Chapter 2
Non-states

Religions

It would be a great mistake to assume that people everywhere define their identity primarily in terms of the state in which they reside. For millions of people, especially those who live within the borders of multi-religious and multi-ethnic states, their primary identity will be defined by their religion, or by a mixture of their religion and their ethnicity. All the world's major religions originated before the emergence of the modern state. In our secular age, when many of us in Western countries take it for granted that there should be a clear separation between religious institutions and the state, it is quite often overlooked that religion has been the single most powerful influence not only on societal values, morality, and the norms and practices of family and community life: it has also had a major impact on the nature of the state itself, its laws and institutions and processes of government.

For example, Christianity was the major influence in the shaping of the European nation-state and the state system generally. The moral foundations of international law and the concept of international society are to be found in Christianity. This is most clearly seen in the masterwork of international law by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (On the Law of

War and Peace) (1625). Grotius posits the key idea of a society of states sharing sufficient solidarity on the common principles that should govern inter-state relations, even in times of conflict, so that international law would not only be respected, it would be enforced. According to the rules of Grotian international law the rights of states to go to war are strictly limited and military force should only be used for the benefit of the whole international society. Sadly these principles remain idealistic aspirations: today one could hardly argue that Grotian ideas of the basic norms of international society and humanitarian restraints in the course of inter-state and internal warfare are respected and implemented by nation-states generally.

To sum up briefly, the impact of religious movements and institutions has been decidedly mixed. On the one hand, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have all inspired humanitarian activities by both the rulers and the ruled, including the movement to abolish slavery, the International Red Cross movement, and Christian socialism aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the working classes. On the other, religions have motivated and inspired some of the most brutal inter-state and internal wars and terrorist campaigns. Yet the long-term influence of religion in helping to inspire and establish movements for the protection and enhancement of human rights for aid and development in the world's poorest countries has been a hugely positive contribution to the betterment of humanity.

However, we would be making a great mistake if we thought this was the only way in which religion can influence international relations. Religious institutions and movements have intervened directly in politics with quite dramatic effects. One example from recent history would be the way in which the Catholic Church acted as a focus of resistance to Communism. The ultimate success of the Solidarity movement in bringing Polish liberation from Communist rule owed a great deal to the determined support of both the Catholic Church in Poland and

8. Pope John Paul II (1920–2005), born in Poland, was the first non-Italian to be elected Pope since 1522, and is credited with helping to hasten the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and generally.

the Polish-born Pope John Paul II. In Iran the overthrow of the Shah of Iran (1979) was led by Ayatollah Khomeini, the architect of the revolution which brought a militant Islamic fundamentalist regime to power and changed the balance of power in the Gulf and the wider Middle East. The former would be viewed by liberal-minded people as a good example of religion serving as a powerful ally in the struggle for political freedom and democracy, but the religious revolution in Iran, which put an authoritarian theocracy into power, can be seen as a regressive step both for the Iranian people and for the future of Iran's international relations.

This negative aspect of the influence of religion on international relations is of course by no means confined to the Islamic world. Jewish extremists in Israel, for example, have bitterly opposed any proposals for handing back lands in Gaza and the West Bank on the grounds that these are part of 'Biblical Israel' and must be defended at all costs. Note that it was a Jewish religious extremist

who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, thereby dealing a major blow to the Oslo peace accords.

Our new US Secretary of State should be briefed in considerable detail about the influence of religious extremists not only in the Middle East but worldwide. She should be advised to take a close interest in inter-faith dialogue, to be fully aware of the extent to which Islamist extremists are involved in the Al Qaeda network, the most dangerous form of international terrorism faced by the international community today. If this ruthless fanaticism is to be opposed effectively, the Secretary of State will need to work with her opposite numbers around the world to enlist moderate religious leaders everywhere to combine their efforts to dissuade angry alienated young Muslims from being recruited into the Al Qaeda or jihadi networks. Non-state religious movements, institutions, and leaders would not have been part of a Secretary of State's briefing during the cold war. Today it is as important that she knows about these as it is that she knows about the policies of major states, for these non-state networks pose a threat to the security not only of the US and its allies, but also to many medium and small states in the international community who may well have supposed that they were immune from such attacks. Why should Kenya and Tanzania, for example, have been chosen as venues for attacks on US embassies in August 1998? The attacks came like a bolt out of the blue, killing over 240, most of whom were citizens of Nairobi going about their daily business. I shall return to the challenge posted by terrorist groups in a later section, but first we must consider a second major category of non-state phenomena with an enduring and massive influence on international relations: nationalist movements.

Nationalism

Medieval Europe was innocent of modern doctrines of nationalism. Linked by the concept (if not by the reality) of a united Christendom and by the common language of the Catholic

Church, the states of medieval Europe constituted parcels of dynastic inheritance. The boundaries of these empires, kingdoms, and principalities were often ill-defended, and were drawn without regard for ethnic, linguistic, or religious homogeneity. The kingdom was what the king could hold against the military and diplomatic rivalry of his competitors and the king's subjects therefore maintained a kind of tripartite structure of loyalties: duty to the church (which was conceived as separate from, and transcending, temporal rulers), duty to the king, and loyalty and service to the lord of their locality. Often the sovereign and the lord had to resort to coercion when loyalty or service was withheld. The term 'nations' therefore had no political significance until the late 18th century. It simply meant, as Kedourie puts it, 'groups belonging together by similarity of birth, larger than a family but smaller than a clan or a people or places of provenance'.

The origins of modern political nationalism lie in the historical movements or trends in evidence in the Western European states of the 16th and 17th centuries, whereby the loyalty to the king and king's government became identified with, if not equated with, the overall interests of the ruler, his officials, and the entire population. Most important of all, when *raison d'état* and increasing cultural linguistic identification were reinforced by the economically maximizing potential of mercantilist, centralized, state government, the nation-state clearly emerged as the predominant and most viable European political unit.

The modern European political doctrines and movements of nationalism did not crystallize, however, until the French Revolution. It is primarily in the writings of Rousseau that we find the most powerful source of the recharging of the nation-state concept and the basis of nationalism as political doctrine. Rousseau and the Jacobins asserted the claims of the *whole population* to sovereignty over their state, for the first time proposing that the model state was synonymous with the nation.

Principles of national solidarity, universal citizenship, equal rights to civic participation and equal treatment under the law, all underpin the modern doctrine of nationalism. Once defined in terms of the entire population within a given territory, or a whole ethnic or linguistic group, nationalism asserts that the nation should become the fundamental and universal unit of political organization. Human society becomes a world of nation-states. The inevitable corollary (revolutionary, of course, in the context of 19th-century Europe) was that any nation that was oppressed by another had the right to be emancipated and made fully politically self-determining so that it could enjoy 'full nationhood'.

The nationalist doctrine has been attacked very effectively on three main fronts. The first practical point raised is that there

9. The Paris Peace Conference redrew the map of Europe after the First World War. Critics argue that the Treaty of Versailles contained the seeds of the Second World War.

is no clear agreement about how the nation should be defined. Linguistic, ethnic, and cultural-historical differences have an unfortunate habit of cross-cutting. The national determinationists in the Versailles settlement, for example, confronted ultimately insoluble difficulties in following this principle to its logical conclusions. Far from creating a new map of watertight 'pure' national units, the 1919 frontiers created fresh problems for the national minorities inconveniently trapped on the wrong sides of the new state boundaries.

Secondly, as Kedourie forcefully argues in *Nationalism*, the insistence of nationalists upon the right of national self-determination has often been mistaken by well-meaning Anglo-American liberals for a preference for constitutional democracy as a form of national self-government. Successive newly independent nation-states of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia have shown that independence in no way guarantees the adoption and maintenance of democratic free elections, parliamentary government, and independent judiciary or the protection of basic civil liberties in the state concerned.

The third point, which is the burden of E. H. Carr's brilliant short essay *Nationalism and After* (1945), is that the spread of nationalist doctrines and movements has, far from creating a happy family of nations, exacerbated international conflict. Indeed, nationalist doctrines have provided additional justification for revolution and war, have formed the basis for a popular commitment to, and involvement in, national struggles, and have provided a powerful political rationalization and propaganda instrument for indoctrinating mass armies and waging 'total war'.

On the other hand, nationalist doctrines are clearly not wholly responsible for the parlous state of international relations. Whatever Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814, German philosopher), Ernest Renan (1823–92, French theorist), and the

sillier romantic dreams of nationalist propagandists in the 19th century may have claimed, most nationalist political leaders have shown realism in appreciating that the achievement of national political self-determination can neither eradicate all external dependence and obligations nor provide a universal elixir for world peace. When critics castigate nationalist doctrines for their aggressiveness and propensity for inducing political violence, they are generally confusing nationalism in its *pure form* with doctrines of racial supremacy or ideologies of imperial aggrandizement. Given the conjunction of the rise of the nation-state with the collapse of the absolute monarchy and the rise of republican democracy, was it not inevitable that the people of Europe should look to national identity and solidarity to provide a legitimation for political autonomy? Were Gladstone, Asquith, and Lloyd George (and Woodrow Wilson for that matter) so wrong to concede to Irishmen or Czechs or Poles the right to self-determination, freedom from an alien rule which their people had never endorsed or accepted? Surely it is natural justice that people who feel themselves part of a homogeneous national community should enjoy the dignity and status of national political autonomy, so long as it is admitted that such autonomy does not in itself resolve the pressing problems of internal political and economic justice, or the problem of creating a stable international order?

Major forms of nationalist movements

Cultural-linguistic nationalism

Many of the pioneers of Slav, Western European, Middle Eastern, and African political nationalisms were *literati* who used their writings to project their consciousness of national distinctiveness and develop their initial claim for political independence. Nationalist leaders and intellectuals, once independence is achieved, may be displaced by other revolutionary political forces. Nevertheless, the newly independent nations, like their

long-established ex-imperial rulers, rapidly appreciate the importance of cultural nationalism ('the battle of the books') for the intensification of their own people's national commitments.

In cases of long-standing imperial control or attempted elimination of political nationalism, cultural nationalism stubbornly survives. As the former Soviet Union found, it is almost impossible, in practice, to eliminate the linguistic identity and solidarity of an ethnic group. Indeed there is strong evidence, in Ireland and Wales in the 19th century for example, that the more the native language of an ethnic group is despised and deliberately discouraged by a government, the more it gains in mystique and significance as a street language for the expression of communal sufferings and hopes. Where the tradition of culture and language is still widely disseminated among an entire ethnic community, it is entirely unrealistic, as was proved in the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century, to hope to prevent a political phoenix arising from the embers of cultural nationalism simply by granting a limited imperial recognition of national cultural identity. Only when the larger proportion of an ethnic group has been assimilated in the politically dominant culture, as in modern Brittany, does cultural nationalism survive as a doomed minority movement tragically unable to extend its cultural-linguistic base sufficiently to capture power by democratic means.

Anti-colonial nationalism in the 'Third World'

Nationalism was originally a European political doctrine, and it developed in the Third World as a by-product of colonial experience, accompanying or following the impact of colonial rule rather than preceding it. Herculean efforts at nation-building therefore proceed simultaneously with the construction of the political and administrative apparatus of a modern state. In most cases, however, it is by the accidents of colonial inheritance that

the territorial configuration and the designated population, as well as the official language, educational system, and the major economic and administrative institutions have been determined. In such a setting, the appeals of doctrines of national self-determination to a European-educated but partially alienated and subordinated intelligentsia were absolutely overwhelming. Here, couched in terms that Europeans found immediately comprehensible, was the very rationalization they needed for their claims to run their own affairs, liberated from imperialist rule. To carry through their objectives, however, they had to create a national identity, consciousness, and solidarity among their own people, a deep popular movement fired with a commitment to national independence. Not surprisingly, colonial governments at first attempted to crush such movements, though precise treatment varied according to the imperial power concerned and its political and military circumstances. A pragmatic colonialist tradition, such as the British, was able to engender policies of actually encouraging or conniving with the new nationalist movement in the belief that the colonial power could thus more effectively weld the often disparate and warring tribes and religious communities into a stable and orderly polity.

The early colonial nationalists, however, very soon found themselves threatened by the outflanking economic revolutionism of socialist and Marxist movements. Those leaders who clung to a vague populist appeal, to an abstract millennialism, or to dependence on their charismatic predominance, have frequently paid the price for failing to deliver the material goods, a greater social and economic equality, and improved living standards.

In many cases, especially in the British colonies, the colonial power's permissive rule encouraged the formation of nationalist parliamentary parties as a form of 'democratic tutelage', and where this happened the mass violence of a revolutionary overthrow of colonial rule was often avoided. In other circumstances, as in Cyprus, Algeria, and Aden, nationalist movements found

themselves suppressed or outlawed by the colonial government, and resorted to extra-legal, underground, guerrilla, and resistance tactics in order to wrest control from their colonial rulers. Both revolutionary 'movements of national liberation' and essentially non-violent emergent nationalist parties require, above all, powerful bases of mass support and active participation if they are to wrest and hold power. The former type has to prove its popular legitimacy in the crucible of revolutionary war, and the latter has to prove its nationalist credentials to the departing power and to its own people. It should be stressed, however, that such movements may be far more ephemeral and unstable coalitions than has been assumed hitherto. Where such movements divide and collapse, the very possibility of a popularly legitimate regime, even the nascent sense of national identity and solidarity, may be lost. In such a vacuum the way is open to determined minority groups, particularly the military officers with a monopoly of control over the coercive forces of the state to snatch a *coup d'état*, rationalized as 'the maintenance of national unity' or 'preserving law and order'.

Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

The new Secretary of State will certainly need to be briefed about MNCs. They are among the most influential and powerful non-state actors in the international system. The largest MNCs are likely to possess assets and deploy annual budgets which dwarf those of the many poor states where their operations may be located. MNCs have grown rapidly since the economic recovery following the Second World War and have undoubtedly made a major contribution to the growth of the world economy. Because, by definition, MNCs operate simultaneously in several countries or in some cases numerous countries, they can choose to locate their operations in those parts of the world where it is most profitable. They also have access to considerable funds for investment and can command the best available business and technical expertise.

However, although many countries, especially developing countries, are generally eager to attract MNCs they often hopelessly overestimate the benefits to be gained. MNCs tend to use capital-intensive methods of production, in which case they will not need to employ large numbers of workers from the host country. Often the skilled and managerial employees will be brought in from overseas. They may manage to avoid the host country's taxation by the simple device of shifting the profits out of the host country. Often the MNCs exploit the offers of incentives by the host countries quite cynically, by taking the 'carrots' offered and then reconfiguring their operations in ways that deprive the host countries of benefit.

It is a common error, however, to assume that the MNC is 'sovereign' and that 'globalization' has destroyed the capacity of the state to strike back at MNCs when they wish to do so. States have ultimate control over their territories and borders. They can and do seize MNC assets, expel MNC personnel, nationalize MNCs, impose draconian fines and punishments for alleged violations of laws, and so on. Ultimately the state is still sovereign, though it may be reluctant to take extreme steps against an MNC for fear of causing a flight of overseas investment and the withdrawal of other MNCs from the country.

It will also be very hard for the new Secretary of State to resist MNC pressures on the US government to intervene on their behalf in the event of a major clash with the host state government. However, if the new Secretary of State is able to push through quietly policies that substantially assist the MNC she might hope to be offered an attractive non-executive directorship when she eventually retires from politics!

Guerrillas and insurgents

Guerrilla warfare is the natural weapon of the strategically weaker side in a conflict. Rather than risking the annihilation of their own

forces in a full-scale battle with better armed and more numerous opponents, the guerrilla wages what Taber has called 'the war of the flea', using methods, times, and places of the guerrilla's choice and constantly striving to benefit from the guerrilla's major tactical advantage – the element of surprise. It is a classic method of warfare, almost as old as the history of human society.

A key lesson from the recent history of guerrilla warfare, as shown in a masterly survey by Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla*, is that it is hardly ever a self-sufficient means of achieving victory. Only when the anti-guerrilla side underestimates the guerrilla threat, or simply fails to commit adequate resources to the conflict, does a guerrilla have a change of achieving, unaided, long-term political aims. In most 20th-century cases, guerrilla warfare on a major scale has been linked to revolutionary warfare, a struggle between a non-state movement (in some cases assisted or sponsored by a state) and a government for political and social control of a people in a given nation-state's territory. Most revolutionary wars (for example, in China, Vietnam, and Cambodia) have moved through a guerrilla phase and have finally developed into a decisive struggle between conventional armed forces. But the evidence from guerrilla struggles and revolutionary warfare in Latin America, where a number of attempts were made to emulate the success of Fidel Castro's guerrilla revolution in Cuba, shows that where there are determined and ruthless efforts to suppress them and the revolutionaries fail to gain substantial and lasting mass support, guerrilla campaigns will end in failure.

However, it would be a serious mistake to conclude that guerrilla warfare has become obsolete as a result of developments in military technology and counter-insurgency. Guerrilla warfare continues to prove effective in tying down large numbers of security forces, disrupting government and the economy: it poses a particularly serious threat to weak and unstable governments in divided societies. The protracted insurgency in Iraq, where rural

10. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924) founded the Bolshevik Party and the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Soviet Union, which aimed at world revolution against 'capitalist imperialism' – a project which failed completely with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

and urban guerrilla attacks on the Coalition armed forces have been combined with major terrorist attacks against the civilian population, has killed hundreds of Coalition troops and members of the new Iraqi army and police, and thousands of civilians.

The newly appointed UK Foreign Secretary will need to convey these lessons to his Cabinet colleagues and to his opposite numbers in the US and the other NATO member states in the hope that they will not again be tempted into underestimating the challenges of major insurgencies and terrorism in future conflicts, and the implications for international relations. The consequences of all-out civil war in Iraq and the possible acquisition of a new base area by Al Qaeda in the midst of the Middle East would indeed have dire effects on international security and stability.

Terrorist groups and networks

Terrorism is the systematic use of coercive intimidation, usually to service political ends. It is used to create and exploit a climate of fear among a wider target group than the immediate victims of the violence and to publicize a cause, as well as to coerce a target into assenting to the terrorist aims. Terrorism may be used on its own or as part of a wider unconventional war. It can be employed by desperate and weak minorities, by states as a tool of domestic and foreign policy, or by belligerents as an accompaniment in all types and stages of warfare. A common feature is that innocent civilians, sometimes foreigners who know nothing of the terrorists' political quarrel, are killed or injured. Typical methods of modern terrorism are explosive and incendiary bombings, shooting attacks and assassinations, hostage-taking and kidnapping, and hijacking. The possibility of terrorists using nuclear, chemical, or bacteriological weapons cannot be discounted.

One basic distinction is between state and factional terror. The former has been vastly more lethal and has often been an antecedent to and a contributory cause of factional terrorism. Once regimes and factions decide that their ends justify any means or their opponents' actions justify them in unrestrained retaliation, they tend to become locked in a spiral of terror and counter-terror. Internal terrorism is confined within a single state or region while international terrorism, in its most obvious manifestation, is an attack carried out across international frontiers or against a foreign target in the terrorists' state of origin. But, in reality, most terrorism has international dimensions, as groups look abroad for support, weapons, and safe haven.

Terrorism is not a philosophy or a movement: it is a method. But even though we may be able to identify cases where terrorism has been used for causes most liberals would regard as just, this does not mean that even in such cases the use of terrorism, which by definition threatens the most fundamental rights of innocent

civilians, is morally justified. Paradoxically, despite the rapid growth in the incidence of modern terrorism, this method has been remarkably unsuccessful in gaining strategic objectives. The only clear cases are the expulsion of British and French colonial rule from Palestine, Cyprus, Aden, and Algeria. The continuing popularity of terrorism among nationalists and ideological and religious extremists must be explained by other factors: the craving for physical expression of hatred and revenge; terrorism's record of success in yielding tactical gains (e.g. massive publicity, release of prisoners, and large ransom payments); and the fact that the method is relatively cheap, easy to organize, and carries minimal risk. Regimes of totalitarianism, such as Nazism and Stalinism, routinely used mass terror to control and persecute whole populations, and the historical evidence shows that this is a tragically effective way of suppressing opposition and resistance. But when states use international terrorism they invariably seek to disguise their role, possibly denying responsibility for specific crimes. Another major conducive factor in the growth of modern terrorism has been repeated weakness and appeasement in national and international reaction to terrorism, despite numerous anti-terrorist laws and conventions and much governmental rhetoric. Early writings on terrorism tended to treat it as a relatively minor threat to law and order and individual human rights. In a series of studies, for example, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, I concluded that major outbreaks of terrorism, because of their capacity to affect public opinion and foreign policy and to trigger civil and international wars, ought to be recognized as a potential danger to the security and well-being of afflicted states and a possible threat to international peace.

There are of course many other threats and challenges which are potentially far more serious than terrorism. Global climate change, the existence of which has been scientifically proven to the satisfaction of all but a curious group of flat-earthers, could bring catastrophic changes. Scientists are also concerned about the dangers of a global pandemic which could kill hundreds

of thousands of people. Despite the efforts to maintain a global nuclear non-proliferation regime, proliferation continues and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) estimates that there are over 40 states capable of using their civil nuclear technology and resources to pursue nuclear weapons programmes. I will consider some of these global problems in Chapter 4.

In view of these potential dangers it would be wrong to exaggerate the danger from international terrorism, but what any Foreign Minister will need to understand is that the so-called New Terrorism of the Al Qaeda network of networks is the most dangerous type of international terrorism ever experienced from a non-state entity in the international system. Why is this?

First, Al Qaeda is explicitly aiming at the mass killing of civilians. Al Qaeda declared a jihad or holy war against the US and its allies. In bin Laden's so-called 'fatwa' of 23 February 1998, he announced the setting up of a World Islamic Front for Jihad and declared that it is 'the duty of all Muslims to kill US citizens – civilian or military and their allies everywhere'. The readiness to kill civilians on a massive scale was demonstrated in the attacks of 11 September 2001 which caused the deaths of nearly 3,000 people.

Second, the Al Qaeda network has a presence in over 60 countries and this makes it the most widely dispersed international terrorist network ever experienced in the history of terrorism. Al Qaeda's large number of affiliates and operational and support network not only gives a genuine global reach to their terrorist activities, it also enables them to claim with some truth that they are continuing to wage a 'global jihad'. Indeed, Al Qaeda is more of a global transnational movement bound together mainly by a shared ideology than a traditional highly centralized organization.

Typical current Al Qaeda methods are no-warning coordinated suicide attacks hitting several targets simultaneously. Al Qaeda's

11. The twin towers of New York's World Trade Center on fire after being struck by airliners seized by Al Qaeda suicide hijackers on 11 September 2001.

most commonly used weapon has been the large suicide vehicle bomb. However, the Al Qaeda network has shown a keen interest in obtaining weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Its track record shows that it would have no compunction about using them to cause large numbers of civilian deaths.

Now let us turn from one of the most malevolent non-states to the most benevolent.

Humanitarian and human rights organizations

There is an impressive array of humanitarian organizations and charities which operate internationally and which bring great dedication, skill, and experience to bear in order to save lives, alleviate suffering, and assist in post-disaster relief and

reconstruction. Among the best known of these organizations are the International Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, and Christian Aid, but there are many others.

Most of the international relief work done by these organizations is delivered in the form of humanitarian assistance, with the full consent of the authorities in the country in need. They have made a huge contribution to provision of relief even in the most daunting of humanitarian crisis situations, such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004) and the Pakistan Earthquake disaster (2005). Governments in stricken countries simply cannot cope in the face of large-scale disasters. Assistance rendered by other governments is very important but it could never be enough. What the non-state humanitarian organizations can bring to bear very rapidly in such situations is local knowledge and contacts with the affected communities, great experience of delivering humanitarian

12. Relief workers delivering humanitarian aid to an area devastated by the huge tsunami caused by a submarine earthquake on 26 December 2004 – it struck coasts as far away as Sri Lanka and Thailand, killing an estimated 150,000 people.

aid, and the help of professional experts such as doctors, nurses and so on, and (usually) wide experience of working with host governments and intergovernmental organizations such as the UN agencies.

Far more controversial is the growing trend towards coercive intervention, that is intervention without the consent of the target country's government. Examples are the establishing of Kurdish 'safe havens' in northern Iraq (1991), plus interventions in Somalia, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. This trend has been facilitated by the gradual weakening of the principle of state sovereignty; the growth of human rights awareness; the propensity of the UN Security Council to widen the concept of 'threat to the peace'; and the globalization of information.

Yet despite the gradual undermining of the principle of absolute state sovereignty, there are considerable countervailing pressures in the international system which still constitute major obstacles to coercive humanitarian intervention: there is the fear that such intervention might provoke a breakdown of international order; states may also be reluctant to commit themselves to intervention because they fear that it may turn into a very costly long-term responsibility with no prospect of an easy exit; there is the worry of regimes, particularly in the developing countries, that intervention might become a cover for the major powers to interfere in their affairs.

Non-state organizations have the huge advantage that they do not engender the sort of mistrust and concern caused by the intervention of foreign states. Non-state humanitarian organizations seem likely to continue to play a vital part in delivering relief to countries with humanitarian crises. Enlightened governments should welcome the NGOs' contribution and be ready to develop fuller dialogue and cooperation with them in order to help them to optimize their capacity to deliver their knowledge, resources, and

specialized skills directly to the populations that are in greatest need.

Human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have a similarly vital role. Few governments would be prepared to speak so openly to condemn human rights violations. Governments tend to be worried about losing lucrative trade or investment opportunities or access to key commodities such as oil or natural gas. Non-state human rights organizations can perform an invaluable role by educating and mobilizing international opinion and shaming governments that abuse human rights by spreading accurate information about their misdeeds.

How would a senior adviser sum up his briefing to a new Secretary of State or a new Foreign Secretary on non-states? If he is doing his job properly he will avoid the old canard of state-centrism. He will not try to suggest that non-states can be safely ignored. States are extremely important, but so also are many non-state phenomena.

The new Secretary of State will ignore them at her peril. Let us bear in mind that non-state organizations succeed in seizing power in Russia in 1917, in China in 1949, in India in 1948, and in Iran in 1979, and it was a non-state organization/network that carried out the devastating attacks on 11 September 2001. As a result of the actions of Al Qaeda on 9/11 we have a 'War on Terror', the war in Iraq, and a war in Afghanistan. It would be absurd to claim that non-state organizations are of only peripheral importance and have had no significant impact on international relations.