

Regionalism in World Politics

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION AND
INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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order in Europe to a 'conversation'. A nation, like a single person, 'only feels happy', Ranke observed, 'when many-sided personalities, freely developed, meet on a higher common ground or indeed produce this very meeting-place by stimulating and complementing one another'.¹⁰³

Human freedom on an international scale consists in, and also depends on, having a 'choice of venue' among a variety of decision-making structures and the solutions they can offer in different places. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's conception of global 'democratization' partakes of such a larger vision. So too does the thinking of Andrei Kokoshin who, when Deputy Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada in Moscow under the USSR, explained that, 'when searching for a new security structure to ensure stability, it would not be wise, even in Europe, for the Soviets to confine themselves to only one approach... After all, given the discouraging historical experience in this area, the Soviet Union can hardly trust one universal security structure'.¹⁰⁴

Taken together, these three general reasons—political, institutional, and philosophical—form a rationale for strongly supporting any serious attempt, such as that outlined by Boutros-Ghali in *An Agenda for Peace*, to bring the one, central international organization, the UN, into a functioning new partnership with the many regionally based ones. The new partners include regional alliances such as NATO as well as the growing list of Chapter VIII organizations—the OAS, OAU, and Arab League, now joined by the OSCE and, even more recently, the CIS. This broadly systemic goal, as the present chapter has argued, should be sought without unduly subordinating regionalism to globalism, for reasons of international political reality, needed organizational effectiveness, and the impulse of human freedom.

¹⁰³ The Great Powers (*Die Grossen Mächte*), in Theodore von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton UP, 1950), 218.

¹⁰⁴ Andrei A. Kokoshin, *The Evolving International Security System: A View From Moscow*, CNA Occasional Paper (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, Dec. 1991), 27.

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National Identity and the Revival of Regionalism

James Mayall

HISTORICALLY, nation and region have stood in much the same relationship to one another as actor and stage. The regions of the world, separated as much by history and culture as by oceans, deserts and mountains, provided the political space in which the drama of nation, state, and empire-building was enacted. Proximity frequently led to conflict over land, access to precious metals and other resources, trade routes, status, and religion. Proximity also made possible the dynastic and military alliances, the exchange of goods and services, and the diffusion of ideas, tastes, and values through which a modicum of security and welfare was provided and without which neither national cultures nor international society could have developed. The boundary between these separate regional worlds was seldom unambiguous, let alone impermeable; sometimes conflict across the line was deeply embedded—as in South-East Europe where the division between the Orthodox and Catholic worlds and between Christendom and Islam is often described by analogy to a geological 'faultline'. But, until the twentieth century, politics, like architecture, was constrained within a human scale.

The ground-plan of the modern world was laid down in the previous century. The consequences of European imperial expansion were far-reaching: for the first time all parts of the world were integrated within a single economy; and the wars of the great powers were also fought world-wide. As always, thought followed action—grand ideological and geopolitical theories were generated to explain what had happened. When European power was withdrawn in the mid-twentieth century, there was a predictable reaction. The concept of region ceased to be used in a purely descriptive sense, to denote a cultural or geographical area, and was increas-

ingly invoked to support a political doctrine or a principle of international order.

From the start regionalism has had to overcome certain disadvantages in the market-place of political ideas. It is a concept of the middle ground, lacking the highminded appeal of cosmopolitanism and the atavistic warmth of nationalism. However, the defeat of fascism (under which the atavism finally drove out the warmth) and the rapid disintegration of the European empires created an organizational void in world politics. After 1945 an attempt was made to design an international order based on principles of co-operation rather than conflict. The intention was to reconcile rival claims and interests at the national, regional, and universal levels, but the East-West conflict quickly overshadowed this attempt. Nationalism and regionalism were not totally written out of the script, but they were undoubtedly subordinate. The Cold War, in both its military and ideological dimensions, was acted out on a global stage.

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that, the ending of the Cold War has been followed by both a resurgence of nationalism and a proliferation of regional projects and regionalist arguments. These developments prompt three questions. First, how have regionalism and nationalism been related, in theory and practice, since 1945? Second, how were they related, severally and together to wider conceptions of international order? And third, can they be accommodated within a reconstructed world order, or are they fundamentally antithetical doctrines?

1. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Answering these questions is not straightforward: the terms themselves are ambiguous and contested. It may be helpful, therefore, to begin by sketching the disputed terrain before turning to the way in which the disputes have been handled in practice.

There is no problem with the doctrine of nationalism itself. It merely states that the world is divided into nations and that each nation should have its own independent sovereign state. The difficulty arises from conflicting definitions of what constitutes a nation. Romantic historicists view it in primordial or essentialist terms. For them the origins of the nation, into which one is born, are known, yet lost in the mists of time. In effect, the nation has

always existed, although it may well have lost its ancient independence to foreign conquerors. National identity is defined in cultural terms, most often by membership of an ethnic group speaking a common natural language. For romantics, the doctrine of national self-determination refers to the right of all such groups to reclaim their birthright, whether through the break-up of empires or by secession from an existing state.

By contrast, liberal pluralists, equate the nation with the political community. The nation is defined by the constitution and by citizenship. Ethnic and cultural identities are largely irrelevant, although some liberal thinkers, such as John Stuart Mill, have argued that, from a practical point of view, democracy is likely to prove fragile in countries where powerful ethnic communities compete to capture the state through the ballot box.¹ In recent times, liberals have tended to support the breaking up of empire through negotiation, but usually stop short of endorsing wars of national liberation (at least until they have been won) or secession from existing states. On the other hand, modern liberals are divided on the issue of the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention in cases where members of an ethnic or other minority have their fundamental human and civil rights systematically abused.

When we turn to the concept of region, the disputes may be less passionate, but are almost equally confusing. As a political doctrine regionalism is even more incoherent than nationalism since those who advocate regional solutions to political and economic problems do not merely differ on the meaning and implications of the concept, but are frequently pursuing contradictory projects. Consider the following examples. Some Euro-enthusiasts, have hinted at the possibility of transcending the state and nation by creating a wider federation and a regional political identity. Yet the federalists have been repeatedly frustrated by the continuing vitality of the national idea.² Scottish or Catalan nationalists are more likely to see regionalism as the doctrine which will justify granting them greater autonomy, and thus provide an escape route from the tyranny of the sovereign state. These and other such 'peripheral' nationalisms emphasize their own 'Europeanist' and 'international-

¹ J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1910, repr. 1957), ch. XVI.

² See James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 94-5.

ist' orientation but aim not for a single European identity but rather for a Europe of the regions. A further perspective is provided by the functionalists' appeal to regional criteria such as transport networks or migratory labour patterns to suggest that political frontiers somehow distort reality and hence unnecessarily reduce human welfare. But they are divided among themselves over the possible consequences of regionalism, in particular over the desirability of superseding the nation state with what Mitrany once dubbed the 'continental union'.³

Finally, some nationalists, pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism for example, operate at the regional as well as the state level. In these cases the claim is that a regional political identity already exists, even if it does not require a surrender of sovereignty by existing national governments. Indeed when states endorse a solidarist ideology of this kind, they define it in a way which reasserts the primacy of the state in the event of any conflict between the national interest and any wider obligation.⁴ This has been all too clearly reflected in groupings such as the Organization of African Unity or the League of Arab States.

The gap between these rival interpretations is one of kind not degree. However, not all of them command equal respect within the society of states. Since 1945 national and regional issues have been 'managed' in international politics pragmatically as they have arisen, rather than according to a preconceived doctrine. Conventional interpretations have emerged of both national self-determination and the role of regional organizations in international society. Let us consider how these orthodox interpretations came about.

2. REGIONALISM AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The peacemakers in 1945 built upon the foundations of the League of Nations. Like the League, the UN was designed to provide security for a world of nation states, not to replace the state with a new form of political organization. However, it was not considered sufficient merely to return to the *status quo ante*. After the excesses

of the Nazi period, nationalist doctrine was widely discredited amongst the major powers. The economic depression of the 1930s had proved that autarky was not a practical option for industrial societies. The war had then demonstrated the importance of standing military alliances in control of an extensive industrial infrastructure. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left little room for doubt that the separate state could not defend itself in a war taken to the limit. If the world was to survive and prosper it seemed that new forms of political and economic association would be necessary. Writers like E. H. Carr and John Herz attempted to map the contours of the new age, without, it must be said, clarifying how the problem of sovereignty was to be overcome.⁵

It was not immediately obvious that regionalism was the solution to the old problem of international insecurity, or the new one of economic interdependence. David Mitrany, the most important of the early functionalists, saw in a world of competitive regional powers all the dangers of the system of separate states magnified on to a larger scale.⁶ His own solution—the ensnaring of the sovereign state in a web of transnational welfare activities—may have been unrealistic, but his charge against the dangers of regionalism has never been satisfactorily answered. In any case, in the immediate post-war period the preferred solutions were a revised form of collective security presided over by the five permanent members of the Security Council, and in the economic sphere the reconstruction and strengthening of an open world economy.

The UN charter established the primacy of the sovereign state and the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination, without acknowledging the apparent contradiction between these two principles. Whatever the intellectuals might think, it seemed that governments believed that the best chance of building a new world order was by arranging a marriage between the individual, who would have his rights guaranteed, and the state which would be secure in its independence. The concept of guarantees for minorities, which had been a feature of the League, was omitted from the UN Charter.

Regionalism was not a central feature of this post-war design,

³ David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 44–68.

⁴ Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, 145–6.

⁵ E. H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London: Macmillan, 1945) and John Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia UP, 1962).

⁶ Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*.

but its claims had to be recognized if only as a corollary of the respect paid to state sovereignty. If states were sovereign, they had to be free to associate, for any co-operative or defensive purpose, provided that by so doing they did not prejudice the security or welfare of other states. Article 51 of the UN Charter acknowledged this right in matters of security by expressly permitting military alliances. Article 24 of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT)⁷ similarly excluded customs unions and free-trade areas from the obligations of the non-discriminatory most favoured nation principle on which the system of liberal multilateralism was to be based. The vast majority of such associations were likely to be regional in character.

The outbreak of the Cold War ensured that these provisions of the new world order were given rapid prominence. It also served to freeze the political map in Europe and to confine state creation (and hence the application of the principle of national self-determination) to the former colonies of the European powers. The first consequence of the Cold War was the military division of the world into rival military blocs, organized on the one side through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the regional alliances by means of which Western power was projected on a global scale, and on the other through the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which legitimized the subordination and military occupation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union. The global reach of Cold War antagonisms meant that the revised form of collective security was stillborn: it had assumed the continuation of the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies, and could not survive the repeated use of the veto by one of the permanent members. But although the two sides confronted one another in Europe, by the 1960s it was clear that neither side could challenge the political and territorial dispensation that had emerged at the end of the Second World War.⁸

The national question, which had proved such a disruptive force in European politics after the break-up of the Habsburg and Otto-

⁷ The GATT filled the gap when the charter of the proposed ITO failed to carry through the US Congress.

⁸ This dispensation included communist, but non-aligned Yugoslavia, which, after its excommunication from the Comintern in 1948, was propped up by the West, as a kind of ideological no-man's land between East and West.

man empires, was pushed into the background. So long as the power and authority of the Soviet Union was unchallenged, it suited both sides to accept that the People's Republics (and Yugoslavia) rested on the exercise of self-determination, as was their acknowledged right under the UN charter.

Beyond Europe, the Cold War created an environment which favoured anti-colonial nationalism. Both superpowers opposed the continuation of the European empires, although the USA soon tempered its opposition to its strategic requirements for military bases. None the less, once India had been granted independence in 1947, the liquidation of the British, French, and Dutch empires was only a matter of time.

The UN provided the stage on which the anti-colonial struggle was internationalized. Despite unconvincing efforts by the imperial powers to deny the organization any role, as each new state was admitted to membership, it joined the chorus of ex-colonial states demanding the complete eradication of empire and its proscription. With the passage of General Assembly Resolution 1514 in 1960 they achieved their objective. This resolution condemned any delay in the granting of independence, even on the grounds that the population was unprepared to receive it.

It was thus the former colonial rather than the European states that established the orthodox interpretation of national self-determination in post-war international society. The consequences for the new world order are only now becoming apparent. In Europe, before the Cold War the national problem had arisen because ancient, and more important, politically self-conscious cultures were divided between different states. In Asia, and more particularly in Africa, imperialism had more often than not destroyed the old political order and created new territorial units that had not existed before. The political movements that were created to oppose colonial rule, and which eventually succeeded in gaining control of the colonial state, claimed to represent the nation; but in reality they mostly faced the need to create nations out of a heterogeneous group of peoples and cultures that had been thrown together under colonial administration.

Self-determination became a synonym for decolonization, the transfer of power within the frontiers laid down by the European powers. From the point of view of the West, this was an acceptable outcome, particularly as the political idiom employed by most of

the new nationalists, at least during the early years of independence, was that of the liberal pluralists: the nation was evidently no more than the political community which they strove to create. There was no dissent from the Western democracies when the governments of the new would-be nations showed themselves as intransigent in the face of secessionist claims as the European powers had been during the nineteenth century.

Liberal democrats have generally leaned towards Lincoln's view that a minority should aim to transform itself into a majority by influencing public opinion, rather than by attempting to secede.⁹ This allowed them to interpret the right of self-determination as arising from the break-up of empires, a once-and-for-all event in the past with no implications for the creation of new states in the future. In so doing, of course, they conveniently overlooked the uncomfortable fact that in deeply divided societies, public opinion is not swayed by argument but by historically embedded loyalties and structures.

This conventional understanding of a principle, which might otherwise have been highly subversive of the existing international order, was paradoxically reinforced by the nature of Third World regionalism. Pan-Asian sentiment was always weak, certainly when compared with the strength of local rivalries and the magnetic attraction of the two major world ideologies. Although not all Afro-Asian countries resisted the blandishments of the Western alliance system, the majority did. For most Asian states, the Non-aligned Movement, a loose coalition opposed to the blocs, upheld the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the new states, and rendered any tighter regional security arrangements superfluous. However, in Latin America, the Arab world, and Africa, for a variety of economic and ideological reasons, non-alignment and the attempt to assert a regional presence in world affairs went hand in hand.

Territorial identities competed with racial, linguistic, and religious loyalties for Arabs and Africans. By appealing in the name of pan-Arabism or pan-Africanism, over the heads of neighbouring conservative governments, radical nationalists, such as Nasser of Egypt and Nkrumah of Ghana, aimed to monopolize the political

identity and command the loyalty of the newly liberated masses. It was a threat which the governments, many of which had indeed been co-opted by the Western powers as the radicals maintained, could ill afford to ignore. Both the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity claimed to represent a wider political community whose members shared a common identity and interest. In practice, both organizations captured the pan-national ideology for the separate states.

Before the withdrawal of European power, there had been much talk amongst Arab and African intellectuals of the artificial nature of the states created by European colonialism and of the need to redraw the political map. Such attitudes evaporated rapidly after independence. Sovereignty was regarded as too precious an inheritance to be easily transferred or pooled. In the face of the outside world, Africans and Arabs maintained common positions on issues of key interest to them, in particular confrontation with Israel and South Africa. But in relations amongst themselves they stood jealously on their rights and refused to transfer any power to a supranational authority. Indeed, the charters of both organizations echo in many respects the charter of the UN itself. The OAU Charter was drafted with help from the Organization of American States (OAS) which had itself traditionally combined territorial nationalism with a regional identity based on language, culture, and geopolitics.

In all three areas, then, political regionalism amounted to little more than a diplomatic concert for dealing with the outside world. Criteria for membership were geographical rather than ideological, although each organization was partly defined by a consensus on a major foreign-policy issue. Thus members of the OAU were required to confront South Africa, Cuba was suspended from membership of the OAS when its government embraced communism, and Egypt expelled from the Arab League after Sadat had made a separate peace with Israel. Regional organizations were also charged with settling disputes between neighbours. In this respect, however, the record of regional peacekeeping was not noticeably superior to that of the UN. Relatively few post-colonial states succeeded in creating conditions of security for their citizens; so it is not surprising that their regional organizations have failed to develop genuine security communities.

⁹ See Harry Beran, 'A Liberal Theory of Secession', *Political Studies*, 32 (1984), 21-31.

3. REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL ALTERNATIVES TO ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

The Cold War also had a decisive, if indirect, impact on the development of economic regionalism. At the Bretton Woods and Havana Conferences, the central objective had been the restoration of an open liberal economy in which individual businesses would compete freely for markets and consumers have the widest possible choice. This objective was far from narrowly technical. The main danger was that governments would slip back into the economic nationalist policies which had led to massive trade diversion and distortion during the interwar period, and had helped to poison the political atmosphere. The programme of liberal multilateralism required the major trading currencies to be convertible and governments to refrain from discriminatory trading practices. It did not require economic co-operation at the regional level, although, as we have seen, in the case of free-trade areas and customs unions, it was to be permitted, presumably on the grounds that they could be shown to be 'trade creating' rather than 'trade diverting'.¹⁰ However, the bias of the new economic order was towards universalism rather than regionalism.

This bias was reversed, partly because there was insufficient credit in the system to support currency convertibility in the short run, but also because, with the outbreak of the Cold War, there was pressure on the Western powers to find a long-run solution to the problem of European co-operation in order to strengthen the Atlantic Alliance. We cannot know whether the original six members of the EEC, and particularly France and Germany, would have persevered with such determination to promote European integration, in the absence of a threat from the East. But we do know that the US government made progress towards the dismantling of intra-European monetary and trade barriers a condition of Marshall Aid. The USA also welcomed the Treaty of Rome, even though Part IV (which established associate status for the former colonies of France, Belgium, and Italy) clearly contravened the GATT.

Strain would have nothing to do with capitalist universalism. He regarded the Bretton Woods system and GATT as the economic

¹⁰ The classic statement of this argument is Jacob Viner, *The Customs Union Issue* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1950).

infrastructure of the Western Alliance and would not permit any member of the socialist bloc to participate. The USA and its allies overtly denied any linkage between their security and economic policies, but in practice the multilateral system was always more Western than universal. For the USA, the priority was to construct a security arch across the Atlantic: they were prepared to support any arrangement which would strengthen the European pillar on which this arch was to rest.

The political imperative, whether viewed from Washington, Bonn, or Paris, was how to resolve the German problem. If nothing was done there was no reason to suppose that, over time, Germany and France would not again confront one another, as they had already done three times since 1870. In that event the task of holding the Western Alliance together against the Soviet Union would be impossible. One favoured approach was to transcend the national states by creating a federated United States of Western Europe. The rejection of the proposal for a European Defence Force by the French National Assembly in 1954 blocked this option. This failure in turn led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community which signalled the decision to find an alternative, economic, route towards co-operation. In a sense, it was fortuitous that Article 24 of the GATT had already established a way in which regional integration and the multilateral trading order could be reconciled. However, its existence meant that the Treaty of Rome could consolidate the new regional approach, and thus promote Western strategic interests without damaging the wider attempt to entrench liberal multilateralism as a structural support of the new international order. In effect, both universalism (i.e. liberal multilateralism) and regionalism were to be used to combat the danger of a retreat towards competitive economic nationalism.

In the longer term, the contradictions between both regional and global, and national and regional, economic interests, resurfaced. Indeed, it seems extremely unlikely that a demonstration of the massive trade distortion caused by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be sufficient to bring about its total abandonment. During the early years of the European Community, the CAP was the linch-pin which held together the Franco-German Alliance. It had the effect of compensating French agriculture for opening the French market to German industry. No doubt, it no longer per-

forms this crucial political function, but in the meantime powerful national interests have developed and want to see it perpetuated. For example, the revolt of French farmers in 1992, and their organized opposition to the Maastricht Treaty, and the completion of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations was linked to the proposed reform of the CAP.

I shall return to these long-term contradictions in the final section of this chapter. For the moment let us consider the implications of the European experience for the rest of the world, particularly the Third World. The most important of these was as a model. The West Europeans had evidently found a way of promoting and intensifying co-operation amongst themselves, without flouting international economic law and without sacrificing their national sovereignty. Since most developing countries were critically dependent on the Western powers for economic sustenance, and hence under considerable pressure to frame their economic policies in accordance with accepted international practice, while being extremely unwilling to surrender the sovereignty they had so recently acquired, the creation of free-trade areas and customs unions seemed to offer them a painless way forwards. Moreover, as Sydney Dell once argued from an economic point of view, Third World countries were more in need of integration than those in Western Europe. The latter all had developed industrial economies, with national markets which for the majority of goods were sufficiently large to allow the exploitation of optimal economies of scale. They also already enjoyed extensive trade amongst themselves. By contrast the markets of the former were limited twice over; even in populous countries, market size was constrained by very low per capita income, while many more were both poor and had small populations. Intra-regional trade was in most cases insignificant. In such circumstances, it was most unlikely that the investment, without which there could be no development, would be attracted from abroad, or even, where there were domestic savings to be tapped, locally, it followed that regional economic integration was a political necessity for development.¹¹

The logic of this argument was widely accepted in the Third World, although at times it led to disputes about the nature and

¹¹ Sydney Dell, *Trade Blocs and Common Markets* (London: Constable, 1963).

boundaries of the regions to be integrated. For example, Kwame Nkrumah, who believed that the African continent should form both a single currency area and a common market, attempted to frustrate the putative efforts of the three former British colonies in East Africa to federate.¹² He need not have bothered: the internal tensions within Uganda, and between Tanzania and Kenya, were sufficient to scupper the project before it was launched, without external assistance. The East African Community, the purely economic organization which was established on the basis of the colonial East African Common Services Organization lasted into the 1970s. In the end, it too fell foul of the political conflicts between the three members governments and the doubtful validity of the model to East African circumstances. The numerous conflicts between the Kenyan and Tanzanian governments and the Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, provided the immediate cause of the collapse, but by then the contradictions between Kenya's protocapitalist economic policies and Tanzania's experiments with collectivism had dealt the regional structure so many body blows that there was little hope of recovery.

The circumstances of the widespread collapse, or atrophy, of Third World regional-integration schemes differed from case to case, but the underlying reason—the poor fit between the imported model of regional integration and the circumstances in which it was applied—was very similar. Since it is not clear (at least to this author) that the weaknesses of the model are being adequately addressed in the revived enthusiasm for a regional approach to international order, it may be worth while to provide a brief sketch of them here.

There are political and economic weaknesses in the model. Both derive from the false analogy between Western Europe and the Third World. In Europe, although there were many economic obstacles to the free movement of goods and services across national borders, the political problem was more urgent and also, seemingly, more intractable. By the mid-twentieth century, the issues which dominated the political agenda in industrial societies, were, in any case, increasingly issues of political economy. It was because no purely political solution was available, that the Europeans agreed

¹² See Joseph Nye, *Pan-Africanism and East African Integration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1965).

to create, by economic means, a new kind of hybrid international body, something less than a state but more than an old-fashioned marriage-of-convenience alliance.

Third World countries face many political problems and threats, but the overwhelming constraints on their development are economic and environmental. Some of these lie far beyond their capabilities; others are the result of disastrous economic policies pursued in the past. The main point, however, is that effective regional co-operation requires a high, not a low, level of political commitment. Weak states often have strong, even dictatorial governments for whom the exercise of sovereign control means the ability to form the state in their own image, and to farm it in their own rather than the general interest. In many cases, control over the modern sector of the economy, however small that may be, is the only way the government has to establish its hold over society at large. The high level of military expenditure, on which many such governments depend, has after all, to be generated from somewhere. Even at the height of the Cold War, very few Third World governments could rely solely on free hand-outs from the super-powers and their allies. The issue of sovereignty, in relation to the increasing powers of the European Community in Brussels, is still hotly debated within Europe. In the Third World, to hand over the right to levy excise and customs duties, or licensing, to a regional body is deeply unattractive to most of those who exercise power.

The economic weaknesses in the model relate on the one hand to the existing pattern and level of intra-regional trade and on the other to the asymmetrical costs and benefits that are likely to result from regional integration. The six original members of the European Community, all had diversified industrial economies and depended on a complex division of labour amongst themselves (i.e. they exchanged manufactures, often of the same kind, rather than manufactures for raw materials or semi-processed goods) well before they agreed to integrate.

During the 1960s and 1970s most Third World states which attempted to establish regional integration schemes had competitive rather than complementary economies, in the sense that they mostly produced the same kind of goods—raw materials and tropical agricultural products—for sale to the industrial world in exchange for capital goods and manufactured commod-

ities. Consequently, the level of intra-regional trade was generally very low (although certainly understated in the official statistics). Integration failed to occur because in most cases there was virtually nothing to integrate. Reducing a tariff on intra-regional trade was a symbolic and largely painless move, but achieved nothing because so little moved across regional borders in the first place.

The customs union/free-trade area model assumes the existence of a market economy in which both public and private enterprises engage in arm's-length pricing and free exchange. The government's role is meant to be limited to framing the rules under which commercial competition takes place and guaranteeing, through the law, that contracts are honoured. Conceptually, the model was a development within liberal economic theory. Its justification is that economic freedom within the Union will generate optimal long-run welfare gains. Liberals have never denied that, in the short run, there will be winners and losers from any change in the rules. Politically, this means that some way must be found to compensate (or at least appease) the losers, if they have a capability to disrupt the scheme.

Within Europe, a redistributive mechanism was developed in the shape of a strong regional fund through which resources could be channelled to depressed areas such as southern Italy and, with the enlargement of the Community in the mid-1970s, to whole countries such as Ireland. Without a mechanism of this kind, these areas would have been marginalized: left to itself, investment will flow to the centres of growth within countries and to the strongest national economies within the Union. The gains of trade would also go disproportionately to those enterprises located at the centre. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Europe: it is a necessary consequence of operating a free market. So long as the regional economy is expanding and the Union is perceived to be in the wider political and economic interest of the strongest member countries, they may grumble, but they will be willing in the end to foot the bill.

None of these conditions obtained in the Third World during the first phase of regional enthusiasm. In areas where all countries are poor, although not equally so, resentment will be fanned by the natural tendency of foreign investment to flow to the most attractive location, i.e. the country with the least underdeveloped

infrastructure. It will be inflamed still further when industries from the relatively better-placed economies begin to displace those in poorer neighbouring countries.

In the East African case, which we used earlier to illustrate the poor survival record of Third World integration schemes, an attempt was made to deal with this problem through a transfer pricing system and an intra-regional investment policy. Under the former, the distribution of Community revenues was weighted in favour of the two poorer members—Tanzania and Uganda, while under the latter investment in specific industries was assigned to each country, again with a weighting in favour of the poorer members. The first of these policies led to complaints from Kenya about its equity and the second never worked. Leaving aside the political disputes between the three governments, the economic explanation is neither surprising nor complicated. It is that in regional unions where the members do not have already complementary economies, and where growth rates do not appear to be greatly affected by integration, the relatively less poor will have little incentive to share the pain with those even less fortunate than themselves.

Most Third World governments, where they were not entirely predatory, justified their policies during the Cold War era, in terms of nation-building. The most prevalent of these policies was import substitution. It was pursued partly for its own sake, and partly in a vain attempt to overcome the chronic shortage of foreign exchange, which quickly established itself as a defining characteristic of Third World status. Governments in all parts of the Third World flirted with regionalism on the European model, and talked loudly about the importance of South-South trade; but regionalism turned out to be a poor bulwark against their own nationalist aspirations and internecine rivalries, and an inadequate antidote to their comprehensive dependence on the industrial West.

There is a sense in which this conclusion is unduly negative. Not all Third World regional schemes were quite as unsuccessful as the account given here suggests. But where they both persisted and proved their utility, the explanation was often curiously paradoxical. In Europe, the customs union formula was adopted because it was available under GATT rules, and because it provided a way forward when more direct political co-operation was impossible. In the Third World, where regional organizations have taken root, the

pursuit of economic integration has generally been a veneer, ignored in practice and sometimes in theory also.

Three examples may illustrate the point. The most successful of Third World organizations, ASEAN, has still not developed into an effective customs union and operates as a traditional, but informal, diplomatic concert for managing intra-regional problems and concerting policies towards the outside world. SADC (now SADC), established after the Independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, has deliberately avoided commercial integration from fear of provoking intra-regional conflict of the East African kind. Yet it was founded with the explicit objective of building a regional economy capable of withstanding the magnetic, and destabilising pull of the South African economy. Member countries were assigned sectoral responsibilities for developing regional development plans, with an initial emphasis on infrastructure and professional services and standards. The organization—held together by a common, although uneven fear of South Africa—has operated successfully as a mechanism for co-ordinating and maximizing international aid into the region. Whether it can adapt itself to absorb a post-apartheid South Africa, now that its original political rationale has virtually collapsed, is uncertain. If it is to survive as an effective organization it will have to develop an approach to regional trade. This cannot be done without confronting the rival national sensibilities which SADC has so far been so careful to avoid offending.

In West Africa, ECOWAS, dealt with the same problem, which was rightly seen as having destroyed the East African Community, by adopting the customs union formula but projecting the removal of trade and other barriers so far into the future as to remove the issue from the immediate political agenda. As a regional economic organization, ECOWAS, has done little or nothing to reverse the disastrous economic plight of the region. Nor has it been able to contain the integration of the unofficial, as distinct from the official, economy through smuggling between the franc-zone member countries and their neighbours. Yet politically ECOWAS has survived and has provided the required cloak of legitimacy for a regional peacekeeping force in the Liberian Civil War. This operation may not have been an unqualified success, but at a time when neither the OAU nor the United Nations were willing to get involved, it has at least bought some time in which to check the slide into barbarism and anarchy and, optimistically, work out a viable political solution.

4. REGIONALISM AND NATIONALISM AFTER THE COLD WAR

A summary of the argument should now provide us with an answer to the first two questions asked at the beginning of this chapter: how have regionalism and nationalism been related since 1945, and how were they related to wider conceptions of international order?

Since it was agreed that international reconstruction required both acknowledging the sovereignty of states and the right of all people to self-determination, a way had to be found of reconciling these two principles. In practice, the sovereignty of all existing states was guaranteed and the right of self-determination was confined to the colonies of the European powers. Except where they coincided with state boundaries, little attention was paid to ethnic claims. The post-war international order, unlike its predecessor, was also held to require an institutional support system to underpin the liberal economy, and to prevent countries backsliding into beggar-your-neighbour and other politically dangerous nationalist policies. Both liberal theory and the fact that the whole system rested on the bedrock principle of sovereignty, required a permissive attitude towards regional arrangements where these had neither an aggressive nor a discriminatory intent. But, the original bias of the proposed system was towards universal arrangements, collective security in the political sphere, and non-discriminatory multilateralism in the economic.

The Cold War reversed the priorities. Collective security was marginalized as a mechanism of international order and regionalism was elevated. In the first instance, this was seen as a means of strengthening the European side of the Atlantic Alliance against the threat from the East, and subsequently, as the result of a largely putative demonstration effect, over much of the non-communist world, as a strategy for promoting economic development and reducing Third World dependence on the West. Regionalism is widely held to have been successful in the first case, and a failure in the second. Within Europe, a large part of the explanation is that both the experience of the Second World War and the ideological confrontation between capitalism and communism which followed it, effectively froze the political map and encouraged, on both sides of the divide, visions of a political order which would transcend the

national ideal. Within the Third World, where nationalism was associated with liberation from colonial rule, a large part of the explanation for failure was that, in practice if not in theory, regional arrangements challenged the national ambitions and aspirations of most post-colonial successor governments.

It remains to answer the final question: can nationalism and regionalism be accommodated within a reconstructed international order? In the final analysis, history will provide an answer to this question. The best that can be done here is to sketch some of the problems which will accompany any effort to reconcile these competing principles of order and some of the issues that will have to be confronted if the attempt is to appear at all credible.

Even this modest task must overcome an initial difficulty: what are the criteria by which the new order is to be judged? This is a more complex issue now than it appeared to be in 1945. Then, the architects of reconstruction were led by a self-confident power with clear ideas about what kind of political and economic order it wanted to achieve. The Americans wanted a liberal order, within which their own primacy would be acknowledged and the rest of the world would be as like the USA as possible. When that goal proved elusive, it settled for containment of the Soviet Union and ideological confrontation with communism wherever it spread.

The chaos created by the Second World War also cleaned the slate. No doubt it was not as clean as it appeared to be to the victors, but 1945 none the less constituted a break with the past, qualitatively different from 1989. The end of the Cold War left only one superpower, and exposed the bankruptcy of the only alternative macroeconomic strategy to capitalism. But the USA was no longer self-confident about its world role, and its relative economic decline, no doubt greatly exaggerated by academics with a theory to peddle, is still real. The new world order is being debated on the hoof in most unpropitious circumstances.

Not only is the world economy in the deepest and most prolonged recession since the war, but the resurgent national question will not easily be settled by recourse to the kind of pragmatic compromise—colonial self-determination and opposition to all secession—that was adopted after 1945. It is ethnic nationalism and religious sectarianism, not discriminatory economic policies, that are currently tearing states apart in many parts of the world. If the state collapses, the warlords move in, as they have already done in

Bosnia, Somalia, parts of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere. Where chaos is substituted for the anarchical society, talk of international co-operation, whether at the regional or global levels, is largely fantasy.

What then is to be done? If, hypothetically, there was a chance of designing a new international order from scratch, rather than having to deal with messy unforeseen problems as and when they arise, what would it look like? It is not so difficult to answer the question in the abstract. Presumably most people of goodwill could accept that international arrangements should be designed to promote the security and welfare of the world's population. It is probably safe to assume also that agreement, in principle, could be reached on the need to safeguard the fundamental human rights which are already entrenched in theory in the Universal Declaration. It is when one tries to go beyond these broad, and perhaps pious, statements of principle, that the difficulties crowd in. After all, the problem is not what the ultimate objectives of international order should be; on this, my hypothetical consensus already echoes the existing UN Charter.

The problem is how best to pursue these agreed objectives in the new circumstances, and what role to assign respectively to the nation state (and its supporting nationalist ideology) and the region. If the objective is to provide security and welfare for people (and it is), it follows that their collective identities must also be acknowledged and protected.

There is nothing, in principle, to say that people cannot identify with, and express loyalty to, a region and its organizations. To some extent, they already do. As other chapters in this book have discussed, there has been a revival in regional awareness in various parts of the world, particularly Latin America and Asia. Moreover, for some commentators there are already signs of the emergence of a broader European identity albeit primarily at an élite level.¹³

Nevertheless, regionalism represents a weak, and emotionally thin form of identification, generally recognizable only at a distance from hearth and home. Pan-African or pan-Arab sentiment is likely to be more appealing in London, Paris, or New York than in Cairo, Lagos, or Maputo, just as ordinary (as opposed to Eurocratic)

Spaniards or Swedes are more likely to recognize themselves as members of a common civilization in Tokyo or Sumatra than in Madrid or Stockholm. Nations, as has often been pointed out, are ultimately inventions or, in Benedict Anderson's felicitous phrase, 'imagined communities'.¹⁴ They gain their power over human beings because over time they come to form a deeply felt (if often consciously unrecognized or even repudiated) part of our imaginative and emotional lives. By contrast, regional organizations are mostly in their infancy. They are self-conscious constructs for managing specific political and economic problems, strong on administrative rationale of a Weberian kind, but short on the power to move people in the mass, or extract loyalty from them.

Indeed, in Western Europe, the very success of the Community in facilitating economic integration and thereby supporting a relative homogenization of products, 'life-styles', and tastes, has also led to a popular reaction. Ironically, at the same time that the newly liberated countries of Eastern Europe were looking forward to their eventual entry into the Community, the British, Danes, and French were agonizing over what was widely perceived as an excessive surrender of national sovereignty, and the way in which this was eroding cherished symbols of national identity. Even the Germans, faced with the economic and psychological costs of reunification, became more hesitant in their Euro-enthusiasm. While major doubts remained over whether governments were prepared to surrender their currencies to the ECU, despite the commitment of most of them to monetary union, at the popular level the reaction took the form of special interest protests—against the usurpation of beer by wine, or the creation of Europe-wide standards which militate against farmers catering for local and particular tastes. The ruling that the British sausage was not a sausage in the true sense of the term, may strike the discerning consumer as, in the main, just; but the survival of the British fruit-growing industry has been purchased at the price of increasing the size of the Cox's orange pippin to meet EC standards and so substantially reducing its natural taste! Such national irritations are unlikely to resist the logic of economic advantage for long, but they may help to explain why regional organizations may be respected, but are unlikely to be greatly loved.

¹³ See e.g. William Wallace, *The Transformation of Western Europe* (London: Pinter for RIIA, 1990), esp. ch. 6.

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2nd edn., 1992).

But if it is true that popular identities have not significantly shifted away from the national and towards the regional unit, it does not follow that all is well, even with the old and supposedly well-established national identities. It may well be that standing up to 'the threat from Brussels' is more a sign of weakness than of strength. The states of Western Europe, whose national identities were constructed only slowly between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, are under simultaneous attack from at least three directions. From above, the relentless progress of economic, and more particularly financial globalization, is undermining the claims of governments to exercise national control. From below, the reassertion of ethnic and local political identities is challenging the official monopoly of the symbols of national integration. From outside, the pressure of those trying to get in from the south and the east is testing the self-perception of societies as being based on citizenship rather than ancestry. In these circumstances, the question, what it is to be British or French, is becoming increasingly strident and desperate. And the German solution—a right of return under the *ius sanguinis* for anyone of German descent, regardless of whether they speak German, and the prolonged naturalization procedure which leaves many second-generation immigrants without citizenship—is hardly an improvement.

Many of the states in the Third World are facing an even more acute identity crisis. Although in East Asia, the authorities adopted traditional interventionist state and nation-building policies before embracing the open market, in most other regions the policies of import substitution and state-promoted development, around which nationalist claims were largely constructed, manifestly failed. However, the new international orthodoxy which demands of governments that they open up their markets to foreign competition and private investment while simultaneously embarking on democratic reform, runs the danger of putting the cart before the horse: the state is being rolled back before it has established a legitimate sphere of competence. Add to this, the fact that in the poorest parts of the world as much as 75 per cent of GDP is often derived from external assistance, that the professional élites frequently fail to return from training in Europe and North America, and that in some countries the average age of the population is as low as sixteen, and it is hardly surprising that governments find it hard to mobilize national support

and are frequently at the mercy of sectarian or communal movements.

These challenges to the legitimacy of the state, which affect industrial and developing countries alike, are symptomatic of a more serious problem. The resurgence of ethnic nationalism which has been such a feature of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence, is currently finding echoes in many other parts of the world from the Punjab to Quebec. It constitutes a direct challenge to international society because such groups attack the state, either as a result of the systematic abuse of their civil and political rights, or in order to assert their right to self-determination, in which case they are liable to finish up as victims of state terror just the same. The Cold War no longer provides a prudential excuse for inaction, but it is not at all clear what the international community (i.e. other states) should do.

What can then be done? As we have seen, it is unlikely that regionalism will come to represent an alternative locus of human identity. It should be viewed, at least in the first instance, not as an alternative doctrine to nationalism, but as a supplement to it. Regional organizations, in other words, should be designed not to replace the nation state and its command of the people's loyalties, but rather to help manage the inevitable problems that arise from the coexistence of competing national groups.

In thinking about the forms that such regional management might take, it may be useful to distinguish between 'normal' and 'abnormal' political conditions. By 'normal' is simply meant circumstances in which conflicts of interests and adjustments to changing political and economic forces can be accommodated within the framework of a regional organization and without resort to force. It seems possible, for example, that the relevant European organizations (i.e. the European Union, Council of Europe, and CSCE (now OSCE)) may be able to reduce the level of political instability arising from the resurgence of sub-national groups. It is no accident that the politically self-conscious but stateless ethnic groups in Europe—for example the Basques, Bretons, or Scots—have embraced the European Community, even if the route towards greater regional devolution within a larger and regional whole remains obscure. Certain steps which would support this view have already been taken. The Maastricht Treaty provides for a Committee of the Regions. There seems no reason in practice why this

committee should not evolve in ways which would provide for a measure of representation at the European level for stateless national groups, even if, as a matter of principle, member states insist that the regions should be defined in economic terms rather than as units of popular affective identification. Perhaps of greatest significance at a time when European societies are having to adjust to the political fall-out from the collapse of communism, the Council of Europe and the OSCE have both recognized the importance of minority rights in the wider Europeans order. The criteria for membership of the Council of Europe consist of a proven commitment to multiparty democracy, the rule of law and the entrenchment of fundamental human rights, including minority rights. Since membership is desired by most European states and recognition can be withheld, in this instance the regional framework can in principle exercise a benign influence towards the reconciliation of ethnic and national conflicts at state level. The OSCE has gone further by establishing a Commissioner on Minorities, with powers of investigation and recommendation in countries where ethnic tensions threaten to explode into open conflict. To the extent that the resurgence of nationalism and nationalist conflict is world-wide, and not merely a European phenomenon, it must be hoped that regional organization will be able to evolve analogous techniques for containing its destructive impact.

Unhappily, it is not clear that under 'abnormal' conditions, that is when a state has already irrevocably broken down, or a new political and territorial dispensation is already being contested by force, regional management will be effective. The reason has less to do with the relative weakness of regional sentiment than with the structure of international society itself. The problem may conveniently be illustrated by reference to the topical debate concerning humanitarian intervention and coercive international efforts to protect oppressed groups trapped within the prison house of the sovereign state.

The political language in which the post-war international order was conceived, with its emphasis on human rights and resolutions passed by votes at the United Nations, belonged firmly within the vocabulary of Western democratic pluralism. But the central place in the scheme given to state sovereignty in turn ensured that it was a democracy of states only: authoritarian dictatorships were as able as liberal democracies to shelter behind the principle—a logical

corollary of recognizing sovereignty—of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Both classical and modern liberals have differed over the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention. The post-war order, however, recognized only one cause for invoking the collective security provisions of the Charter: to deter or repel threats to international peace and security. Because the major states with global international interests and capabilities also had a power of veto within the Security Council, the ability of international society to provide even minimal security to its members was barely tested throughout the Cold War.

The absence of any effective case-law meant that it was difficult to argue coherently about the adequacy, or otherwise, of the central mechanism which had been intended to underwrite international peace and security. It is this which made experience of Operation Desert Storm central to the 'new world order' debate. The crisis, in which one member of the UN attacked and attempted to annex another, was tailor-made to test international resolve to prohibit war carried out for aggressive or foreign policy purposes. In this sense it was an old-fashioned and reasonably unambiguous crisis, which was handled effectively and within the spirit of the traditional society of states. There may have been those in the USA and other Western governments who wanted to continue the war until the Iraqi ruler, Saddam Hussein, was overthrown, but they knew that they could not hold on to the regional members of the coalition, who had provided vital backing for the relevant Security Council Resolutions, if they threatened the sovereignty and integrity of Iraq itself.

So far so good. However, the aftermath of the war raised two kinds of doubts about the adequacy of current arrangements and understandings. These doubts point in opposite directions. The first points, on pragmatic and prudential grounds, to the dangers of moving far from the existing conventions of the anarchical society. The second points to the artificial distinction between domestic and foreign affairs, and to the necessity of making some adjustments if the new world order is to have any chance of being an improvement on the old.

Even during the war, Western public opinion became agitated over the fact that Western lives were being put at risk to defend a state whose own government's human rights record was unimpressive. Potentially, far more damaging to the new world order,

was the way in which, as soon as the war was over, Western governments appeared eager to walk away from the consequences of their policies.¹⁵ They appealed to the Iraqi people to finish the job, and had to be forced by public outcry, to acknowledge that Iraq has a deeply divided society, and that those whose own frustrated national aspirations would prompt them to heed the message, would be brutally suppressed for their pains. In the end, the Western powers, acting with the connivance rather than under the authority of the Security Council in the Kurdish north, and more equivocally still in the Shi'ite south, effectively suspended Iraq's sovereignty from the air. From the Kurdish and Shi'ite point of view the idea of a safe haven secured by an air exclusion zone was presumably better than nothing. But as a defence of their most fundamental human rights it was precarious; and as a precedent for the new world order it is not encouraging. The national and religious crisis in Iraq is a far more typical post-Cold War challenge to international society than its invasion of Kuwait.

If humanitarian intervention is a problematic way of managing such problems, what of revising the idea of self-determination and the criteria for admission to international society? In answering this question it is tempting—and certainly fashionable—to invoke the concept of civil society. There have always been available two alternative views of what constitutes a nation, the exclusive ethnic group and the inclusive political community defined by citizenship and allegiance to the constitution. Only the latter conception, it will be argued, is capable of measuring up to reality, namely the fact that the vast majority of states are now (and will continue to be) multi-ethnic in composition. Also, only a nation-cum-political community will be able to tolerate diversity within civil society—and hence protect the human rights of its citizens—without regarding it as a form of treason and threat to the state. If this line of reasoning is accepted, then there is little for the international community to do. Certainly, it will not be required to recognize every tribal or ethnic group that claims the right of self-determination. The one departure from established practice which might be urged is the recognition of new states where the people have clearly demonstrated their desire to establish a political community with an entrenched and strongly defended civil society. Earlier (and more

¹⁵ See James Mayall, 'Non-intervention, Self-determination and the New World Order', *International Affairs*, 67/3 (July 1991), 421–9.

principled) recognition of Lithuania and Slovenia, it has been claimed, would have increased the respect in which the international community is currently held.¹⁶

Nevertheless the temptation to argue in this way should be resisted. Not only are the criteria for distinguishing between legitimate claims to exercise the right of self-determination, i.e. in order to establish a plural democracy, and illegitimate ones on behalf of ethnic communities, unclear and question-begging, but there is no reason to believe that a commitment to democratic government can be secured by legislation or long-distance social engineering. It is true that national identities *can* be supported by a political culture which subordinates ethnicity to citizenship. Ethnic conflict has certainly not been eliminated from the political life of the USA, Britain, France, or indeed most other West European democracies, but equally ethnic origins clearly do not wholly define the 'imagined community' of these nations. But how are we to distinguish publicly—and before the event—between, say, the claim of the ethnically homogeneous Slovenes to establish a genuine representative democracy and Serbia's and Croatia's widely suspected ambition to expand their territory at their neighbours' expense, and to use the form of democratic government as a cover for systematic discrimination against ethnic minorities?

If there was a simple answer to this question, we should know about it. There is not. There seems, therefore, no alternative but to deal with the linked questions of when to recognize the right of self-determination, how to agree on state creation in a post-imperial world and when to intervene for humanitarian purposes on a case-by-case and even consequentialist basis. There is no escaping passing judgement in particular circumstances. The only fixed points are that international action should always aim at improving the security and welfare of the people at whom it is directed, rather than *merely* acting to cloak with respectability the foreign policies of the major powers; and that it should not be quixotic, lightly undertaken, without a serious attempt to estimate the dangers and foresee the consequences. These axioms apply as much in the field of international economic policy as they do in relation to the international response to political crises.

¹⁶ See Tomaz Mastnak, 'Is the Nation-State Really Obsolete?', *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 Aug. 1992.

It follows that the level—i.e. regional or global—at which the international community should be mobilized in particular cases is also a question for pragmatic judgement. Certain recent positions favoured by powerful states need to be treated with caution. For example, it is difficult not to sympathize with the view that the European Community's determination to discredit the nation state in its attempt to speed up the process of regional integration, led it to pay insufficient attention to national aspirations in Eastern and Central Europe. Since most countries in the area had their eyes firmly fixed on eventual entry to the Community, it had considered able political leverage. The Community may not have been able to do much to prevent the disaster which has now overwhelmed the region, but with hindsight it would obviously have been prudent to have placed as much emphasis on confidence-building measures amongst minorities as on the importance of having elected governments. As one Slovene critic has argued, there is not much point in unseating Leviathan merely to substitute a Behemoth in his place.¹⁷

Similarly, in the economic sphere the new enthusiasm for regionalism, which was spurred on by American frustration with progress towards global trade liberalization in the Uruguay Round, and short-run domestic pressures to relieve the trade deficit, provide grounds for concern. Amongst professional economists there is a vigorous debate about whether the current American policy of pursuing regional free-trade agreements is worth encouraging in its own right or only if it contributes to kick-starting the American economy out of recession and hence, indirectly, helps to overcome the obstacles to continued multilateral trade liberalization.¹⁸ Whatever the merits of the technical arguments, from the point of view of international order, the only case for preferring regional to global economic arrangements is if it can be established that the creation of a more integrated regional market will not damage the world trading community as a whole. The prospect of three powerful competitive trade blocs attempting to shut each other out of their home markets has been reduced with the completion of the Uruguay Round and the creation of the new World Trade Organ-

ization. However, whether world-wide liberalization can be sustained remains unclear. The alternative prospect is not only politically unattractive for the countries involved, but threatens to cut off peripheral areas. e.g. much of Africa, from the benefits of world trade altogether.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has developed a parallel argument in relation to security. On his view, a principle of subsidiarity should apply to conflict management and peacekeeping. Attempts should be made to resolve civil conflicts within the country where they arise, after which they should be referred to the appropriate regional organization, and only if all such efforts fail, to the Security Council.¹⁹ There is a compelling logic to this argument. If the numerous inter-ethnic conflicts that have arisen around the world in the aftermath of the Cold War, are all referred to the Security Council it will quickly exhaust the organizational capacity and financial resources of the United Nations. At the same time it is within the regions that the immediate spillover effects of such conflicts are most likely to be felt, particularly in the form of vastly increased refugee movements and appeals for asylum. Regionalism may not excite much passion as a political doctrine, but in most cases there should be a strong regional interest in containing the conflict at its source.

Even here there are dangers in placing too much faith in a hierarchically organized international order in which the United Nations acts as the security guarantor of last resort. The first is that regional intervention in local crises is likely to be fuelled by the special and partisan interests of neighbouring governments and the pressures to which they must respond. Opinions still differ about the wisdom of the European Community's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, in view of the terrible civil war that erupted subsequently in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There can be little doubt that, in forcing its partners into line, the German government was responding to domestic pressures, notably from the resident Croatian community. How, it was asked, was it possible to deny the peoples of the former Yugoslavia the right of self-determination which had so recently been extended to East Germany?

A second danger in the regional approach to international order is that it threatens to marginalize the United Nations again just as

¹⁷ See Masnik, 'Is the Nation State Really Obsolete'.

¹⁸ A useful review of the arguments is contained in Jagdish Bhagwati, *Regionalism and Multilateralism: An Overview*, Paper delivered to World Bank Conference, Washington, DC, 2-3 Apr. 1992.

¹⁹ For a fuller discussion, see Alan Henrikson's chapter.

there is an opportunity for it to play the central co-ordinating role in international society for which it was originally designed. Marginalization would occur if the UN became merely the defender of the Third World. In cases where the state breaks down and society disintegrates into brutal anarchy, there may be a case for reviving the idea of United Nations trusteeship.²⁰ Many but not all such breakdowns are likely to occur in the Third World. If this idea was to gain legitimacy it would therefore have to be divorced so far as possible from the national interests of particular powers.

Admittedly at present the omens for such a development are not good. The experience of the UN in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia, where international intervention went further in the direction of humanitarian intervention than ever before does not suggest that the major powers are anxious to experiment any further with peacemaking as distinct from traditional peacekeeping. In neither case was the intervention unequivocally successful; and in both powerful voices can be heard to argue that the interventions were misplaced in the first place. A major reason given in support of this view is that where there is no peace to keep, UN military personnel cannot be impartial and cannot confine their activities to humanitarian relief. One conclusion that might be drawn from this observation is that when the moral case for intervention none the less proves irresistible, the United Nations must accept that strategic and political responsibility cannot be separated from humanitarian relief. However, the conclusion that is in fact increasingly drawn is that they should not be there at all. Perhaps, but if so, we must fervently hope that regional approaches to international co-operation will develop more strongly than the argument in this chapter has suggested likely.

²⁰ This idea was openly canvassed in the context of the Security Council's decision to intervene militarily to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

PART II