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Geopolitical world orders

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The key issue in contemporary international politics, so President George Bush and his advisers keep reminding us, is the creation of a 'New World Order'. After the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989, it has become generally accepted that the Cold War – the 'Old World Order' – is finished, and international politics has to be reconstructed in another form. Hence the call for a New World Order from the remaining superpower, seemingly the only state with the power to embark on such a project.

It is the purpose of this chapter to explore this now popular notion of a 'world order' so as to set the current search for a new one into both a theoretical and an historical context. This requires the argument to be developed in two parts. The first develops a geopolitical analysis that interprets world orders as relatively stable distributions of political power across the world. To understand these 'geopolitical world orders' it is necessary to relate them to both other global patterns of social change, and the particular activities of governments that create the events that are the stuff of international politics. The result of this analysis is to produce a concept of world orders that is a framework for relating events to broader patterns of change. Two geopolitical world orders are identified in the twentieth century and they form the subject matter of the second and larger empirical part of the chapter. They are dealt with chronologically, first the Geopolitical World Order of the British Succession and then the Cold War Geopolitical World Order, as two subjects for describing the international politics of the twentieth century from a distinctively geopolitical perspective. With the concept of a world order so treated, we can return to George Bush's call for a New World Order and, in a short conclusion, lessons from our analysis and history are used to speculate on what we might expect from the contemporary reconstruction of international politics.

Geopolitical analysis

Geopolitics was born with the twentieth century. The German term *geopolitik* was first coined in 1899 by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf

Kjellen, and geopolitics' most famous model – pivot area, later heartland thesis – was presented to the Royal Geographical Society by Halford Mackinder in 1904. For many people geopolitical analysis came to mean the revealing of fundamental truths about global geographical constraints on the behaviour of states. Events were interpreted in terms of what were viewed as permanent spatial patterns of power. What came to be called 'traditional geopolitics' became a source of structural imperatives that determined the course of international politics. Although such thinking could still be found towards the end of the century, such geographical determinism is now generally considered to be inadequate as a social theory of international politics.

It is somewhat ironic that Mackinder's theory should be a stimulus for the identification of such ahistorical 'changeless geographical factors' when his analysis was imbued with historical insight. Mackinder's history is best interpreted in terms of Fernand Braudel's concept of the *longue durée*. The heartland model was originally devised to mark an important change in 'epoch' as Mackinder saw it. After 400 years of the 'Columbian era' dominated by sea-powers, Mackinder thought the twentieth century to be the beginning of the 'post-Columbian era' when global power would transfer to land empires: a key structural change of long-term importance was occurring. Mackinder feared for the new epoch since the expansion of sea-power had incorporated the whole world into a single system, eliminating colonial expansion as a 'safety-valve' in an increasingly competitive inter-state system.

Such *fin de siècle* thinking was relatively common, and in this respect we can link Mackinder's original geopolitics with other writers who were concerned with *longue durée* processes such as Lenin. In his revolutionary prescriptions for changing worlds, Lenin similarly focused on the new imperial competitiveness that worried Mackinder, identifying it as the 'highest', and final, stage of capitalism. Such long-term thinking is important in this chapter, not just as a recovery of Mackinder from ahistorical analysis, but because such ideas have been influential in the construction of geopolitical world orders in

this century. The Cold War a half-century later, for instance, was built in part upon ideas from both Mackinder and Lenin to define the enemy for each side (threatening heartland = USSR, expansive capitalism = USA). And, of course, this competition between superpowers was launched by both sides in *longue durée* terms as the ultimate conflict between two incompatible civilizations vying to define a new epoch for the world.

In contrast to the time perspective of traditional geopolitics, the narrative history approach to international relations has concentrated upon the events themselves, the wars, the treaties and the political elites making the decisions. It was this concentration on the short term or *courte durée* that Braudel was rebelling against in his history. His social model of time went beyond 'eventism', not just in defining the *longue durée*, but by defining three levels of social time including a middle category, the *moyenne durée* of temporal sequences such as trends and cycles. Despite his attacks on the *courte durée* historical tradition, Braudel (1980) argued that for a comprehensive historical analysis, all three social times must be examined. In this chapter, as well as the *longue durée* claims of the Cold War described above, we will present a narrative of events, *courte durée*, but as part of an analysis of medium-term changes in patterns of international politics. Geopolitical world orders are creatures of Braudel's *moyenne durée*. In the analysis developed here we describe a geopolitics of the *moyenne durée*; we will be concerned with the changing political geography of 'periods' rather than 'epochs' and their (nearly) permanent geography or the particular transient worlds of individual events. But the medium-term time span is the most complex, dealing as it does with a very wide range of patterns of change. Hence our starting-point in this analysis must be to locate geopolitical world orders within the periods and cycles that form the twentieth century.

Periods and cycles

Distinctive historical periods can be conceptualized in several ways. They may be viewed as stages in a sequence of changes, as components of

cycles in which repetitions of circumstances are emphasized, or simply as different times that are not linked into any such patterning. Geopolitical world orders at first sight seem to fit into the latter category, but in fact can be related to other temporal sequences that are far more patterned. The international political elites and their governments making the decisions that collectively make up the world orders do not operate in a material vacuum. The world-economy is notoriously cyclical in nature – what Wallerstein (1984b) calls its rhythms – and politicians have to accommodate to these systematically varying circumstances. Changing material contexts profoundly alter the circumstances in which politicians act by providing new agendas for action. Precisely how the world orders relate to these cycles is a complex and highly contested theoretical issue; in this chapter I am merely asserting the relationship, letting my empirical description of the world orders within a framework of material cycles justify this position. The starting-point of the analysis is a discussion of cyclical changes on a global scale, concentrating on the two longest cycles that are usually identified, Kondratieff cycles of approximately half a century and hegemonic cycles of about a century or so in length. (For the best and most comprehensive review of the literature on long social systemic cycles, see Goldstein (1988).) These two types of cycles and their component periods are compared across the last two centuries in Table 1.1 which we will refer to frequently in what follows.

Kondratieff cycles are usually described in strictly economic terms, but undoubtedly they have profound political impacts. The fifty-year cycle is divided into two approximately equal periods, an A-phase of growth and a B-phase of stagnation. There is a large debate on the causes of these long economic fluctuations, but their existence is now generally agreed upon. In conventional timing of these cycles the twentieth century covers the third and fourth Kondratieff cycles when dated from the industrial revolution in Britain (Table 1.1). In general terms B-phases are more competitive economically, although how this translates into politics is by no means simple. Probably the most successful interpretation of Kondratieff cycles in relation to political

Table 1.1 Long cycles and geopolitical world orders

Date	Kondratieff cycles	Hegemonic cycles	Geopolitical world orders
1790/8	<i>First Kondratieff Cycle</i> A phase (industrial revolution)	<i>British Hegemonic Cycle</i> Ascending hegemony (grand alliance)	(Napoleonic wars as French resistance to Britain's ascending hegemony)
1815/25	B phase (first long industrial depression)	Hegemonic victory (balance of power through Concert of Europe)	Disintegration <i>World Order of Hegemony and Concert</i> Transition (1813–15)
1844/51	<i>Second Kondratieff Cycle</i> A phase (mid-Victorian boom)	Hegemonic maturity (‘high’ hegemony: free trade era)	(Balance of power in Europe leaves Britain with a free hand to dominate rest of the world)
1870/75	B phase (late-Victorian depression)	Declining hegemony (age of imperialism, new mercantilism)	Disintegration <i>World Order of Rivalry and Concert</i> Transition (1866–71) (Germany dominates Europe, Britain still greatest world power)
1890/96	<i>Third Kondratieff Cycle</i> A phase (the Edwardian boom)	<i>American Hegemonic Cycle</i> Ascending hegemony (a world power beyond the Americas)	Disintegration <i>World Order of the British Succession</i> Transition (1904–7)
1913/20	B phase (the ‘great’ depression)	Hegemonic victory (not taken up: global power vacuum)	(Germany and USA overtake Britain as world powers, two world wars settle the succession)
1940/45	<i>Fourth Kondratieff Cycle</i> A phase (the ‘post war’ boom)	Hegemonic maturity (undisputed leader of the ‘free world’)	Disintegration <i>Cold War World Order</i> Transition (1944–6)
1967/73	B phase (the latest long ‘slump’)	Declining hegemony (Japanese and European rivalry)	(USA hegemony challenged by the ideological alternative offered by the USSR)
19??	<i>Fifth Kondratieff Cycle?</i>	<i>New Hegemonic Cycle?</i>	Disintegration <i>‘New World Order’</i> Transition (1989–91)

processes has come through their linkage to hegemonic cycles.

Hegemonic cycles focus upon one state, the hegemon, that for a short period is pre-eminently powerful economically, politically and culturally. The cycle consists of the rise and fall from this position. Following Wallerstein (1984) we can describe the cycle as follows. The hegemon gradually gains a clear economic advantage in the realm of production and extends its leadership to the commercial and financial spheres. At the same time it becomes politically dominant after leading a coalition of states against its main political rival. Henceforth it is able to order the world to its advantage using such techniques as balance of power rather than outright coercion. This is possible in part because of its cultural leadership in 'universal' ideas – the hegemon is typically the champion of world liberalism. The period of 'high hegemony' is relatively short, and these leadership attributes from production to culture are progressively lost.

The relationship between Kondratieff A- and B-phases and the hegemonic rise and demise periods is illustrated in Table 1.1 as pairs of Kondratieff cycles coinciding with one hegemonic cycle defining British and US 'centuries' respectively. This means that the influence of Kondratieff phases will vary between rise and fall periods of the hegemonic cycles. The clearest relation between the two cycles in both centuries is the common coincidence of high hegemony with an A-phase to be followed by hegemonic decline and increased competition in the subsequent B-phase. For instance, the personal experience of many readers of this book has been of US high hegemony coinciding with the great 'post-war boom' (Kondratieff IV A) and our current worldwide recession (Kondratieff IV B) associated with recognition of US relative decline.

Although Table 1.1 covers two hegemonic cycles, we will be concerned with British hegemony only in its demise phase. At the beginning of the twentieth century Britain and its empire was clearly still the most powerful state in the world, but its undisputed hegemony was already a quarter of a century past. Its main rivals were Germany and the USA, with the latter becoming hegemonic after 1945. Hence we will be con-

cerned largely with the US hegemonic cycle from its rise through the defeat of Germany, high hegemony at mid-century, and finally the debates over its relative decline in more recent years.

Geopolitical world orders are not as neatly related to the two material long cycles as they are to each other. As Table 1.1 shows, world orders have been of varying length so there is no cyclical pattern. Nevertheless world orders do generally begin and end at roughly the same time as Kondratieff phases; in fact, I would argue that both cycle phases and the world orders between them constitute the nature of our modern global times. For instance, the processes making up Kondratieff cycle IV, US hegemonic practices and the Cold War are impossible to disentangle in understanding the recent past and our contemporary situation. However, for pedagogic reasons we are going to concentrate largely upon geopolitics in the remainder of this chapter. We will be concerned with the practical geopolitical reasoning and actions of political elites in their creation of the two world orders of the twentieth century.

Geopolitical codes

Geopolitics is avowedly state-centric in its premises. By practical geopolitical reasoning I mean the way in which governments conceptualize the distribution of political power beyond their boundaries as a precondition for conducting foreign policy in their special national interest. This is the way state elites make sense of the world in order to respond to or create events to their state's advantage. Through studying such statecraft we can identify the geopolitical codes that are the building blocks of geopolitical world orders.

Following John Gaddis (1982), we shall use the term 'geopolitical code' to describe the output of practical geopolitical reasoning. These are the codes or geographical frameworks by which a government deals with the outside world. A national interest is defined and other states are evaluated in terms of whether they are real or potential aids or obstacles to that interest. A change of government in a state may change

details in a code, but foreign policy in the twentieth century has come to be located within the consensus realm of most state politics. Bipartisanship is the norm, which means that we can usually identify general codes that transcend several governments but with specific codes incorporating perhaps different emphases for each of those governments. For instance, Gaddis (1982) identifies a general containment code for the USA after 1947 but with distinctive features for successive Democrat and Republican administrations.

One important reason for the relative continuity of codes across governments has been the formal democratization of politics in many states in the twentieth century. Bipartisan policies insulate foreign affairs from democratic pressures. For instance, in Britain there has been much discussion, when the Labour Party have been in opposition, of what a 'socialist foreign policy' should be, but no such phenomenon has been forthcoming in any of their periods of office. 'National interest' cannot be easily changed back and forth; 'friends' and 'enemies' once so identified have to have some degree of permanency to make sense. The definition of national interest and with it the general geopolitical code cannot be reduced to a mere political football like domestic policies. This is what is implied by the phrase 'high politics', being 'above' the partisan concerns of domestic politics. But in this matter the twentieth century differs from definitions of state interests in earlier periods, when 'high politics' was solely the concern of the monarch and his advisers. Winston Churchill at the beginning of this century saw the dangers of democratic input into foreign policy: geopolitical codes would lose their flexibility and politicians would be thus constrained in periods of inter-state tension (Bartlett, 1984, 86). Certainly wars have become 'patriotic', more total and exceedingly popular in the twentieth century. Of course, the influences on codes have by no means been all one way. Popular sentiment has been very efficiently mobilized when state elites have found it necessary to do so. This is obviously required when the government wishes to change the geopolitical code and designate new enemies. The conversion of the USSR from ally to enemy between 1945 and 1947 is a good example, and

was accomplished by a virulent anti-communist campaign (Adler and Paterson, 1970).

At a general level, the description of a government's geopolitical code is relatively straightforward and can be inferred from its foreign policies. Alliances, lesser agreements, overseas bases and levels of diplomatic status are all obvious indicators of the code. Some researchers have tried to quantify codes or groups of state codes through analysis of policy-makers' journeys (Henrikson, 1980), diplomatic linkages (Nierop, 1989), voting in the United Nations (Brunn and Ingalls, 1983) and the counting of place references in policy statements (Grant and O'Loughlin, 1991). All of these are valuable in defining the salience of different countries for each other. However, probably the most explicit source of information on any codes is to be found in the activities of the General Staffs of the armed forces. Parallel with the intellectual emergence of geopolitics, the same competitive pressures led to governments' creating new departments where the leading military elites could officially plan wars for the first time in peacetime (Kennedy, 1978). In such statements there is simply no room for any diplomatic ambiguity on who are targeted and who are not. We will use such materials frequently below.

Finally, we must recognize the geographical scale component in geopolitical codes. In general the salience of one state to another will decline with distance (O'Sullivan, 1986), but this will vary greatly between states. For all states their immediate neighbours are crucial components of their code either as friends or enemies. Most peaceful interactions such as trade generally occur between neighbouring states, but also most wars are border wars. Every state, therefore, has its own local code. For the majority of states, the small ones, this constitutes the effective whole of their practical operations. For medium and large states, though, there is a wider range of salience which is termed regional. Regional powers throughout the world define their national interests beyond the narrow confines of their borders. Brazil in South America, India in South Asia and Nigeria in West Africa are the three clearest examples of states which include domination of their region as integral to their national interests. Finally there are world powers whose codes are

global in extent. Their governments consider events across the world as being of potential relevance to their national interest as a Great Power. The USA and USSR as superpowers in the second half of the twentieth century are classic examples of states claiming such extravagant interests. States can move between these categories. British withdrawal from 'east of Suez' in 1967 to concentrate on Europe is an example of reduction from world power to regional power. This also happened to the USSR in the final two years of its existence as it disengaged around the world, leaving its major successor state, Russia, a regional power.

Geopolitical world orders

The three-scale hierarchy of geopolitical codes defines relations between codes. At its simplest, the local codes of small states have to fit into the regional codes of medium states which in turn should fit into overarching global codes of world powers. This is what phrases such as 'sphere of influence' and 'backyard' imply as expressions of geographical power relativities. This leads to a series of bilateral and multilateral patterns of associated codes across the world. The concept of a geopolitical world order asserts that the geographical organization of power across the world is more than an aggregation of these interlocking hierarchies of codes. It is a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Beyond any individual code, however powerful the state, there is a geopolitical order that defines the basic parameters of the international politics of the time. Such orders represent relatively stable patterns of geographical power-distributions over distinctive periods of time. During that period the geopolitical codes of most, though not necessarily all, states will accept the defining parameters of the order.

Geopolitical world orders will vary in terms of the degree of conformity required of states. We can tell from the name of the latest such order, the 'Cold War', that stability was based on very strict adherence to an antagonistic alliance system. Previous world orders have been much more flexible, although a general global structure of power was always easily discernible. All

orders may incorporate contrary codes, however. These may reflect vestiges of past world orders or may represent attempts to define new orders. For instance, Spain and Portugal vigorously pursued policies akin to pre-World War II colonialism for two decades after such activity had been de-legitimized by the Cold War. In contrast, other states, such as India, refused to be forced into taking sides in the Cold War. They formed a nonaligned bloc to proclaim their independence from the prevailing order. Notice that this policy is not one of neutrality as typically practised by some of the smaller European states. Neutrality is a policy that is effectively a local code, a strategy against more powerful neighbours. Nonalignment is a global strategy, a policy against a world geopolitical code: by its violation of the premises of the Cold War it constitutes a challenge to that world order. Refusing to choose between East and West, nonaligned states defined themselves as South in an attempt to change the key geographical fracture of world power from East/West to North/South. But the Cold War geographical pattern prevailed until its recent demise which was not precipitated by the South.

Geopolitical world orders are relatively stable patterns of power. They represent what many regard as 'surface features' of the world-system compared to the more basic material changes expressed in Kondratieff and hegemonic cycles. But this is a rather unhelpful way of looking at world orders, since they cannot be independent of these cycles. For instance, the Cold War is how US hegemony has been expressed as a world order. Cycles and world-order periods should be interpreted together.

Periodization

We are in a position now to define our periodization of the twentieth century in terms of geopolitical world orders as shown on Table 1.1. Geopolitically the century has consisted of two distinctive world orders plus very small parts of two others. These world orders are separated by relatively short geopolitical transitions when the assumptions on which the global power distribution exists are overturned. We identify three

such transitions in 1904–7, 1945–6 and 1989–91; these transitions encompass two world orders which we will term the Geopolitical World Order of the British Succession and the Cold War Geopolitical World Order.

Our treatment of each of the two world orders will concentrate on three main themes. First we consider the precursors of each new order. Although geopolitical transitions constitute changes that surprise contemporaries, no new order can be constructed out of nothing. Hence, using our considerable powers of hindsight we can find pointers to the new order in the old. In the case of the first world order we describe, this will mean delving back into the late nineteenth century to consider its precursors in what we shall term the World Order of Imperial Rivalry and Concert. It also means that the contemporary search for pointers to a new world order should scour the recent history of the Cold War.

Secondly, we deal in some detail with the geopolitical transitions themselves. Turning worlds upside-down is a complex business; erstwhile friends become enemies and vice versa. Although we can identify a period of disintegration in the old world order prior to a transition that in hindsight we see as vital, when the change around comes it is rapid and decisive. A new international political logic is constructed and every state has to review its geopolitical code and change accordingly. In this way geopolitical transitions define our periodization. Notice that this periodization does not use World War I and its associated events – the Russian Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles – as a break point. Certainly contemporaries acting in these events very consciously thought they were creating fundamental transitions – witness the phrases ‘the war to end all wars’, ‘world revolution’ and ‘peace with justice’. In terms of diplomatic organization and activities, an important change did occur as Clark (1980) has illustrated in his periodization of the period, but geopolitically this is not the case. In our interpretation we follow Wallerstein (1984) and Modelski (1987) in considering both World Wars I and II as essentially one prolonged ‘thirty-year war’, ‘the German Wars’; hence we follow Lentin (1984) in treating the grand events at Versailles as ‘a mere

truce’, and we follow Dukes (1989) in viewing the Russian Revolution as a precursor of the Cold War. Geopolitically there is one world order from 1904 to 1945.

The third element in our discussion of each world order emphasizes the variety within each period. Although there is one dominating logic throughout the period of a world order, this does not mean that international politics stops still. Within the parameters of the world order different phases of political activity can be discerned. It is the identification of such phases that enables us to transcend World War I in our periodization. Certainly international politics changed after 1917/18/19, but the dominant logic of the World Order of the British Succession remained: how to control German expansion as British decline continued. More recently, identification of the 1970s detente as a phase within the logic of the Cold War enables us to pinpoint the essence of the transition at the end of the 1980s. This transition was not a new detente, a reform of the old order as originally thought (Falk and Kaldor, 1989), but a genuine change which turned international politics upside-down for the third time this century.

The Geopolitical World Order of the British Succession

As the new century dawned, political observers in different countries talked of a forthcoming ‘German Century’ or an ‘American Century’, but the idea of a further ‘British Century’ seemed most unlikely. Britain was still the most powerful empire in the world, but the signs of relative decline were uncontested. The decline might have been obscured by the successes of empire as symbolized by the imperial pageant for Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (Morris, 1968), but the increases in Britain’s territory compared to other states had run counter to comparative economic indicators in the late nineteenth century. And there was little doubt which changes were of most long-term importance: Britain was being overtaken by both Germany and the USA as the ‘workshop of the world’, and no imperial aggrandizement could hide this fundamental fact of the world-economy. Which of

these two challengers would take over Britain's erstwhile role as hegemonic power was settled in the Geopolitical World Order of the British Succession of 1904 to 1945.

Precursors of a new order

Imperial policy could reveal as well as obscure Britain's declining world position. Such was the case in 1900 as the small Boer republics continued to resist the greatest empire the world had ever seen. The possibility of defeat was not a realistic worry, but the exposure of Britain's international position was. Hostility to Britain was widespread, and the perennial British nightmare of a continental alliance of powers in opposition to Britain appeared briefly as a real possibility. Certainly the Franco-Russian alliance was explicitly anti-British at this time, and Germany was very publicly pro-Boer; if the Russians had succeeded in their attempt to bring together the arch-enemies France and Germany, then the twentieth century would have looked even less rosy for Britain. But in the event this Russian ploy turned out to be just another episode in the three decades of geopolitical manoeuvring that typified the World Order of Imperial Rivalry and Concert. We need to consider this world order to understand the stabilization in alliances that was to occur after 1900 to produce a diplomatic turnabout which left Germany more isolated than Britain.

The establishment of the German Empire in 1870–71 coincided with the earliest British worries about decline. In fact, the emergence of this dominant power in Europe had mixed blessings for Britain. For Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, German military successes had produced 'a new world' where the 'balance of power has been entirely destroyed' (Dukes, 1989, 94–5). Britain's ability to balance European powers to her own interests was most definitely curtailed after 1871, but initially at least the result did not have to be disadvantageous to Britain. What Britain required in Europe was political stability; since this was German policy after 1871, the changing power distribution had less effect on Britain than was first feared.

Diplomatically the late-nineteenth-century

world order was one of immense fluidity. Alliances, agreements and understanding among the major states abounded, but with no consistent pattern. Russia, for instance, made agreements with Germany and France at different times indicating contrary geopolitical codes. But this fluidity should not be interpreted as chaos. There were two certainties that held this first post-British-hegemony world order together. In Europe, Germany was the status quo power wishing to preserve its recent rise to the top of the European hierarchy. In the rest of the world, Britain was the status quo power attempting to preserve its global pre-eminence. It is this combination of two status quo powers without overlapping interests that defines the order of this period. In their two spheres of operation, both states had similar strategic concerns. In Europe, Germany was between Russia and France and feared a European war on two fronts. Outside Europe Britain's two major adversaries were also Russia and France, and she feared an imperial war on two fronts.

Notwithstanding this common pattern of strategic foes, the British–German power duopoly was never a formal arrangement despite such suggestions from both sides. But an alliance proved to be unnecessary; the status quo powers, operating for the most part separately, were able to preserve the peace among the major states for over three decades. Ultimately the world order was an unstable one since the power trajectories of the two 'guarantors' pointed in opposite directions – one up, and one down. But in the meantime an order prevailed.

The peace of this world order was a very tense one and it is in this context that we can find precursors and preconditions of the warring world order that was to come with the twentieth century. In response to the perennial tension and associated suspicions, Europe became highly militarized in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century the German, Russian, French and Austro-Hungarian armies each numbered between 2.6 and 4 million men (Bartlett, 1984, 6–7). Even Britain had increased its military expenditure by 45 per cent before the Boer War. The remarkable feature of the old Pax Britannica of British hegemony had been its 'cheapness' (Kennedy, 1981, 32), but in

this new world this was no longer the case. The great additional drain on the Treasury by the Boer War finally confirmed that the new militarization had finally caught up with Britain in its extra-European activities.

Associated with the great new armies came the integration of General Staffs into the state apparatuses. This followed the successes of the Prussian Army from 1864 to 1871 and the expectation that future European wars would be equally as swift. Hence in this period, and for the very first time, we get the development of detailed war plans in what is peacetime (Kennedy, 1979, 2–3). This one sector of the state apparatus translates each state's political and economic interests into friends and foes in battle. This state innovation was to be vital to both world orders of the twentieth century.

All this pent-up aggression was premised on one fundamental geopolitical assumption. This is what we may call an 'ideology of bigness'. Although Europe remained the political cockpit of the world throughout the nineteenth century, there were many commentators who saw the future in terms of large continental-scale states nominating the USA, Russia or even China as harbingers of new worlds. With efficient mobilization of resources, these giant extra-European states would be able to dwarf even the major powers of Europe. The response to this widely-held scenario came in the form of two geographical global models that challenged the 'one world' assumption of British hegemony. Between them they were to dominate geopolitical thinking in the twentieth century; we will term these important precursors the geostrategic and geo-economic models.

The geostrategic model derives from Britain's response to the bigness thesis. From at least the 1840s onwards, Britain had been 'playing the Great Game' in Asia to counter the expansion of Russia (Edwardes, 1975). Friction occurred between the geopolitical codes of these two empires in an 'arc of conflict' from Afghanistan/North-West Frontier through Persia/the Gulf to the Turkish Straits/Mediterranean. There was no actual war in any of these zones in the last third of the nineteenth century, but pressure rose with the increased tension of imperial rivalry in the world order. A crucial new factor appeared in the

equation with technological advances in transport and communications. Russian railway-building into Asia seemed to presage the continental state beginning to realize its great-power potential. On the other side steamships, telegraph cables and the Suez Canal similarly made global mobilization of distant lands a new possibility. Kennedy (1979b) notes that telegraphic cable-laying was largely commercially led from 1837 to 1870, but thereafter strategic considerations dominated. In particular the British constructed their 'all-red' network, avoiding locations outside their direct control (Christopher, 1988). This was completed by 1900. It spawned dreams of a world-state based upon a new imperial unity. Many political commentators now believed that the culmination of the Great Game would be a new power constellation that pitted global sea-power against continental landpower. This geostrategic model was to be codified by Halford Mackinder as his Heartland Theory which has been so influential this century.

The geoeconomic model derives, in part, from Germany's response to the bigness thesis. It related initially to the 'new mercantilism' that followed the end of British hegemony, rather than the 'new imperialism'. As the free-trade arguments of the British came under attack after 1870, it was the German Empire that became the leading advocate and practitioner of protectionism. The logical consequence of this for a Great Power was autarky so as to become as economically self-sufficient as possible. But it was becoming more and more difficult to reduce economic vulnerability in an increasingly interconnected world. The solution to the impossibility of 'capitalism in one country' was to create economic zones of dependence beyond the state. Outside Europe these would be colonies or spheres of influence: inside Europe, dominated trading spheres. For Germany, central Europe (*mitteleuropa*) and the whole Danube basin constituted the zone of expansion linking the state irrevocably to Austro-Hungary (Schultz, 1989). Hence when Max Weber in his inaugural lecture of 1895 dismissed German unification as 'youthful folly' unless followed up by some grander scheme (Bartlett, 1984, 20), he was pointing towards the theory of pan-regions, the division

of the world into a few large self-sufficient regions centred on the Great Powers (O'Loughlin and van der Wusten, 1990). Of course, such a strategy by Germany would bring her into conflict with Britain and doom the World Order of Rivalry and Concert that depended on the separation of their political interests.

Changing codes, changing world orders

In January 1896 Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed that Germany should pursue a policy of *weltpolitik*. At a stroke, Germany was converted from a status quo European state to a deprived global power. If the sun never set on the British Empire, then Germany too should have its 'place in the sun'. By giving notice of a global geopolitical code, Germany was directly challenging Britain's extra-European supremacy. Bartlett (1984, 80) has argued that the influence of *weltpolitik* has been overemphasized. Our interpretation is that the Kaiser's proclamation set the conditions for a new world order – early premonitions of transition.

Exactly the same point can be made for the Franco-Russian alliance of two years earlier. Kennan (1984) calls this the 'fateful alliance' that led to World War I. He argues that the mobilization provisions were crucial, since they meant that limited war would no longer typify European conflicts and a war *à outrance* (255) was set for the future. Once again Bartlett (1984, 13) argues against overemphasizing this event – no deep divide resulted from it initially. Nonetheless it is true that this treaty finally separated Germany and Russia and set the geopolitical codes in Europe into the pattern that was to be so important in the next century: this was a precursor of transition to a new world order.

There were other important political developments in the 1890s that were equally setting out the conditions for the transition to come. Britain was revising its geopolitical code, albeit much less radically. In the 'Great Game' it was reassessing its position with regard to the Turkish Straits. With German influence now extending through the Balkans to the Ottoman Empire, Britain had to reconsider its strategy of confront-

ing Russia in the Black Sea. Egypt and the Suez Canal was the new strategic point on the route to the East, and became the focus of the imperial geopolitical code replacing the straits. But this had further implications for Africa as the British embarked on a conquest of the Sudan to protect their position in Egypt. At the same time the French had an east-west Sudanese African strategy and the countries clashed famously at Fashoda in 1898 where the French retreated. Hence, the considerations bringing the French and Russians together were as much anti-British as anti-German; no new order had yet arrived. Rather, these changing codes of the 1890s are best interpreted as the disintegration of the old order – not yet its replacement. And we can add to the list of code revisions: first the emergence of Japan as an Asian regional power after its defeat of China in 1894, and second, the extension of the USA's geopolitical code beyond the Monroe Doctrine in the Americas and eastern Pacific to include interests in the Far East, after the defeat of Spain in 1898 and the subsequent retention of the Philippines (Grenville, 1979).

The old order was definitely disintegrating in the late 1890s, but the actual transition was not immediately forthcoming. There was still one final important event of the World Order of Rivalry and Concert to occur which was quintessentially of the old order. After the Boxer rebellions in 1900, China was humiliated and brought into line by a joint force of imperial powers, with Japan and the USA alongside the Europeans. The major powers of the world were not to act in concert again until the Gulf War of 1991. To understand the creation of a new world of 'deep divide', we have to return to the activities of what was still the most important power – Britain.

While British forces were joining with their rivals in China, they were fighting a much larger and diplomatically lonely war in South Africa. This conflict precipitated a rethink of Britain's code. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, called first for an end to Britain's isolationism, and second, for tariff reform to end British free trade. In this challenge to traditional British thinking he was successful in the former, but he failed in the latter. In his campaign Chamberlain was actively supported by Halford Mackinder, whose development of the Heartland Theory

should be interpreted in this light. The final years of diplomatic isolationism are associated with Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury and his appeal to retain Britain's 'free hand' in world politics. In his famous defence of this policy in 1901, he still talked in terms of France and Russia being the main enemies. But in this his preferred code is not dissimilar to Chamberlain, who favoured alliance with Germany – same code, different means. 'It is a matter of supreme moment for us,' stated Landsdowne, Salisbury's successor at the Foreign Office, 'that Germany should not be squeezed to death between the hammer of Russia and the anvil of France' (Bartlett, 1984, 42). It is the overturning of this traditional British geopolitical code focusing on the enmity of France and Russia that marks the core of the geopolitical transition to a new world order.

The end of the 'free hand' came in the Far East with the Britain–Japan naval agreement in 1901. The crucial importance of this was not that it ensured British neutrality in the subsequent Japanese–Russian war in 1904–5, but that it broke almost a century of British isolationism – the first major political retreat from British hegemony. In fact, we can see this as part of a general pattern, starting with the transition, of Britain securing its position with each of the other powers in turn in order to combat the threat of Germany. We may see this transition process as Britain's first round of appeasement in its political decline. For instance, later in 1901 Britain conceded USA predominance in Central America in the Hay–Pauncefote treaty and made concessions on the Alaska–Canada border. But the crucial changes came in relations with European states with what Langhorne (1981, 85 and 93) has termed the first and second 'impossible agreements'. In 1904 Britain settled its differences in Africa with France – they accepted each other's positions in Egypt and Morocco respectively – to sign the Entente Cordiale. This was a diplomatic revolution that surprised other states, especially Germany. Equally surprising, after Russia's defeat by Japan, Britain and Russia agreed on the partition of Persia between them and in 1907 joined with France in a triple alliance. The final effect of all this diplomatic activity was a 'rigidification of alliance blocs' (Kennedy, 1987, 249) into the geopolitical

pattern of the World Order of the British Succession: confronting Germany on two sides in Europe, with Britain controlling access to extra-European arenas, plus the USA being politically neutral while generally in sympathy with the Allies.

Phases of the succession

The first round in Britain's appeasement of its rivals should not be seen as a voluntary withdrawal on the part of the British from their global predominance. The British succession was to be contested; appeasement was merely a policy to hold the line at special times of perceived threat, such as after the Boer War. The actual succession by the USA at the expense of Germany took four decades of threat and real conflict involving two further rounds of appeasement by the British. There were five distinct phases in the unfolding of this world order.

(i) *A fragile divide, 1907–14.* The Anglo-French *entente* was tested by Germany almost immediately and before the addition of Russia to the alliance. In 1906 Germany called a international conference at Algieras to discuss French activities in Morocco, but in the event Britain backed France with the added bonus of USA sympathy. Germany was humiliated and its isolation exposed. But Germany continued to probe the alliance ranged against it right up until 1914. And it was by no means a hopeless task. Although in hindsight we can see a geopolitical pattern that was to last for many decades, this was by no means so obvious to contemporaries. Rivalry and concert in the manner of the previous world order continued and sometimes cut across the new alliance system. France and Germany came to a bilateral agreement over Morocco in 1909, for instance. Even more ominously, the carefully-arranged division of Persia was failing to prevent renewed rivalry between Britain and Russia there in 1911. Certainly Germany had not given up prising Russia from the alliance and made several approaches along these lines during this period. Also in 1911 the Japanese–British naval alliance came up for renewal which was by no means automatic being

only agreed by the British with misgivings. There even seemed to be the beginnings of a *rapprochement* between Britain and Germany between 1912 and 1914, so much so that early in 1914 it has been claimed that a war was just as likely between Britain and Russia as between Germany and Russia (Bartlett, 1984, 73). We may conclude that the 'deep divide' which was constructed in the geopolitical transition remained fragile in this, its first phase of operation.

But there was a more fundamental basis to the new world order than these continuing diplomatic manoeuvrings suggest. This is clearly illustrated by documents of the two main protagonists at either end of this phase. In 1907 a British Foreign Office document, the 'Crow memorandum', identified Germany as the leading revisionist state in the inter-state system, and concluded that even major concessions by Britain would not satisfy her demands. There could be no appeasement here; rather, Britain and Germany were destined to conflict by 'the form of a law of nations' (Bartlett, 1984, 57-8). The converse of this can be found in 1914 with the 'Rathenau programme' for Germany's last chance to 'catch up'. This argued that Germany could never be a world power by accepting 'the charity of the world market'; rather, what was needed was 'territory on the globe' (Bartlett, 1984, 75). There could be no compromise with Britain; a redistribution of the world's lands was a necessity. Similarly, the Balkan Wars of 1911-13 confirmed the incompatibility of German and Russian interests in central and eastern Europe. Something would have to give.

Such global strategic thinking was complemented by war planning by the Chiefs of Staff, and by popular sentiment in the various countries. In Germany the famous Schlieffen Plan convinced the government that it could win a war on two fronts by knocking out France before Russia had had time to mobilize fully. On the other side, counter plans were in hand. Britain, for instance, had reorganized its imperial defences to support France on her left flank, thereby preventing German access to the channel ports. As one newspaper put it in 1912: 'We are in the position of Imperial Rome when the barbarians were thundering at the frontiers . . . We have called home the legions' (Kennedy, 1981,

131). Defending north-west Europe meant the army coming to the fore instead of traditional British military reliance on the navy; from their impossible task in the 'Great Game', they now welcomed a feasible continental engagement and planned for it accordingly. All the major powers on both sides had their plans for a great European war, and it is hardly surprising that many contemporaries thought it inevitable.

Armies were not all that were mobilized in 1914. Foreign policy had become an issue of popular concern. The rivalries of the period were producing mass phobias against the inhabitants of other countries. While the Kaiser could rely on Anglophobia in his political practices, there was equally an anti-German sentiment building in Britain through the popular press. Such processes put pressure on 'high politics' from below, and were occurring in all European states - even Tsarist Russia. Hence, when war came in 1914, it was very popular. Declarations of war were accompanied by mass expressions of patriotic fervour throughout Europe. This ensured that this war would be like none that had gone before.

(ii) *The first round, 1914-19.* The mobilization of armies across Europe in August 1914 ensured the era of limited wars, the minor adjustments of boundaries in favour of the victor, had come to an abrupt end. This was a war about the nature of the geopolitics of the world-system. It was a total war where the victor would design the pattern of power in the post-war world. Although there were a variety of motives from the different participants, the essence could be distilled into two contests. First there was the question of the mastery of Europe: would Germany be able to maintain her pre-eminence held since 1871 and indeed extend it? Second, there was the question of the global balance of power: would Germany be able to force Britain into a redistribution of colonies and influence across the globe?

Expectations on all sides had been of a quick war, but as it settled down to a stalemate in late 1914 and the belligerents decided to see it through to the end, the relative levels of power within each camp became clarified. A long war of attrition required a large and productive industrial base. Very soon a pattern of dependence was revealed. For the Central Powers, Austro-

Hungary needed German armaments and the finance to buy them with in order to stay in the war. For the Allies, Russia and France were similarly dependent on Britain. But this was only part of the story. From 1915 Britain was financing its war effort through loans from the USA. The war was depleting British overseas assets which had been built up over a century of hegemony and its aftermath. Britain was using up the proceeds of past dominance to preserve its current situation. By staying in a military war with Germany, it was effectively losing a financial war with the USA: World War I marked the transfer of the centre of world finance from London to New York. The final tangible element of Britain's financial hegemony was gone, whatever the outcome of the war.

The USA was the real winner of the war even before she joined with the Allies in 1917. But Britain remained the status quo power throughout. For instance, despite the American rhetoric of national self-determination, Britain was not necessarily against the maintenance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as part of a new balance in Europe. But that was not to be. The irony was that the Austrian and Russian empires collapsed, but the German one did not. After the Armistice in November 1918, the German state remained intact while awaiting the Allies' terms. The problem for the victors meeting in Paris in 1919 was that Germany remained the largest and economically the most advanced country on continental Europe. Stripped of her colonies and with no remaining allies, she remained a formidable foe. The Versailles Treaty humiliated Germany politically as a major power and imposed some economic constraints on her immediate recovery, but left a potentially great but wounded state in the heart of Europe. The challenge was not over.

The discussion at Paris revealed the geopolitical codes of the remaining major powers. France was most concerned with her northern boundary with Germany and was to insist on the most severe conditions to maintain her position in Europe gained through the war. For instance, German sovereignty, not violated in the war itself, was now subject to external oversight in the Rhinelands. France also took her share of Germany's colonies to maintain her world role.

Britain and her empire got the lion's share of the dispossessed colonies, enhancing her world imperial role – this was to be the greatest extent the British Empire was to reach (Christopher, 1988). As the status quo power she presided over no major changes in the world outside Europe; certainly, national self-determination was not to be interpreted as a valid concept beyond Europe. The USA and Japan joined in sharing out the spoils of the German empire in the Pacific and China.

The position of the USA in the aftermath of the war is most interesting. Potentially the most powerful country, she took on the role of the honest broker with no major interests at stake. President Wilson maintained a position above the fray in a hegemonic-like stance to impose new institutions on the inter-state system. We will deal with this in more detail in the next section as a precursor of the future world order. The important point here is that the President's idealistic institutional arrangements were agreed by the other victors in return for satisfying their very realist demands. With the domestic defeat of Wilson and the failure of the USA to join the League of Nations, the new institutions set up to preserve the peace were doomed. The League of Nations, without the USA and the pariah states of defeated Germany and revolutionary Russia, was a mask for a power vacuum in the world-system.

(iii) *Power vacuum interlude, 1920–31.* This phase of geopolitical order was superficially like the Rivalry and Concert Order after 1871. There were two status quo powers, one in Europe and one for the rest of the world, but this is where the similarity ends. As a result of World War I and the Versailles settlement, France was the leading power on continental Europe. But the position was quite artificial and therefore short-term; it was only a matter of time before the larger and more industrial German state would be in a position to reassert her leadership of Europe. France understood this, accounting for her acute anxiety during this period. In the wider world Britain remained the status quo power, but her relative decline since 1871 meant that she was only a shadow of her former self as a world power, despite the size of her empire. Britain favoured

sharing global responsibilities with the USA through the League of Nations, but this was not to be. The USA was certainly not isolationist in this period, but she was highly selective in her interventions so as to preclude any overall construction of a Pax Anglo-America. In short, within and beyond Europe the inter-state system experienced a power vacuum.

The situation in Europe centred on providing France with security. This took three forms. First, France was the power most insistent on war reparations from Germany, both to pay off her own war debts and to retard German economic recovery. By 1923, when German economic recovery seemed to be overtaking that of France, the French army marched into the Rhinlands to force its reparation grievances to the fore. As the major debt-holder in Europe, the USA became involved in rescheduling debt and reparations, but this remained the most short-term of France's policies. Second, France formed a little *entente* with the new Eastern European states, continuing the old policy of confronting Germany on two fronts, but this was no substitute for the power of Russia. Third, France sought security guarantees from other Great Powers. The initial guarantee from Britain and the USA negotiated at Paris fell with the US's failure to join the League. This need became more obvious when the two pariah states, Germany and Russia, came to an agreement at Rapallo in 1922. France supported Britain's proposal for Germany to join the League in 1924 to counter this ultimate French nightmare of a threatening German-Russian alliance. At Locarno in 1924, general territorial guarantees were agreed among the European states (minus Russia), and this ushered in a short period of detente that lasted until the end of the decade. Briefly the hope of peace and stability promised by Versailles seemed attainable. But it was all based on the artificial position of French predominance in Europe.

Beyond Europe, Britain was equally as insecure as France was within Europe. Britain needed the USA as co-sponsor of any world order. She had tried to get the USA to accept a mandate in the Middle East, for example, but the United States limited her interests to the oil in the region, eschewing any territorial involve-

ment. Britain's initial concerns were in Asia and the continuation of the Great Game. Taking advantage of the revolutionary turmoil in Russia, Britain first sponsored a break-up of the old territorial state by supporting independence movements in south Russia – Mackinder was sent there as Britain's representative (Blouet, 1976). Britain also attempted to turn Persia into a puppet state now Russia was not on hand to balance her power. But all this changed rapidly as the communist regime consolidated itself. At Baku in 1920 the Bolsheviks went on the offensive, calling the First Congress of Peoples of the East where a holy war against British imperialism was proclaimed. But in the event, the new state had too many domestic problems to pursue traditional Russian expansionist policies at this time, and the Great Game faded from the picture except in the anti-communist rhetoric of such imperialist politicians as Winston Churchill.

Outside Europe, Britain's chief rivals during this phase were the USA and Japan. Britain coped with them in what we may see as its second round of appeasement in its long political decline. With the Anglo-Japanese naval agreement coming up for ratification, negotiations in Washington in 1921 and 1922 led to a new broader naval agreement incorporating the USA, France and Italy as well as Japan and Britain. The key point is that Britain bowed to reality and conceded naval parity to the USA. The principle of British global naval supremacy – 'Britannia rules the waves' – was ended. Japan was not conceded parity, but to compensate, a 3,000-mile non-fortification zone around the country was agreed. This meant that Britain could build a base no nearer than Singapore, and the USA had to abandon similar plans for the Philippines and have its nearest base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Both decisions illustrate how far Britain had declined from its nineteenth-century position as the only global power.

Although the Washington Treaty was largely confirmed in London in 1930 despite some Japanese pressure for major revision, by this time the world situation was rapidly changing. The financial collapse in New York in 1929 was undermining the popularity of governments throughout the world. In 1931 two events marked the end of this artificial phase based upon

two inadequate status quo powers: Britain took her currency off the gold standard, marking a new intensity in economic competition; and in China, the Manchuria crisis marked the beginning of a new intensity in political competition to be led by Japan. The power vacuum was ready to implode.

(iv) *Reconstituting the divide, 1931–9.* The implosion took the form of developing pan-regions. The nineteenth-century world that Britain had presided over was finally disintegrating into a deeply divided world.

The most developed pan-region, the one most commonly quoted by contemporary theorists, was the Americas under US leadership. Although originating from the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 warning off European powers from the western hemisphere, the major practical beginnings of this pan-region were at the turn of the twentieth century with the British concessions – the first round of British appeasement discussed above – leading to irregular US armed interventions into the 1930s (Pearce, 1981). In the reassessment of the Roosevelt administration after 1932, this was replaced by the ‘good neighbor’ policy consisting of seventeen bilateral trade agreements. This single-power dominance of a world region was becoming so clear-cut that pan-regions became commonly referred to as ‘monroes’ (Taylor, 1990).

In the Far East an analogous process was operating, but here the armed intervention by the Japanese was more permanent. During World War I when the Allies were diverted by events in Europe, Japan began the process of consolidating her position as the leading regional power. After seizing Manchuria in 1931, Japan continued to pressurize the Chinese for further concessions, leading eventually to war in 1937. By this time Japan was attempting to marshal Asian nationalist feelings against rival western powers under the umbrella of a ‘Greater Asian Co-prosperity Sphere’ proclaimed in 1938. By the end of the decade the Japanese were well on their way to carving out their own pan-region.

Other divisions were being forged. In a parody of the Roman Empire, Fascist Italy started to define its imperial goals in Africa with the invasion of Abyssinia in 1934. At the other end of

the political spectrum Stalin was embarking on the USSR’s autarky programme which he termed ‘socialism in one country’. But the key actors remained Britain and Germany. In the former case, the economic collapse after 1929 precipitated the final revision of its nineteenth-century foreign policy principles – free trade was finally abandoned. In 1932 Britain agreed to adopt a trading policy of ‘imperial preferences’ aimed at both the USA and its trading rivals in Europe. Whether the British Empire dotted across the globe could have ever become a viable trading bloc is debatable, but certainly it was not a good time to try in the 1930s at the end of over half a century of British decline. Canada’s growing trade dependence on the USA and Australia’s vulnerability to Japan were the two glaring examples of other cross-cutting pan-regional projects. If the Americas represented the ‘classic’ pan-region, the British Empire was the epitome of an illogical, geographically-fragmented imperial inheritance that pan-region theory was designed to undermine. Britain and her Empire were out of tune with the times.

In contrast, it was in Germany that pan-region theory was developed as part of this revisionist power’s legitimation of its expansionist foreign policy (O’Loughlin and van der Wusten, 1990). With the coming to power of Hitler, a four-stage plan came into operation (Stokes, 1986). First, Germany recovered its territorial sovereignty by militarizing the Rhinelands against the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles in 1934. Second the need for *lebensraum*, literally ‘living space’, led to the takeover of lands in central and Eastern Europe. The ultimate expression of this process was the war on the USSR – Germany’s ‘India’ – in the carving-out of a Eurasian pan-region in the manner feared by Mackinder at the beginning of the century. Third, there would have to be war with the oceanic powers to force a redistribution of the world’s territories in Germany’s favour. This was to be more than the recovery of colonies lost at Versailles; a second German pan-region, Eurafrika, was envisaged. Finally, from this vantage point Germany could dominate the world. This *Stufenplan* was not necessarily attainable in a short time, but defined the geopolitical code and hence directed foreign policy.

These pan-regions began to come together as

two antagonistic world blocs as early as 1936, with Germany and Japan joining in the Anti-Comintern Pact against the USSR. Italy joined in 1937, and her help for the rebels in the Spanish Civil War alongside Germany solidified the growing world division. In 1938 at Munich, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain attempted to paper over the geopolitical divide by territorial concessions to Germany in central Europe. This region had never been strategically important to Britain and accounted for only about 1 per cent of British trade, but by now international politics was a zero-sum global game; a gain for Germany was a loss for Britain. In terms of Britain's long decline, this was the third and final round of appeasement. Appeasement in Europe, rather than in remote parts of the Empire, showed how weak Britain had become as British politicians surmised that another war would end any remaining ability of their state to play the role of a Great Power, whatever the outcome (Bartlett, 1984, 191). War had to be avoided even if it meant effectively conceding Europe to an enemy. The world Britain had created in the nineteenth century had finally come to an end. All that was left was the final showdown.

(v) *Final showdown, 1939–45.* As with World War I, this second episode of the 'German Wars' provides us with the explicit revelations of the geopolitical codes of the period. There was again a mixture of local, regional and world wars, and we will concentrate on the latter geographical scale. In fact, the alliance of Germany with Japan, coupled with the joining of the USA with the Allies, meant that this was the first truly global conflict with major confrontations outside Europe.

In 1939 the British policy of appeasement failed. Although Britain had no strategic interest in Eastern Europe at a regional level, it was clear that as Germany's expansion became perceived as a global challenge to Britain, the strategic equation changed dramatically. Any major territorial gain for Germany tipped the balance against Britain. There was a point, therefore, when appeasement would be counter-productive. The British government in 1939 chose Poland as the point too far for Germany.

Germany's invasion of Poland, unlike the earlier dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, triggered off the final showdown between Britain and Germany.

The German–Russian pact before the outbreak of war in Europe ensured that Germany would not be fighting on two fronts as in 1914. Germany and Russia divided Eastern Europe, allowing the former to concentrate its forces in western Europe, leading to the defeat of the arch-foe France in 1940. At this stage we can discern a German plan of four pan-regions. Germany largely ignored the USA and conceded the Americas to that quarter. From a different starting position but with the same outcome, east and south east Asia were conceded to Japan by the 1936 alliance. Russia was encouraged to develop its Eurasian pan-region with the ultimate prize of India. This left Germany with Eurafica including the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The end-result of this world plan would be the dissolution of the British Empire, with Germany gaining African colonies, the USA inheriting Canada and the Caribbean, Russia conquering India and Japan likewise Australia and the Pacific islands.

There were three major problems with this seemingly neat division of the world. A pan-region scheme can only work when the geopolitical codes of the Great Powers do not overlap. In this case the only reliable participant who had no claims beyond its quarter was Japan. But east Asia had been a US area of economic interest from the 'Open Door' policy at the beginning of the century. Hence the USA refused to allow Japan its own pan-region and employed a trade embargo which precipitated the war in the Pacific. Similarly it could not be expected that the USSR would concede Europe to Germany and pursue a purely Asian strategy. Its ultimate security rested on its ability to control events on its European borders, and therefore it was never a feasible proposition that it would re-engage in the 'Great Game' with Britain while neglecting the more fundamental 'European Game' with Germany. But most important of all, Germany would not be limited to its Eurafican pan-region. After the fall of France there was even concern in the USA lest Germany use French West Africa as a stepping-stone to the Americas to consolidate its already growing influence

there, especially in Argentina. But the real threat of further German expansion was not a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, but a return to an anti-Soviet stance. The two pan-regions meeting in Eastern Europe were inherently unstable for both geostrategic and ideological reasons. The 1939 pact was generally interpreted as a short-term expedient by both sides. With the defeat of France, the western front was effectively neutralized, leaving Germany to turn again to her eastern front. In 1941 Germany invaded Russia and thereby converted her global strategy from a four to a three pan-region plan. In fact, this was a move towards the Heartland world model, since if successful it would leave Germany in possession of most of Mackinder's 'world-island', ready to strike at the remaining two smaller pan-regions.

By the end of 1941 the division of the world into a power struggle between the two alliances was in place; the Axis powers of Germany, Japan and Italy versus the 'Grand Alliance' of Britain, the USA and USSR. The former was the less co-ordinated alliance, with Germany and Japan effectively fighting separate wars, merely agreeing to a division of activities along the 70° longitude east. This allocated almost all of British India to Japan. Although both Japan and Germany made massive territorial gains initially, Japan never reached India and Germany never reached the Urals or Siberia. The Heartland survived, and the USSR finally defeated Germany on the eastern front. Both the three pan-region model and subsequent stages towards German world domination were brought to an end with the unconditional surrender of the two major Axis powers in 1945. Britain was on the winning side in this second great test of strength of the twentieth century, but this time its contribution was clearly secondary in both the European and the Pacific theatres of war. Germany may have been stopped a second time, but now the British succession could no longer be postponed. The time was ripe for building a very different geopolitical world order.

The Cold War Geopolitical World Order

The term 'cold war' was popularized by US political commentator Walter Lippmann in 1947

(Steel, 1980). It was born of disappointment in the new post-war era: the 'hot' war with Germany and Japan was over, only to be replaced by new international tensions as the Grand Alliance broke up. For the USA, the USSR soon replaced Germany as a great ideological enemy threatening the building of a liberal world order anchored in the United Nations. As the USSR slipped into Germany's role, the only change seemed to be the lack of military conflict itself, hence 'cold' war.

Lippmann's phrase has outlasted its original context because it conveys a second important feature of the post-1945 world order. The particular distribution of power that emerged seemed to be more permanent than any that had gone before. As E. P. Thompson (1987, 14) has remarked, continuing the climatological analogy, the world was 'glaciated into its Cold War form . . . like an immutable fact of geography'. As well as the two chief protagonists never coming to blows, the Cold War represented a freezing of international relations into a solid structure contrasting with the relative fluidity of previous world orders.

The freezing of the inter-state system into two antagonistic blocs had an ideological basis. The new world order was proclaimed in civilization terms. For the USSR this meant that the Cold War was just a step on the road to world revolution to create a new civilization. Western politicians were thinking in similar terms. In his famous speech to Congress of 1947, US President Harry Truman talked of the world having to choose between two 'ways of life', positing freedom against totalitarianism. Nazi Germany had been the totalitarian foe, so by branding the USSR with the same label the recent mobilization of resources and peoples for freedom could be continued: it justified the conversion of ally into enemy. In Britain a 1948 Foreign Office memorandum was entitled simply, 'The threat to world civilization'. For both sides the world was divided into more than mere blocs; two contrary 'systems' were facing one another. This is the language of the *longue durée*, of epochs rather than periods.

We will interpret the Cold War as a world order of the *moyenne durée*, but its civilizational pretensions remain a vital aspect of its

character to be investigated. The Cold War covers the period of US hegemony in the world-system. Superficially this world order seems very straightforward, with an 'East-West' geographical pattern of power conflict dominating the inter-state system. But hovering in the background throughout there is an alternative 'North-South' geographical pattern. Originally benefiting from the anti-imperialism of both the USA and the USSR, proponents of this other interpretation of the global pattern of power came to question the relevance of the Cold War to most of the world's peoples. Hence, US political hegemony came to be challenged by a new 'Third World' as well as the USSR (Krasner, 1985).

Precursors of a new order

The idea of a great ideological contest between bourgeoisie/capitalism and proletarians/communism predates 1945. What happened after 1945 was the translation to the inter-state system of the century-long domestic socialist challenge. This process actually began at the end of World War I with the establishment of the USSR from the ruins of the old Tsarist state. The intervention of the 'west' – Britain, France, Japan and the USA – in the Russian civil war in 1920–21 was the first war with communism at the inter-state level and may be interpreted as a prologue to the Cold War world order.

Ideologically the Cold War contest has been traced right back to 1917 as a clash between Wilsonism and Leninism. President Wilson's administration represented the first tentative steps by the USA towards hegemonic policies, as opposed to the protectionist and relatively isolationist Republican administrations before and after. Wilson wanted to use the new-found financial power that World War I provided for the USA to manoeuvre international relations towards a more liberal order. He claimed a role for the USA as 'champions of the rights of mankind' (Lentin, 1984, 6) and 'trustee for the peace of the world' (Dukes, 1989, 85) – words very reminiscent of later Cold War statements. And this was at the same time that Lenin was supporting revolutionary movements in Europe as a

move towards a socialist world order. Dukes (1989) interprets this as the 'Great Conjunction' of Leninism/Wilsonism when the Cold War was born.

We have to be careful reading back from the Cold War in this way. Dukes 'conjunction' is a precursor to the next world order, but no more. To think otherwise is to project a Cold Warrior view of the world back on to the conflict over the British succession. In fact, USA–USSR relations were little developed after 1921 until they came together as allies twenty years later. The seeds of ideological conflict most definitely existed, but a great East–West global conflict remained very much a secondary concern while the German threat to both sides existed. This precursor of a new order lay dormant for most of the previous world order.

One effect of Wilson's rhetoric on US entry into World War I was that it 'transmuted a sordid imperialist war into a war of liberation' (Lentin, 1984, 6). At the Paris peace conference, the European imperial powers were able to limit this liberation by restricting national self-determination to Europe. Nonetheless, the share-out of defeated states' extra-European territory was in the form of mandates from the League of Nations which presumed development to self-government. The implication was that formal European imperialism would end; only the timing was in dispute. The first mandated territory to become independent was Iraq in 1932. In non-mandated possessions the anti-imperialism movement was led by India. The final successful threat to this 'jewel of the British Empire' came not from Russia in the Great Game, but internally through a radical national mobilization. New nationalisms were emerging outside Europe that would prove to be irresistible. The fall of Singapore to Japan in 1942 symbolically represented the end of European political superiority over Asia. As well as eliminating the organization of the world into pan-regions, World War II struck the death-knell of the European empires they were designed to replace. The precursors of the North–South challenge in the Cold War are to be found in the anti-imperialist movements of the previous world order.

How many worlds – one, two or three?

Because of the depth of change in 1945, this geopolitical transition is the classic case of its genre (Taylor, 1990). The world order was totally transformed; the USA replaced Britain as leader, and the USSR replaced Germany as challenger. The nature of international politics was turned upside-down. The British succession was settled, and a different politics would have to be built to replace it, but it was by no means obvious that the new world order would take the form of the Cold War.

The origins of the Cold War has spawned a very large and controversial literature (McCaughey, 1983). The original 'orthodox' view in US writings emphasized the special nature of the USSR as an inherently expansionist state that could never be accommodated in a stable world order. The only feasible policy was to contain the enemy by encircling it with pro-USA states. This view of a benign USA holding back the destroyers of order was widely disputed during the US war in Vietnam, where the hegemonic state looked anything but benign. In the resulting 'revisionist' school, the Cold War is blamed on US demands for a free world market to suit US business. This forced the USSR to revert to its strong autarky policy to prevent its economic domination. This choice of interpretations between Russian political imperialism and American economic imperialism has been superseded by a 'post-revisionist' literature that attempts a more subtle analysis, emphasizing the interaction of policies by both countries in producing the Cold War.

The debate goes on, but there is one feature of it that we can challenge through our analysis. The British succession may have been completed, but Britain was not immediately finished as a major influence on world events. When the term 'superpower' was coined in 1944, it was applied as much to the British Empire as to the USA and the USSR (Watt, 1984, 11). At the end of the war, the peace was in the hands of the 'Big Three', with Britain accorded equal status in negotiations. It was only in 1947, after Indian independence and another British economic crisis, that the Big Three became definitively reduced to two and we enter the bi-polar world of the Cold War.

The key point is that the geopolitical transition predates this bi-polar world. Much of the literature on the origins of the Cold War suffers from the propensity to read the 'certainties' of the period backwards to before their existence. No account of the geopolitical transition that took place in 1945–6 should ignore the third major participant, Britain. In fact, this can be viewed as Britain's last fling of its world power dice as it strove desperately to retain its geopolitical status. The result was that Britain, despite its rapidly diminishing power, was surprisingly influential in creating the new geopolitical world order (Taylor, 1990).

Geopolitical transitions are pre-eminently fluid periods of international relations when different geopolitical options are vying for construction. Not all options are equally likely, of course, but the chief ones should be considered in an analysis that does not treat the outcome as inevitable. In this case if we limit our 'constructors' to just the Big Three, we can define five potential patterns of power in 1945: (i) *one world*, where the Grand Alliance survives to lead an undivided and peaceful world; (ii) *three monroes*, where the three superpowers split apart and each concentrates on their division of the world – a latter-day pan-region plan; (iii) *an anti-imperial front* producing two worlds where the USA and USSR combine to oppose Britain and other European empires; (iv) *an anti-hegemonic front* producing two worlds where Britain and the USSR combine, perhaps as socialist states after Labour's 1945 election victory in Britain, to confront the overwhelming economic power of the USA; and (v) *an anti-communist front* producing two worlds with Britain and the USA confronting the USSR. How did option (v) become the next world order?

As World War II ended, the expectation was that the Grand Alliance would be able to produce a peaceful world without deep divisions. In 1944 and 1945 a new world organization was agreed, and this United Nations was designed to overcome the weaknesses of the failed League of Nations. In particular the Big Three (along with the other two victors, France and China) were awarded permanent positions on the Security Council, the most powerful organ of the new institution. At Yalta and Potsdam the Big Three

met to agree the post-war order. Through this mixture of idealism and realism it was hoped the one world ideal would emerge. In the event the two peace conferences failed to come to any lasting agreement and delegated the negotiations to a series of Foreign Minister meetings whose breakdown signalled a divided world. Hence there was no peace treaty after World War II, leaving the victors largely in possession of what their armies had taken in war.

The demise of hopes of one world did not in itself mean the emergence of the Cold War. Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, in particular feared a resurgence of autarky among his allied partners. This could be expected from the USSR, but what if isolationist forces came to dominate US foreign policy again? Bevin's 'nightmare' was what he termed a 'three monroes' outcome, where both the USA and the USSR possessed relatively compact and contiguous spheres of influence, leaving Britain with a ramshackle zone of leftover western colonies that would be impossible to defend in any future conflict (Taylor, 1990, 51). Since Bevin had little faith in the United Nations as an defence umbrella to shelter Britain, it follows that his policy was to promote a two-world solution to cope with Britain's vulnerability.

Of the three two-world options, the least likely was probably the anti-hegemonic front. Although there was a strong body of opinion in the British Labour Party in favour of closer relations with the USSR, this was not reflected in foreign policy making. Bevin was a long-term anti-communist from his trade union days and he easily transferred his antipathy to the international stage. The British general election of 1945 was held during the Potsdam conference, and when the Labour ministers returned to the conference they were generally considered to be more anti-Soviet than their Conservative predecessors (Shlaim *et al.*, 1977, 40). We can identify Bevin, therefore, as a major architect of the Cold War.

But the Cold War was not the only two-world option, as we have seen. Why should the USA and USSR be antagonistic rivals as Britain would wish? In terms of their immediate post-war geopolitical codes there was effectively no overlap to generate friction. The civil war in China had not

yet come to a head, and in Europe the USA was originally willing to concede the special interest of the USSR in Eastern Europe. Although the USA was against closed spheres of influence, the idea of 'open' spheres was proposed whereby Soviet political dominance would be conceded as long as economic transactions were not impeded (Harbutt, 1986, 131). For the new hegemonic state, it was such economic matters that were important initially. Hence in 1945 it was the British Empire with its imperial preferences enclosing the largest 'unfree' market in the world that was viewed as a potential enemy to US interests (Kolko and Kolko, 1973). Combined with traditional US anti-imperialism, there was certainly some potential for the isolation of Britain within the Big Three in 1945. The US solved the problem of closed British markets through its loan to Britain that effectively tied Britain to a new liberal US-led world-economy (Taylor, 1990). But there was still no basis for a USA-USSR split.

Although the British feared the USSR as a threat to its empire, it was hard to see how she could possibly get the USA to help defend it. Despite the acknowledged imminence of Indian independence, Britain persevered with its traditional imperial geopolitical code with the route to the east at its heart. USSR demands for access to the Mediterranean at Potsdam fuelled Britain's doubts on her ability to combat a resurgent Russian attack on the 'lifeline' of its empire. For Britain the problem was that if a new Great Game was to be initiated, how could the USA be involved on its side? The answer was to turn the Great Game into an ideological contest and make it 'universal' in scope (Taylor, 1990). If the USA could be marshalled to save the world from communism, then in the process the British Empire might yet be saved. In early 1946 we can see this strategy operating. At the foreign ministers meetings Bevin is hard at work driving a wedge between the USA and USSR (Deighton, 1987) while ex-Prime Minister Winston Churchill puts his immense influence behind the campaign with his famous 'iron curtain' speech positing the dark forces of communism against Anglo-American liberties. The mixed reception this speech received in the USA shows that the Cold War was not yet in place (Harbutt, 1986),

but the rise of anti-communist feeling in the USA soon turned the tide. Ironically, the first real confrontation between the USA and the USSR occurred in Iran – one of the centres of the old Great Game – after the USSR was slow in withdrawing its troops (Harbutt, 1986). Within a year, Britain was to precipitate the Truman Doctrine, committing the USA to defend all countries against the spread of communism: Britain declared her inability to afford continuing the defence of Greece and Turkey, and the USA stepped in as new guarantor. The Cold War was now firmly in place.

In this interpretation the Cold War is just another stage in the Great Game, but with a new team leader, the USA. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the geographer who codified the nineteenth-century Great Game as world strategic model should have a second ‘life’ as a major geopolitical theorist in the Cold War. Mackinder’s Heartland thesis concerning the importance of the world-island and the inevitability of an era of seapower versus landpower conflict derived a new resonance with the coming of the new world order. The British imperialist Sir Halford Mackinder’s two worlds finally came into being as the Cold War Geopolitical World Order.

Phases of the Cold War

Although the most stable of all geopolitical world orders, the Cold War nonetheless has exhibited a variety of international relations within the single pattern. The standard approach to differences over time has been to contrast different degrees of enmity in East–West relations (Halliday, 1983). We define four phases in this manner, but with the added ingredient that we show how these run parallel with developments in North–South politics.

(i) *The freeze, 1947–53.* By ‘freeze’ I do not mean that this phase experienced no ‘hot’ war as we shall see, but rather that the geopolitical world order stabilized into the form it was to take for four decades. Further, this initial phase represents the deepest the Cold War division was to reach: there were to be later crises in East–West relations, but the nadir of this politics is

usually dated around 1950. In addition, the domestic populations of the major participants were being mobilized to the new way of thinking through anti-communist and anti-imperialism programmes that eliminated government opponents (Truman’s loyalty oaths and McCarthy ‘witch hunts’ in the USA, and Stalin’s final purges in the USSR).

The Cold War begins with the division of Europe into two blocs. The Truman Doctrine promising military help to defeat communism was followed later in 1947 by the Marshall Plan, through which US capital was made available to reconstruct Europe. Since the USSR refused to allow states it controlled to accept such funds, the operation of the plan in 1948 effectively divided Europe into two economic regions. In addition the US, British and French occupation zones of Germany now came together to form ‘West’ Germany, leaving the Soviet zone to become ‘East’ Germany. Both Europe as a whole and Germany in particular were thus divided. This was confirmed by the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 that committed the USA to the defence of Western Europe, that is, to the liberal democratic capitalist region its capital was helping to construct (Taylor, 1991).

It is in this first phase that the geopolitical codes of the chief protagonists become clear. For the USSR, Eastern Europe is paramount (McCauley, 1983). Since it had been invaded twice through this region in the first twenty-five years of its existence, the Soviet state insisted on political control of a ring of buffer states from the Black Sea to the Baltic. The other two powers at Yalta had agreed to a Soviet special interest in this region, although not necessarily in the form it finally took. Other Soviet interests along its boundaries through Asia were relevant but remained secondary.

The USA code was originally just as selective in its scope. George Kennan, the first architect of containment, identified four advanced industrial regions that had the potential to sustain a war against the USA: Britain, Germany, Japan and the USSR (Gaddis, 1982). Containment of the USSR would consist, therefore, in ensuring Britain, Germany and Japan remained in the US camp, thus avoiding the situation of World War

II when the US faced an alliance of two of these key strategic regions. Hence the rapid conversion of the erstwhile enemies (West) Germany and Japan to friends, plus the Marshall aid for Britain and the rest of Europe. With the defeat of the communists in Greece, the removal of communists from government in Italy and France, plus the formation of a communist government in Czechoslovakia, the division of Europe was complete. In 1948 the divided city of Berlin, deep in East German territory, came under communist pressure by blockade, but the Berlin airlift from the West preserved this western outlier in the East. This crisis solidified the division, but importantly did not lead to military conflict. This was to typify the Cold War for its whole life. Europe was the main East–West front, with the greatest build-up of armaments ever facing one another, but without the massive arsenal ever being fired in anger: deterrence, not war, was the game.

In 1949 and 1950 the focus of international relations switched from Europe to Asia. The communists won the civil war in China in 1949, and a year later the Korean War began. At the same time the US code changed significantly from selective to blanket containment. In 1950 the policy document NSC 50 committed the USA to massive rearmament to face the communist threat across the world (Gaddis, 1982). This meant committing US troops to fight in Korea against Chinese, but not Russian, soldiers. The Cold War ‘hotted up’ in Asia as it never did in Europe.

As well as this first extra-European ‘hot’ outcome, the switch in concern to Asia is important because it mixed the East–West conflict with the emerging North–South confrontation. Soon after World War II the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Burma and Sri Lanka became independent, but colonial conflict continued against the French in Indo-China, the Dutch in Indonesia and the British in Malaya. Hence, the civil wars in China and Korea, while viewed primarily in East–West terms in the ‘North’, could be interpreted as part of a ‘South’ resistance pattern, as well. In 1950 India convened the first ‘South’ caucus at the United Nations for countries that were soon to be labelled ‘Third World’ to distinguish them from the bi-polar world of the North. Although

the USA had secured UN support for its Korean policy, this institution had lost its original conciliatory role with the demise of the ‘one world’ scenario. India was beginning the process that was to make the UN the prime vehicle for Third World dissent. This phase comes to a close with the armistice and division of Korea, an East–West outcome, but carried out through the offices of Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, to bring peace to the South.

(ii) *Conflict and concert, contest or conspiracy? 1953–69.* This rather awkward title of the second phase reflects the complexity that was emerging in the world order after the relative simplicities of the initial freeze. Fred Halliday’s (1983) description of the period as ‘oscillatory antagonism’ sums up the mixture of despair interspersed with windows of hope that is our subject matter here. The first thaw in the Cold War occurred in 1955 and this period is differentiated from the previous one by the willingness of the protagonists to negotiate their differences. This is when superpower summits first began. But overshadowing all was the threat of nuclear war. The USSR detonated its first atomic bomb in 1949 and a nuclear bomb in 1953. With the US monopoly of this means of mass destruction terminated, the Cold War became dominated by the nuclear arms race with the USSR attempting to make up lost ground on the USA. The traditional concept of balance of power became translated into a balance of terror by the end of this phase, as the USSR could retaliate a US attack to guarantee ‘mutually assured destruction’ or MAD. This represents the nadir of Cold War thinking.

The events of this phase generally confirm the geopolitical codes of the superpowers. Both consolidated their positions in their own contiguous spheres of influence – the Soviet’s buffer satellites in Eastern Europe, and the US ‘backyard’ in central America and the Caribbean. This was by armed intervention when necessary; the USA invaded Guatemala in 1954 and the Dominican Republic in 1965, whereas the USSR army put down revolts in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. There was a final showdown over Berlin in 1961 which resulted in the construction of the Berlin Wall to prevent migra-

tion from East to West, but generally the East–West conflict remained dormant in Europe after the USSR formed its satellites into the Warsaw Pact in 1955 to confront NATO. The USA continued its blanket containment policy and formed two further alliances to complement NATO which stretched from Norway to Turkey in the West: CENTO (Central Asia Treaty Organization), formed in 1959, stretched from Turkey to Pakistan, and SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization), formed in 1954, stretched from Pakistan to the Philippines. Together with the US defence treaty with Japan, the USSR was ‘contained’ from the north Atlantic to the north Pacific.

But the world is never that simple. Civil war in Cuba resulted in a revolutionary government coming to power there. The subsequent Cuba–USSR alliance meant that the USSR was not only breaking out of its containment, but entering its opponent’s sphere of influence. The attempt by the Soviet Union to place missiles there resulted in the Cuban crisis of 1962 when it is often argued the world was closer to nuclear war than on any other occasion. In the event the USSR backed down, but Cuba remained a communist satellite off the coast of the USA.

The Cuban revolution illustrates the fact that political events could not be universally controlled by the superpowers. The collapse of CENTO after a coup in Iraq provides a similar message. Support for Israel in the Middle East made it difficult for the USA to keep allies in this region. All radical Arab regimes – Egypt, Syria, Iraq, later Libya – distanced themselves from the USA to become friendly with the USSR. The region became enmeshed in a complex pattern of overlapping superpower geopolitical codes which became recognized as the classic case of a ‘shatter belt’ (Cohen, 1982; Kelly, 1986). The ominous feature of this was that the USA was becoming associated with conservative regimes, leaving the USSR to reap a harvest of radical states into its camp. This process was to be repeated throughout the South, with catastrophic effects in the other shatter-belt of the period – South East Asia.

In terms of the South, this phase represents the great victory of decolonization: the rest of Asia and the Americas plus almost all of sub-Saharan

Africa became independent of the old European empires. This is what the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan termed the ‘winds of change’; in 1960 it turned into a hurricane, spawning no fewer than seventeen new states. Led by the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations in the 1960s became the world forum for Southern demands on the North. The movement had been formed in 1961 at a meeting in Belgrade and was originally led by Yugoslavia, India and Egypt (Willets, 1978). Yugoslavia had broken with the USSR in 1948; India formed a non-western gap in the containment arc between CENTO and SEATO, while Egypt had survived the last intervention of the European imperial powers – an Anglo-French invasion of Suez in 1956. India, despite its continued membership of the British Commonwealth, supported Egypt in the latter conflict. The movement’s members emphasized their right not to choose sides in the East–West conflict, and promoted North–South issues instead. But the two geopolitical axes could not be kept apart, usually to the detriment of the USA. In Vietnam after 1964 the USA argued that its army was containing communism, but for most of the rest of the world she was opposing a national liberation movement. US-supported conservative regimes in South Vietnam were unstable and the USA had to fight a second war on the Asian mainland while the USSR stood back and, with China, provided military support for North Vietnam. The realization by the USA that she could not win the war and the beginning of peace negotiations signalled the end of this phase by enabling a long thaw – detente – to begin.

Before we leave the discussion of this phase, one further important development requires consideration. The Non-Aligned Movement was not the only major challenge to the assumption of a bi-polar world. Within each bloc there arose differences that exploded the myth of East–West as two frozen monoliths. The most important split occurred between the USSR and China in 1960, but in some ways equally symbolic was the decision of President de Gaulle of France to eschew US leadership in the West: France withdrew from NATO’s military command in 1965, leading to the removal of NATO headquarters from Paris. These changes exposed the superpowers to more general criticisms: the Chinese

accused *both* the USA and the USSR of imperialism. The Cold War was coming to be seen by critics on both sides as a convenient arrangement for both superpowers to keep their allies under continued control. Rather than the 'great contest' of opposing ways of life as expounded when the world order emerged, it had come to look to some as a 'great conspiracy', a power duopoly enjoying condominium over the globe (Cox, 1986; Taylor, 1989). The worldwide students' and workers' resistance to authority in 1968 confirmed the importance of this interpretation. This revolution may have incorporated a major anti-American component, but it was most certainly not pro-USSR in nature (Wallerstein, 1991). After two decades of dominating their respective realms, both superpowers were having to face for the first time a relative decline in their powers. This was the key prelude to detente.

(iii) *Detente and demands for a new order, 1969-79.* Moves towards a more extensive thaw in superpower relations were stimulated by the fear of nuclear war generated by the Cuban missile crisis. This stimulated both the beginnings of negotiations on controlling nuclear weapon testing and dissemination, plus improved communication between the USA and USSR: the 'hot line' linking White House and Kremlin was instituted at this time, for instance. But if there was to be detente in the 1960s it was delayed by US involvement in Vietnam. With this obstacle removed by the beginnings of peace negotiations, both superpowers could begin their moves towards mutual accommodation in 1969. This represents their joint repudiation of ideas of competitive incompatible civilizations and their adoption of the roles of two status quo powers.

The change in geopolitical code was greatest for the USA following on from the trauma of its Vietnam experience. Under the tutelage of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the blanket containment code was replaced by a more pluralistic balance of power model (Gaddis, 1982). A pentagonal distribution of power was envisaged, with the two superpowers being joined by China, Europe (meaning the European Community) and Japan. This realistic reappraisal recognized the economic achievements of the latter two and the long-standing potential of

China. It is during this period that a new power constellation is identified as the 'Pacific Rim', drawing the USA's concern away from Europe as the traditional focus of concern. President Nixon visited China in 1971 and the communist regime was finally admitted to the United Nations. In an explicitly even-handed policy, the USSR was not neglected and negotiations on nuclear arms continued, culminating in the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) agreement of 1972. This represents the apogee of detente.

There was also an important economic dimension to the new pluralism. In 1971 the USA withdrew the dollar's convertibility to gold, thus ending its special role as reserve currency throughout the non-communist world. In effect the USA was reverting to ordinary competitive status within the world-economy (Corbridge, 1984). Thus began a new period of what Kaldor (1978) termed 'West-West conflict'. There were attempts to control the potentially destructive effects by co-operation, resulting in new institutions. The Trilateral Commission was an informal organization bringing together the political and economic elites of the USA, Europe and Japan to encourage the development of a global management class (Gill, 1988). More formally, this is the time when the leaders of the seven largest capitalist economies - USA, West Germany, Japan, France, Britain, Italy and Canada - began their regular series of G7 meetings. In short, US economic hegemony had ended in the West.

Pluralism was extended down the power hierarchy by the recognition of regional powers with special responsibility to maintain stability in their region. In the Middle East, for instance, the US chose Iran under the Shah to play this role. But the superpowers continued their repression of opposition in their sphere of influence: in 1970 the USSR connived in the repression of a workers' revolt in Poland, and in 1973 the USA connived in the coup removing the socialist government in Chile. It was 'business as usual' - repression - for the vast majority of peoples of Eastern Europe and Latin America throughout detente. Furthermore, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war found the USA and USSR in their familiar positions on either side of the conflict. It is testi-

many of the strength of detente that this latter event did not lead to a new 'freeze', but it also shows detente to be a reform of the existing world order rather than its replacement.

Nevertheless this phase of detente did provide a window of opportunity for forces that were demanding a new world order. By this time Third World countries formed a large majority in the United Nations and they were able to use this forum to generate a very different agenda for world politics. Stimulated by the economic success of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) in the aftermath of the 1973 Middle East war in raising their commodity price, a New Economic International Order (NEIO) was demanded (Addo, 1984). This was a challenge to both the USA and the USSR with a new image of 'one world', where the needs of the South would take precedent over the Cold War and its insatiable demand for wasteful arms. The UN sponsored several major international conferences on such global issues as the environment, food, technology transfer and agrarian reform as part of this new world politics. The USA and its allies in particular found themselves as a permanent minority in the UN and at many of these conferences. This, more than superpower detente, seemed to offer a glimpse of the future. But where was the power to bring these ideas into effect? The OPEC success proved to be an isolated event.

As events unfolded during this phase, more and more opposition to detente grew in the USA (Dalby, 1990). In addition to the UN being out of control, it seemed to many critics that the USSR was gaining more from superpower accommodation than the USA. For instance, in the final wave of decolonization, the group of most resisted independence movements became, not surprisingly, the most radical. As colonies turned into new states, they were invariably Marxist in orientation, as in Angola and Mozambique, for example. In addition, new revolutions produced other Marxist regimes, as in Ethiopia. There was also suspicion concerning the Soviet policy on nuclear weapons. Hence, in the 1979 the US Senate refused to ratify the SALT II treaty. But there were three key events in the last two years of the decade that aided the 'cold warriors' in overturning detente. First, the

popular overthrow of the Shah in Iran led to a radical Islamic regime that was explicitly anti-American. Second, the radical Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua brought fears of a communist regime on the American mainland. Third, the USSR sent its army into Afghanistan at Christmas 1979. This latter event, ironically at the location where the original Great Game began, was to mark definitively the end of detente.

(iv) *A process of freeze-thaw with deadly side-effects, 1979-89.* Like detente, this phase began with the US in a state of trauma. The occupation of the US Embassy by revolutionary guards in Iran was a symbolic representation of American weakness – like Vietnam, albeit on a much smaller scale. However, the effect was to be very different. A demand for renewed strength brought President Reagan to power as a right-wing cold warrior 'to make America great again'. The Cold War political agenda was reaffirmed and Third World demands simply ignored in a more aggressive approach to the United Nations.

The geopolitical code of the USA returned to an earlier time of simple bi-polarity. The USSR, referred to by President Reagan famously as 'the evil empire', became the target of increased military expenditures and new missile deployment as the USA attempted to 'catch up', as the government saw it, after the disaster of detente. The most controversial decision came in 1983 with the go-ahead for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) which proposed the militarization of space. All this amounted to a new freeze almost as total as the original phase of the Cold War: it is commonly referred to as the 'second cold war' to indicate this affinity (Halliday, 1983). However, in terms of the geography of the US policy the 'Reagan doctrine' went further even than blanket containment. Given the success of radical regimes in the Third World during detente, a new initiative was required to combat communism wherever it occurred. The invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the support for the rebel contras in Nicaragua was consistent with past sphere-of-influence policy, but the large-scale aid given to anti-communist rebels in Angola, Ethiopia and Afghanistan represented a new departure. It was found that communism could

be confronted worldwide by sponsoring anti-communist groups; this was much cheaper than involving US troops. The Cold War had finally come to dominate the politics of the South.

The result for the Third World was nothing less than catastrophic. International wars, notably the Iran–Iraq conflict from 1980 to 1988, and civil wars on all three southern continents meant that the purchase of armaments received top priority in Third World states. A world of millions of refugees, large-scale famines, plus increasing poverty was created, as massive debt problems sucked capital from South to North. There is no doubt who the losers were in this final phase of the Cold War. With the demise of the UN as a relevant tool of redress, the major political reaction to this change has been intensified ‘terrorism’ – the war of the weak on any available targets of the strong (Herman, 1982). This has taken the form of aircraft hijacking and hostage-taking especially associated with the longest-serving group of refugees, the Palestinians living in exile since 1948.

Promoting the Cold War agenda had other important implications. By bringing political issues to the fore again, it confirmed the USA’s standing as world leader. Although this was achieved at the expense of the US economy, in this phase military preparedness took precedence over concerns for economic decline. This process was confirmed by the re-emergence of that other relatively economically declining major power, Britain, as ‘America’s deputy policeman’ under the cold warrior leadership of Margaret Thatcher, the ‘Iron Lady’. But as in the period of British decline, political leadership can never wholly mask relative economic decline and its concomitant competition. The processes underlying the West–West conflict that emerged during detente did not abruptly end. Hence, with a new thaw in East–West relations in the second half of the decade, voices could be heard in the US identifying Japan as more of a threat to US global pre-eminence than the USSR.

For the USSR with its much more severe economic difficulties, the new freeze was potentially catastrophic. Without the means to enter a new arms race, the Soviet government reached a crucial dilemma in its policies just as a new leader came to power in 1985. President Gorbachev

seized the opportunity to change freeze into thaw with the unlikely support of both Reagan and Thatcher. Major new initiatives resulted in the first major destruction of nuclear arsenals after the INF (intermediate nuclear forces) agreement of 1987. The following year USSR troops withdrew from Afghanistan, removing the original cause of the ‘second cold war’. Commentators began to speak of a ‘new detente’ (Kaldor *et al.*, 1989), but it soon became clear that this language was inadequate: the process in train was not merely one of reforming the Cold War; it was destroying it. This was confirmed by the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989. The USSR indicated that it would no longer employ force to keep its sphere of influence, and the communist regimes collapsed one after another, starting in Poland and ending in Romania – the only collapse accompanied by major violence. Economic crisis within the Soviet Union had occasioned a complete revision of their geopolitical code made possible by the thaw in East–West relations engineered by Gorbachev. On 9 November 1989 the Berlin Wall was breached by the new forces: this stands as the symbolic event of the end of the Cold War, leading to the unification of Germany the following year. And finally, as an aftershock of what the media had termed a ‘geopolitical earthquake’, the USSR was excised from the inter-state system in 1991.

And so the Cold War Geopolitical World Order began and ended in Europe, and benefits are expected from the healing of divisions there. But between this beginning and ending, the remainder of the world was incorporated into this world politics, initially to its benefit through decolonization, but latterly with disastrous consequences. The joy in Europe, and in the North generally, at the ending of the Cold War must be severely tempered while the vast majority of humanity in the South struggle just to survive. Will a new world order address their problems?

A new geopolitical world order

And so we return to the contemporary search for a new world order. After a transition, a new world incorporating new geopolitical assump-

tions is in the making, but it is not yet constructed and we cannot be certain what it will look like. With the demise of the USSR, there is a political power vacuum which accounts for the new order being generally associated with the USA and George Bush. Of course it is not that simple; the Cold War will not be replaced by a Pax Americana. The irony is that this power vacuum has occurred, not as US economic strength is at its height, but after two decades of relative decline. There is a crucial mismatch between political and economic trends in the world-system.

A lack of congruence between political and economic processes at the international level is not new. This is what we reported above at the end of the nineteenth century during British decline. And like Britain at that time, it would be wrong to write the USA off now. It remains not only the leading political power, but the largest economic force in the world, as critics of reading too much into US decline have emphasized (Strange, 1988). Hence it would seem premature to envisage a 'World Order of the US Succession' just yet, if at all. We must be careful not to use our historical analogies too uncritically. But on the other hand we are in a period of lost hegemony and we may expect the USA to employ similar strategies to Britain to maintain its power. Appeasing rivals will be a policy we can expect.

Making sense of where international politics is going must be speculative at this stage so close to transition. We can, however, progress a little beyond crude historical analogy by trying to identify those elements of the last world order that may continue to be important in the future. In a quarter of a century or so from now, perhaps some geopolitical analyst will be identifying the precursors of her or his stable contemporary world order. To predict what these might be I think we have to go back one phase to detente – the time of the Cold War most like our current situation. There were three very important tendencies within detente that survived the early 1980s freeze: the attempt at a new concert of Great Powers; the new economic rivalry, and the challenge from the South. Let us consider the possible relevance of each for the post-Cold War period.

The first major international crisis after tran-

sition, the Iraqi take-over of Kuwait, suggests that we may be entering a new period of 'rivalry and concert'. The United Nations emerged as a vehicle for great-power imposition of order as originally envisaged in 1945. Unlike the 1970s when the General Assembly dominated the scene, it is now the Security Council back in the driving seat and with the five permanent members acting in concert as status quo powers. In fact, this is just one of two key instruments of concert, with the so-called G7 group of leading advanced economies operating a second and complementary attempt to order the world. But it is in this economic arena that the rivalry continues. Hence, while 1991 witnessed agreement on military action in the Gulf, there was fundamental disagreement at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) meetings. The question is whether the economic rivalry can be contained by the processes of concert.

If the economic rivalry comes to dominate the new world order, what form might it take? We can be reasonably confident that it will not take the form of several autarkic pan-regions as envisaged in the past. But this does not mean that the close interconnections among the economies of the North in the late twentieth century automatically precludes separate economic spheres if political elites deem this to be necessary for their particular ends. Following our previous discussion of increasing size of political-economy units, if a new divide is to arise it is likely to be based upon just two global zones. Wallerstein (1991) predicts a divide through the Atlantic, with Japan and the USA leading a Pacific Rim bloc against a 'greater Europe' incorporating the USSR and dominating the Middle East and Africa. Notice that this geopolitical arrangement, while still being bi-polar, completely turns the Cold War pattern upside down in terms of who sides with whom.

The two scenarios above are similar in that politics remains as before for the South; it is still the Great Powers who are calling whatever tune. The condition of the South in the 1980s illustrates how much their challenge of the 1970s failed. If there is an upturn in the Kondratieff cycle in the near future this will give opportunities to alleviate the worst problems of the South. However, given that domestic crises are going to

dominate the states of the South into the foreseeable future, it remains unlikely that any of these states can provide the sort of leadership necessary for a new political challenge. Certainly there is no state like India in the 1950s and 1960s with a foreign policy to counter whatever the North decides for the South. If there is to be a challenge, it is more likely to be from the resurgence of Islam than from any one state. This is the most intriguing precursor within the Cold War order, and one that was briefly activated during the Gulf War by the surprising popularity of Saddam Hussein among Moslem peoples (Taylor, 1992). Geopolitically the main part of the North, on the world-island, has as its Southern fringe a long crescent of Islamic peoples from Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east. It would be the ultimate irony if Mackinder's most famous geopolitical pattern were to be finally relevant as the South threatened the Heartland – the North.

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