule.

By far the worst abuses of coercive power in modern history were committed by totalitarian regimes of the 20th century: Hitler's Nazi regime which was responsible for the Holocaust and which occupied most of Europe in the 1940s; Stalin's Communist dictatorship which imposed on the Former Soviet Union, and the Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe, one of the most repressive systems of totalitarian rule ever known; the Communist regime in China; and Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia. Millions died under these brutal regimes. They belong at the extreme opposite end of the spectrum of state coerciveness in the modern era from the liberal democracies described above.

However, there are some important caveats to bear in mind when one is constructing a typology of states based on the degree of coercion employed. First, there will be huge fluctuations in the amount of internal coercion used in the context of coercive changes in the type of regime. For example, there were extremely high levels of coercion involved in Nigeria during the period

Spectrum of state coerciveness

Least coercive

Operative liberal democracies (e.g. the US and EU states)

Moderately coercive

Traditional autocracies (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco)

Highly coercive

Dictatorships with some countervailing checks on power (e.g. Mugabe's regime, Castro regime)

Most coercive

Personal tyrannies (e.g. Saddam Hussein in Iraq)

Totalitarian one party states (e.g. Former Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Pol Pot's regime)

when the secessionist state of Biafra was briefly established, but once this crisis was ended the level of coercion fell dramatically. The ceasefire and initial peace process in Sri Lanka, which it was hoped would bring a permanent end to conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government, provides another example of dramatic decline in coerciveness. The reverse trend, i.e. a dramatic increase in coerciveness, has occurred in Nepal where the previously peaceful kingdom has been confronted by a Maoist guerrilla insurgency. Second, there are, as one would expect, huge fluctuations in coerciveness of states which embark on, or become involved in, full-scale war. For example, Operation Shock and Awe, which was employed by the United States and United Kingdom when they invaded Iraq in 2003, was one of the most dramatic examples of the use of massive firepower, a deliberate use of coercive military force to commence a war which did not have a mandate of approval from the United Nations Security

Council. Hence, although the US and the UK fall into the category of democracies least reliant on the use or threat of coercive power for their internal governance, both countries have been involved in extreme coerciveness as an instrument of foreign policy.

Economic coercion

It is a mistake to view the use of military or police powers as the only form of coercion open to the state. In domestic policies the state may embark on draconian economic measures, for example, Mugabe's expropriation of the lands of white farmers, Stalin's 'collectivization' of agriculture in the 1930s, and the rather ruthless exploitation of state control over the economy in countries such as North Korea and Belarus. There has been a debate in the neo-Marxist literature about the theory of so-called 'structural violence' as a form of coercion within the capitalist democracies. It is pointed out that what is often described as 'free bargaining', for example, between the worker and the employer, is in effect no such thing because the power of the parties to the bargaining process is so unequal. A poor man who may be the sole provider for his family who becomes unemployed in a time of recession may have no realistic alternative but to take a poorly paid job with poor working conditions in order to support his family. This is certainly not 'free bargaining', but nor is it coercion by the state. It should be more accurately described as economic exploitation by the employer. Moreover, we should take into account that most democracies have adopted social welfare policies which at least mitigate the effects of unemployment and low income on the poorest members of society (for example, forms of national insurance, health care, free education, income support, and other forms of welfare benefits). I am therefore excluding the so-called 'structural violence' in capitalist societies from the coercive powers used by the state.

However, there are innumerable instances of states using coercive economic measures in the form of sanctions as instruments of

foreign policy. Such measures are deliberately aimed at coercing the targeted state to change its policies, and recent history shows that, although they have a mixed track record, they can sometimes be effective. The UK's attempts to bring pressure on the Southern Rhodesian regime when it declared independence in 1965 were ineffective because Ian Smith's government was able to secure supplies of vital material, such as oil, via South Africa. However, economic sanctions against the Apartheid regime in South Africa did make a major contribution to persuading the Nationalist Party government to negotiate an end to Apartheid because the international economic pressure, significantly including the United States, was having a major impact on the South African business community. Another striking example of the power of economic sanctions as a coercive measure to cause major reorientation of a state's policy was the case of Libya. It is widely agreed that the economic measures adopted by the US and the international community in 1991 in connection with two Libyans indicted on charges of involvement in the Pan Am 103 sabotage bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, played a key part in persuading Colonel Gaddafi to hand over the two suspects for trial by Scottish judges held in Holland. The measures that really put pressure on the Gaddafi regime included a prohibition on the export to Libya of vital items of energy industry technology needed by Libya for the exploitation of their gas and oil reserves, and restrictions on trade which prevented Libya from expanding its trade with the EU countries and the US at a time when the regime was desperate to deepen its economic links with Western countries and to attract Western capital investment. The prohibition of direct flights to Libya was far less significant in economic terms but it was humiliating for the Gaddafi regime. Carefully selected and targeted economic sanctions can coerce specific regimes in certain circumstances, especially when the measures are widely supported and implemented by the international community.

The epitome of the coercive state

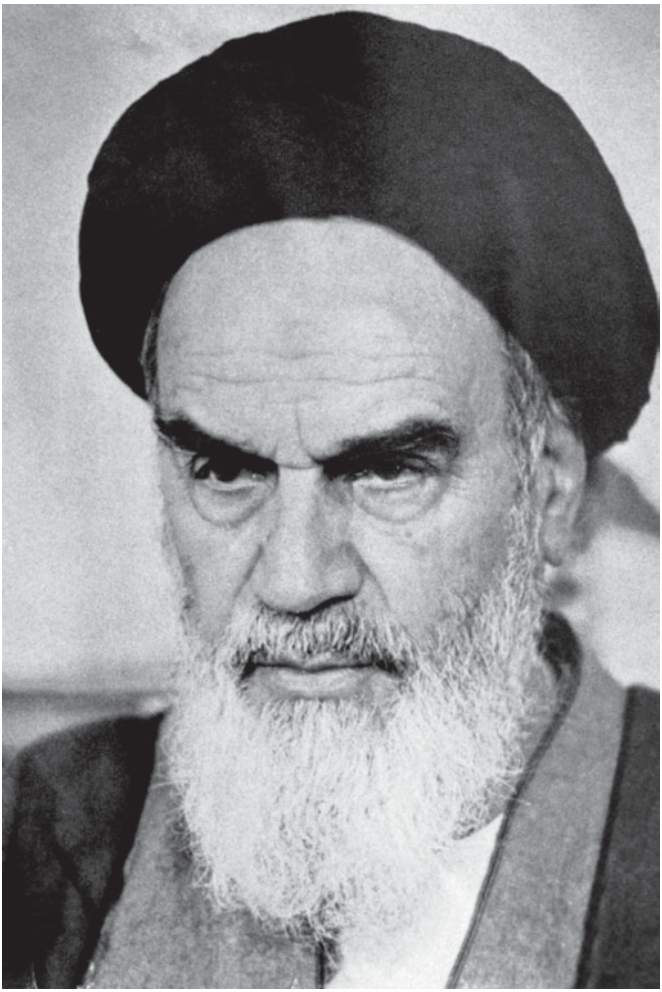
What are the major features of the coercive state? It is not surprising to find that they are wholly incompatible with the key characteristics of liberal democratic states. Whereas the latter come to power by the consent of the governed, that is through regularly conducted free elections, the typical coercive regime achieves power as a result of a *coup*, a revolution, or a successful insurgency, often supported only by a small minority of the population, and frequently resorting to terror attacks against civilians as part of its tactics for seizing power. Once in power the typical coercive state almost instinctively employs extreme violence or terror to intimidate and suppress any threat to its power or even on the pretext of threats or dissent which are shown to be imagined rather than real.

Once in control of the state machine, the military, and the police, the typical coercive state tends to arrogate all power to itself and to use any available means to maintain its monopoly. In other words, they exercise power with total ruthlessness with the full endorsement of the dictatorship. Although they always seek to appropriate the language of legitimacy and legality they have no concept of the rule of law as it is known in an operative liberal democracy. There is no set of constitutional impediments or checks and balances which can constrain them because they see themselves as above the law. The law is whatever they decree it to be at any given moment. There is no independent judiciary: those who dispense the dictatorship's 'laws' are creatures of the dictatorship and their so-called courts are a mockery of justice. Extra-judicial murders, torture, mass deportation, and even massacres are carried out at the behest of the dictatorship which actually orders these crimes.

Political opponents who are seen as potentially dangerous will be either killed or incarcerated in solitary confinement. The typical

security agency of the coercive state is the secret police, and spying on the population, surveillance, and harassment are constant activities, along with attempts to control the media and to censor anything to which the dictatorship takes exception. The typical coercive state will also seek to ensure that all the other organs of social organization and communication, for example, places of worship, educational institutions, trade unions, and professional organizations are constantly monitored to ensure that they do not become channels for mobilizing dissent and opposition to the regime. However, the attempt by dictatorships to control the flow of information and ideas has become far more difficult as a result of globalization and the development of the internet and other media technologies. Ultimately it is this inability to control the flow of information and ideas across international borders that has made the entire project of constructing a new totalitarian dictatorship far less feasible today than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. Personal tyrannies and one-party states still exist but the above analysis suggests that they are more vulnerable than ever today to revolutions from below. In many ways the velvet revolutions at the end of the cold war were the precursors. The appetite for democracy and freedom is contagious. Events in Iraq, the Ukraine, and Lebanon in 2005 are encouraging evidence of this trend, although in Iraq, at the time of writing, the efforts to construct a new democratic constitution acceptable to the Sunni population as well as the Shia and Kurds are encountering considerable difficulties.

Finally, we should note that the typical coercive state of the early 21st century is not a one-party regime. It is a ruling party dominated regime. Frequently a number of tame political parties in addition to the ruling party are tolerated on the strict understanding that they must never threaten the controlling position of the dictatorship's own party. If a token dissenting party steps out of line and becomes a serious nuisance to the regime it will be suppressed ruthlessly.



3. Ayatollah Khomeini (1900–89) led the Iranian revolution which overthrew the Shah (1979). He was leader of Iran during its war with Iraq (1980–8) and the US hostage crisis.

The typical dictatorship takes a similar line on religious faiths or movements. Provided a religious organization keeps out of politics and avoids any criticism of the dictatorship's policies and actions it will generally be permitted to continue to conduct religious services. However, even this limited degree of religious toleration can hold hidden dangers for the dictatorship. For example, in Poland under Communist rule it was not only the courage of Solidarity trade union leader Lech Walesa and his colleagues who provided leadership of the resistance to the Communist dictatorship. The Catholic Church, traditionally a major influence in Polish life, provided an important alternative value-system and intellectual framework to the dreary diet of Marxist-Leninist ideology pumped out by the Communist leaders. Religion can function as a powerful catalyst for opposition and potentially, for outright defiance and resistance to the regime.

This can apply just as much to the Muslim religion. For example, it was Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters who became the catalyst for the fundamentalist Iranian revolution which mobilized mass support in the streets and toppled the Shah's regime. Ironically, no sooner had they disposed of Riza Shah Pahlavi then they proceeded to establish a religious fundamentalist dictatorship far more repressive in character and which used terror against its designated 'enemies' both internal and external. Religiously motivated revolutions or rebellions do not inevitably lead to democratic forms of government being established. The fate of Afghanistan following the seizure of power by the Taliban is a clear example of a religiously motivated extremist regime gaining power and introducing a ferociously repressive regime, in many respects a throwback to the Dark Ages.

The debate on totalitarianism

The most influential work in the concept and theory of totalitarianism is Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

(1958). Her conception of totalitarianism is founded on the theory of a mass society in which traditional ties and intermediate organizations and loyalties have been destroyed by the devastating effects of war. In these conditions, Arendt posits, the isolated individual is vulnerable to being mobilized to a new loyalty, a bond of total loyalty and subservience to a charismatic leader, such as Hitler, who by manipulating the masses can construct a system of centralized control which rules and subdues its opponents by means of state terror on a massive scale. In my view, this remains the most persuasive and powerful theory of the origins of totalitarianism. In an influential study, which was originally published five years after Arendt's, Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski identify the following key characteristics of a totalitarian system: (i) A totalitarian ideology professing to be universal in its applicability and a 'true' theory to govern the life of the individual and the state; (ii) a single mass party under the leadership of the dictatorship; (iii) a system of state terror in which the key instrument is the secret police; (iv) total control over communications; (v) a monopoly of control of the military and military armaments; and (vi) centralized control over the economy. The major point of difference between Friedrich and Brzezinski and Arendt is that the latter does not view a totalitarian universalist ideology as an essential component of a totalitarian system of rule, and she places greater emphasis on the role of absolute terror as an instrument of the totalitarian regime.

However, it is implicit in Friedrich and Brzezinski's concept that a truly totalitarian regime is only feasible in a relatively developed country with a high degree of industrialization, and modern communications and technology. It could be argued that, in the light of more recent developments in technology such as the internet, the degree of control over communications and the flow of information implied in the Friedrich and Brzezinski model is no longer practicable. New technologies have become a powerful weapon for challenging state power.

Rosemary O'Kane, one of the most perceptive comparative analysts of the coercive state, points to another serious problem with the classic theories of totalitarianism described above. In her analysis of the case of Cambodia in the zero years she shows that the Pol Pot regime, which massacred hundreds of thousands of Cambodians in the mid-1970s, did not have access to the modern technology and communications implicit in Friedrich and Brzezinski's model of totalitarianism, or a modern bureaucracy. Cambodia was an underdeveloped largely agrarian country. Nor did the Pol Pot regime have a complex universalist ideology. Instead the regime concentrated on inculcating socio-economic resentment among the peasants and used this, combined with a populist form of nationalism, to turn the rural dwellers against the city dwellers, and particularly against the small middle class and the intellectuals. However, as O'Kane concludes, there are features of the Pol Pot regime which bear a close resemblance to the Arendt model: Cambodia had been devastated by warfare; traditional ties and intermediate organizations at local level were severely disrupted or destroyed (and the regime's enforced movement of hundreds of thousands of the population exacerbated the level of socio-economic crisis); and, above all, the regime fully demonstrated its capacity for absolute terror by mass killing on a genocidal scale, albeit using its guerrilla army rather than a secret police to implement the terror.

Rosemary O'Kane makes the valuable proposal that the more accurate way to describe the Pol Pot regime is as a *rudimentary totalitarianism*, which has its origins in 'the uprooting of societies through the decimation of foreign and civil war'. In other words, it may be a serious error to assume that the totalitarian model of the coercive state applies exclusively to developed, industrialized societies. The severe effects of conflict, destruction, and the uprooting of societies which can be witnessed in so many war-torn regions of the world could well have the effect of stimulating growth of fresh proto-totalitarian and rudimentary totalitarian regimes.

4. The skulls are those of victims of Pol Pot's policy of mass murder in Cambodia in the 1970s, which led to the deaths of an estimated two million people.

Murderous personal tyrannies: Idi Amin and Saddam Hussein

Idi Amin's regime in Uganda began when he seized power from the government of President Milton Obote on 25 January, 1971, and lasted until a successful counter-*coup* by the Tanzanian armed forces and exiles of the Uganda Liberation Front succeeded in removing him in April 1979. The *coup* which brought Amin to power was relatively bloodless, causing less than 100 casualties, and was initially popular among the majority of Ugandans. Amin promised to get rid of the corruption and favouritism which he claimed characterized the Obote government. He pledged free elections, the release of political prisoners, and the scrapping of the martial law imposed by the Obote government. The reality was to be vastly different. Amin soon consolidated his power by taking control of the army, purged it of officers and soldiers who had been loyal supporters of the former regime, and filled it with

Amin loyalists, especially Palestinians and Sudanese troops. There was certainly nothing new about using the army as an instrument of control under dictatorship. What was different about Amin's regime was the cruelty and ruthlessness he used to consolidate and maintain his power.

Amin transformed his regime from a military dictatorship into a personal tyranny. In the process he killed an estimated 300,000 people, mainly members of tribes other than his own. Many were thrown into prison, tortured, and then killed on direct orders from Amin. His main instruments of state terror became the State Research Bureau, Public Safety Unit, and the army. In the autumn of 1972 Amin expelled the Ugandan Asian community to Britain, having made the absurd claim that they were undermining the Ugandan economy. In reality the small Ugandan Asian minority was potentially one of Uganda's main assets because of its business and professional skills.

One of the recurrent features of personal tyrannies in Africa and elsewhere is that the dictator often makes decisions that are wholly irrational, that is against their own longer term interests. This is all too evident in the case of the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe, where the expropriation of the lands of the white farmers has virtually destroyed the rural economy. Ironically it was Amin's unbelievable incompetence in managing the Ugandan economy that was his undoing. In order to court popularity with Ugandans he decided to nationalize all the major foreign-owned businesses in the country. This had the effect of scaring away foreign investment, causing a serious drop in productivity, increasing inflation, and providing Amin and his henchmen with an ideal opportunity for increased personal enrichment through corruption and embezzlement. In the last two years of his rule the economy of Amin's Uganda totally collapsed.

A depressing asset of the Amin regime in Uganda, which again has been a recurrent theme in other dictatorships in Africa and

elsewhere in the developing world, was the initial willingness of the United Kingdom and other countries to turn a blind eye to Amin's major human rights violations and to sell him large quantities of weapons. However, after 1973 when Amin began to form closer relations with the Soviet Union, and in the wake of the 1976 Entebbe hijack, when Amin was shown to be hand in glove with the terrorists, relations with the West sharply declined.

Amin finally overreached himself in April 1979, when he foolishly decided to invade Tanzania. In response Tanzanian troops invaded Uganda. Large numbers of Amin's forces either deserted or surrendered, Amin suffered a humiliating defeat and was swept from power.

Amin's regime is a very clear example of a personal tyranny. It appears to have had no recognizable ideology and this made it very easy for Amin to switch sides and curry favour with the Soviet Union after initially seeking weapons, supplies, and other resources from the West. A common feature of personal tyrannies is that their lack of any basic ideological foundation enables them to be entirely promiscuous and exploitative in their relations with foreign powers.

The personal tyranny of Saddam Hussein over Iraq, 1979–2003, inflicted enormous suffering on the Iraqi Kurdish population and on the Shi'ite population, and also on the Marsh Arabs. There is of course ample historical evidence that dictatorships which are threatened by, or perceive they are in danger of the break-up of their territory as a result of ethno-nationalist insurgency tend to use the most brutal and extreme forms of coercion to suppress the insurgency. The recent history of Burma, Indonesia, Congo-Zaire, Sudan, and many other states exemplifies this trend very clearly. However, even by the standards of draconian repression of nationalist upsurge Saddam Hussein's record was exceptionally brutal.

Indeed, in the eyes of respected human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, the violence and terror used by the Saddam regime against the Kurds was on near-genocidal scale. Kurdish nationalism has always been strong among the Iraqi Kurds and the *peshmerga*, their guerrilla fighters, constantly harassed the Iraqi regime in the years before Saddam took power. During the Iran–Iraq War, 1980–8, the Kurdish nationalists saw their opportunity to take control over what they regarded as their territory in northern Iraq. The various Kurdish factors united under the umbrella of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front. With some help and encouragement from the Iranians they proceeded to mount a very effective campaign against Saddam's army. In response Saddam decided to inflict a terrible vengeance on the Kurds.

Thousands of Kurdish villages were destroyed and mass deportations and massacres of Kurds were carried out. In March 1988 Saddam's forces resorted to the use of chemical weapons against the civilians in the town of Halabja, causing the death of over 6,000. The precise number of those killed in Saddam's brutal attempt to suppress the Iraqi Kurds will never be known, but it is certainly over 100,000.

In the wake of the first Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation the Kurds again went on the offensive against Saddam's regime and reoccupied their land in northern Iraq. However, the US and UK governments were not ready or willing to intervene and support the Kurds' bid for autonomy, and Saddam once again mounted a ruthless campaign to regain control over northern Iraq. Faced with the terrible plight of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees fleeing through snow-covered mountains to Turkey, and many more into Iran, the Western Coalition which had liberated Kuwait declared that they would guarantee the Kurds safe haven in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq, send in humanitarian relief, and attempt to ensure protection of the Kurds by the use of patrols by Allied

military aircraft. Since the toppling of the Saddam regime in 2003 the Kurds have been able to enjoy relative security. They took a full part in the first free elections in Iraq in January 2005 and in the talks on a new federal constitution for Iraq.

There are two main lessons to be drawn from the epic of Saddam's attempts to suppress the Kurds. First, if the coercive state is prepared to deploy its superior firepower without any political or humanitarian restraint, and there is no intervention from a more powerful state or coalition of states to protect a minority targeted with extreme repression and terror, the coercive state can succeed, at least temporarily, in suppressing the physical capability of the insurgents to resist.

However, the second key lesson from the epic struggle of the Kurds against Saddam's personalized tyranny is that there are severe limits to what absolute terror and brutal coercion can achieve. In Milton's memorable worlds, 'Who overcomes by force, hath overcome but half his foe' (*Paradise Lost*, 1. 648).

A determined minority, particularly one with a powerful aspiration for autonomy or self-determination, can still present a latent potential threat even after decades of brutal repression, because they have the motivation and belief in their cause to sustain a spirit of resistance even in their darkest hours.

The proper use of force in the liberal state

There is a crucial difference between the use of illegitimate coercion, or violence, by a state that ignores the norms of the rule of law in domestic and international policy and the proper use of legitimate force under the constitutional and legal checks and balances of the liberal state. There are clearly many circumstances when the use of force is not only justifiable but positively

obligatory if the rule of law, national security, and public safety are to be upheld.

Citizens have a duty, for example, to assist the state in defence of the community against external attack. And there are clear obligations to defend and uphold the constitution and enforce the laws. It has been observed earlier in this discussion that there also may be circumstances in which the citizens may have a moral obligation to use force unilaterally against leaders or state officials who have seriously derogated from, subverted, or overturned the liberal democratic constitution. The problem of the right use of force, however, raises not only issues of moral legitimacy and legality but also some difficult questions concerning the way in which forces should be employed. Who should be entrusted with the execution of force? How much force should be used?

In the case of external attack the normal agency of the state responsible for defence is the armed forces, and in a democracy both government and citizens will expect these defence forces to use whatever force is required to repel attack and defeat the enemy. Moreover it is a cardinal and long-standing principle of democratic government that the armed services should be firmly under ultimate civil control by the democratically responsible government. But responsibility for tasks of internal security has been a matter of serious contention in many liberal states. Should the civil police take on the job as a natural extension of their police law-enforcement function? Should responsibility be shared by police and army, the latter being called in to tackle the more serious outbreaks of political violence and unrest? Or should there be a 'third force', on the model of the French CRS, specially designated, trained, and equipped to tackle domestic political violence? The precise formula adopted has tended to vary widely in accordance with constitutional and juridical tradition. Clear advantage may be gained from a tradition of unarmed police using low-profile and gentle methods and maintaining public support and sympathetic cooperation. These benefits must,

however, be weighed against the concomitant lack of decisive physical presence and firepower necessary to defeat armed insurgents.

In all liberal democracies the army is regarded as the last line of defence against internal disorders, and various constitutional and legal formulas exist to invoke their aid to the civil power in severe disturbances and emergencies. However, whatever the balance of forces deployed by the state to deal with internal violence, there are certain basic principles which must govern the use of such force by the liberal state.

First and foremost, security agencies must operate entirely within the framework of law. If they defy the rule of law under the pretence of protecting it they undermine the integrity, authority, and public respect for the law which is essential to the continuance of constitutional democracy. Some individual sections and members of police and security forces will be tempted to accrete extra-legal powers and to hide behind the shield of 'superior orders' and 'security interests'. Others may unwittingly be misled, in the absence of clearly defined legal responsibilities and procedures, into taking actions which expose them to civil actions and public prosecutions. The most evil and dangerous consequence that may follow from repeated overturning of the rule of law is the establishment of a power-hungry security apparatus which acquires an appetite for extra-judicial reprisal. Alas Solzhenitsyn was too sanguine in assuming that 'the only punitive organ in human history that combined in one set of hands investigation, arrest, interrogation, prosecution, trial and execution of the verdict' was the Cheka. Democracies have no magical immunity against such cancerous growths, and their citizens and political leaders have a duty to ensure that police and security services operate within the constitution and the law. It is noteworthy that the Congressional Church Committee investigation into the US Secret Services' activities, while admitting the difficult problems entailed in firm

political control and surveillance of such operations, repeatedly spells out the importance of this lesson for the health of the US political system.

The clear corollary of operating within the rule of law is the maintenance of absolutely clear and firm democratic control over police and security services and operations. Some modern counter-insurgency specialists constantly reiterate their demand for these services to be kept under a single unified control. Although a case may be made for this on the grounds of economy of resources, secrecy, and effectiveness, we should also recognize the dangers inherent in such a unified structure. There are obvious traditional weaknesses of administrative centralization such as bureaucratic remoteness, insensitivity, and cumbersome decision-making procedures. Additional dangers may stem from 'monopolistic' security organizations abusing their power, losing their identification with local communities, and forfeiting invaluable popular trust and support.

The other major principle governing the right use of force by the liberal state is the doctrine of minimal force. This principle has been the predominant guide to the British police forces in the matter of political violence throughout their history. In essence it has meant the use of minimum force to deter, restrain, or, if necessary, contain violence, and to preserve public order. To exercise the police function with such restraint inevitably calls for superb discipline and professionalism, a studied impartiality and neutrality in matters of political controversy, and considerable patience and moral courage.

Minimal force does not simply apply to crowd control and potentially violent or disruptive demonstrations and processions. The essential principle can also be applied to armed response and armed violence. In such circumstances the aims of minimal force must be to protect the public, to bring about the rapid disarming and peaceful surrender of the armed persons involved, and to

bring them before the courts on criminal charges. Contrast the purely military aim in time of war of identifying the enemy and shooting them on sight. One of the reasons why soldiers find it so onerous and unnatural to take on a constabulary minimal-force role is that it is essentially alien to their military training and ethos.

But can minimal force really work effectively when the security forces face a sizeable number of heavily armed and ruthless insurgents? Historical experience indicates that liberal states need to react much more positively and forcefully to defeat armed revolutionaries, guerrillas, and terrorists. In what is, after all, an internal war situation, the forces of the state have to be empowered to take war measures, to go on the offensive and to use all military means necessary to defeat a direct challenge to the survival of the state. I would argue that the doctrine of minimal force is only really effective in circumstances where there is a relatively high degree of political consensus and social cohesion, cooperation, and discipline. It fails to work where large sections of the population deny the legitimacy of the state, and where many view the police and army as alien, hostile, and oppressive.

In sum, I am arguing that, while the doctrine of minimal force is a sensible and comfortably reassuring one for a democracy, we should be constantly critically re-examining our level of force in the light of changing threats and potential for violence in international relations. While democracies should avoid over-reliance on military force they do need adequate means of self-defence.

There is another reason why we should be conscious of the limitations of minimal force doctrine. We must avoid falling into the habit of believing that the possession of adequate force for legal sanctions and defence is sufficient unto the day, a panacea for all forms of social and political violence. Force may restrain or punish or defend but it cannot reconcile and heal.

Positive political cooperation and unification require the building of allegiances, loyalties, trust and confidence, and greater mutual understanding. Force cannot bring these things about, though certainly a restrained and humane use of force is less likely to destroy positive political cooperation than unrestrained and overwhelming force. But the necessary vehicles for bringing about positive political progress must be effective communication, dialogue, and mutual education. To restore a parched and stricken political community one needs to irrigate it by replenishing or creating afresh the vital channels of political culture.

Weak, failed, and quasi-states

In briefing the new Secretary of State, the senior adviser is unlikely to spend long on very weak and failed states, unless a crisis involving a state of this kind and the United States is seen to have a particular interest or responsibility. The Secretary of State will probably never see files of papers regarding, for example, the tiny microstates of Oceania, the Pacific Islands of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. However, it would be a mistake to equate small size with acute economic deprivation. For example, in 2000, French Polynesia's 200,000 population enjoyed a GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per head of $28,000 US dollars, and a higher total GDP than Papua New Guinea with a population of almost five million. Iceland, with a population of 300,000 has a total GDP of almost $8 billion dollars and a higher GDP per head than Belgium; and Andorra, one of the world's tiniest states, with a population of 100,000 has an estimated GDP of over $1 billion dollars. So long as these tiny states remain financially viable and continue to meet their international obligations and abide by the rules of international trade and diplomacy, they are unlikely to figure in the new Secretary of State's daily briefings.

The Secretary of State will need to be briefed very fully on what some political scientists have called *failed states* because they are, by definition, already experiencing profound political crisis, in

some cases civil strife and acute economic crises and instabilities. Many of the countries that fall into this category are in Africa where in all cases political and economic crises have been deepened by the tragic HIV/Aids epidemic. For example, Congo-Brazzaville, Zimbabwe, and Eritrea are among the ten countries in the world with the highest number of AIDS cases per 100,000 of the population.

A further tragic irony is that Eritrea spends the highest percentage of GDP on defence of any country, and Congo-Brazzaville is twelfth in the same defence spending league table.

The states to which the new Secretary of State will be required to give the most urgent attention are those in a state of serious crisis and where the US has committed US troops, now almost invariably in alliance with other NATO partners, in an effort to provide the necessary basic security to facilitate longer term economic recovery and political stability. In 2005–6 the two thickest files falling into this category would be those covering Iraq and Afghanistan.

Despite the popularity of the term 'failed states' one could argue that it has questionable value in the contemporary international system. One of the most significant features of contemporary international relations is that even the weakest and most crisis-ridden states are protected by the now well established norms of the post-colonial era. In the heyday of colonization such countries would have been immediate targets for imperial conquest and exploitation by more powerful states in the international system. Today, states are expected to adhere to the norms of anti-colonialism and to uphold the right of all the former colonized countries to self-determination and sovereign independence on the basis of equal status with all other states in the international system. Effectively this means that once a state has become part of our international system it automatically retains its status as an independent sovereign country even

when it is woefully misgoverned by its rulers, and even when it is experiencing civil war and other large-scale internal violence and economic crisis. The United Nations Charter does provide for action under Chapter VII which may include military intervention in certain emergency situations which are deemed by the UN Security Council to be a threat to international peace and security.

Although the unilateral decision of the US and UK governments to invade Iraq in the absence of a specific UN resolution authorizing such action defied this international norm against unilateral military intervention, there is no clear evidence that this persuaded the rest of the international community to abandon the norm of non-intervention.

So what term should we use to describe those states which are experiencing internal violence on a massive, in some cases genocidal, scale and which appear to be in a situation of complete internal chaos and crisis, but which still have the formal status of states, recognized by other states, rights of representation at the UN and other international fora? I would suggest that the term *quasi-states* is a more appropriate designation for these states which enjoy the status and symbols of independent statehood but which patently lack the political will and basic capacity for effective governance required to deliver the basic socio-economic needs and security required by their citizens.

The role of the individual and the state

One way of examining international relations is through the role of unique individuals. As E. H. Carr argued in *What is History?*, the study of the idiographic (i.e. individuals) is just as valid and necessary as the study of broad trends and patterns in human societies if we are to gain a fuller understanding of history. Exactly the same argument applies to the study of international relations.

5. Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) was Prime Minister of Prussia (1862–90). He used Prussia's military strength and his political cunning to defeat Austria and France and become the first Chancellor of the German Reich in 1871.

For example, how could one adequately explain the emergence of French hegemony in 17th-century Europe without taking into account the clever statecraft of Cardinal de Richelieu (1585–1642) who became Chief Minister to Louis XIII of France? Richelieu's masterstroke was to align France with the Protestant powers in the Thirty Years War, thus greatly enhancing French power at the expense of France's major rival, Spain. How could one explain the breakdown of the 18th-century balance of power in Europe without reference to the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, who for a limited period succeeded in dominating a large part of Europe? And how can one understand the way in which Napoleon's bid for domination was defeated and how a new balance of power was created at the Congress of Vienna without examining the role of British statesman, Viscount Castlereagh, who, as British Foreign Secretary (1812–22) led the Grand Alliance against Napoleon and, with Prince Klemens von Metternich the Austrian Foreign Minister and Chancellor, created the new Concert of Powers which succeeded in maintaining a general peace in Europe for over half a century? And what chance would the student of international politics in Europe have of understanding the developments which ultimately undermined the European balance of power in the 19th century without a proper consideration of the policies of Prince Otto von Bismarck, Prime Minister of Prussia (1862–90), who masterminded the defeat of France and Austria and brought about the unification of Germany?

Nor is the key role of individual statesmen and leaders restricted to the autocracies and traditional monarchies of the pre-democratic era. It is hard to underestimate the contribution of Georges 'Tiger' Clemenceau, Premier of France 1917–20, to Allied victory in the First World War and to the shaping of the Treaty of Versailles. Similarly, it would be impossible to explain the determined and ultimately successful British struggle to defeat Hitler without taking into account the key role of Winston Churchill as wartime Prime Minister. How very different things would have been if Neville Chamberlain had somehow survived in

Karikatur auf den Wiener Kongreß. Zeitgenössisches Flugblatt.

6. The Congress of Vienna (1814–15), where European statesmen attempted to solve the European territorial problems resulting from the Napoleonic Wars.

office or if the premiership had fallen into the hands of a politician who still clung to the policy of appeasement towards Germany.

It is easy to find examples of dictators in recent history who had a colossal impact on the shape of international relations: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Tse-Tung are obvious examples. And in attempting to explain the ending of the cold war and the implosion of the Soviet Union, it would be absurd to overlook the major role of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party 1988–91. Gorbachev's personal commitment to developing communism with a human face and ending the confrontation with the West were of seminal importance. His political reforms ended the Communist Party's monopoly of power and paved the way for a break-up of the Soviet Union.

Last but not least we should not neglect the huge importance of the common man, particularly important in times of major crises

7. Trench warfare, where armies confronted each other in trenches, notably in the 1914–18 war, led to slaughter on a massive scale. Allied victory was won at a huge cost in soldier's lives.

and war. The sacrifices of millions of individuals made possible our enjoyment of freedom in the democracies of today. It was that wisest of all liberal political philosophers, John Stuart Mill, who observed: 'The worth of a state, in the long run is the worth of the individuals composing it'.

It is again all too easy to overlook the importance of the character and qualities of a state's citizens when attempting to assess the state's power and influence. The dramatist Jean Giraudoux, in his play *Tiger at the Gates* about the war between the Greeks and the Trojans, makes Ulysses muse aloud about the strength of nations:

> A nation doesn't put itself at odds with its destiny by its crimes, but by its faults. Its army may be strong, its treasury well filled, its poets at the height if inspiration. But one day, why no one knows, because of some simple event … the nation is suddenly lost.

Total disappearance of a nation-state would indeed be a rare event in today's world. Indeed the durability of the state as the fundamental unit of the international system is one of the basic realities for any student of international relations. Nevertheless there are international relations scholars who argue that the state is becoming obsolete because even reasonably well-resourced states are unable to deal with the serious challenges posed by transnational phenomena such as climate change, major natural disaster, international organized crime, pandemics such as AIDS, and so on, and because greater regional economic integration and major reform of the UN may now be, according to their view, more promising as a framework for assisting very weak states.

As we have observed there is a huge variety of states. Many are so weak that they can best be viewed as quasi or failing states. Some are extremely unpleasant and dangerous not only to their citizens but to the wider international community. Despite this there is no sign of citizens wishing to abandon their state structures in favour of some integrated system of global or even regional governance. The recent rejection of the EU's draft Constitution by the voters in key member states suggests that even in the EU, a region of the world with long experience of substantial economic integration, there is no appetite for joining a superstate. Let us be realistic. The modern state is not seen as obsolescent by its citizens. With all its imperfections and problems the state seems to be here to stay.