Part 3. TRENDS, RISKS, AND PROBLEMS

Geopolitical Conditions of Internationalism, Human Rights, and World Law[*]

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International rule of law is not an alternative to geopolitics, but is successful only under specific geopolitical conditions. As historical sociologists in the tradition of Weber have documented, the state's existence has depended on its military power, which varies in degree of monopolization, of legitimacy, and of extent of territory controlled. Geopolitical principles (comparative resource advantage, positional or marchland advantage, logistical overextension) have determined both the Chinese dynastic cycles, and the balance of power in European history; they continue to apply to recent wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. Guerrilla wars differ from conventional wars by relying especially on geopolitical principles of promoting enemy overextension. Geopolitics encompasses both war and diplomacy, the means by which coalitions among states are organized. The rule of international law depends on a dominant coalition upheld by favorable geopolitical conditions; and on the extension of bureaucracy via state penetration, but now on a world-wide scale.

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In the period between the fall of the USSR in 1991 and the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, it was often argued that a new world order was emerging. Many politicians as well as journalists and social scientists held that we had entered in a new period where the only use of force would be international coalitions taking action against 'rogue states', 'international outlaws', and terrorist organizations. This rhetoric was shared by US President George W. Bush in setting forth the rationale for intervention both in Afghanistan in 2001, and two years later in Iraq. The first of these invasions was widely acclaimed in the West, the second – widely opposed. The ostensible terms of the debate focused on whether each of these invasions fit the rule of international law. Underneath the ideals and ideologies, however, more basic geopolitical processes have continued to be at work.

The configuration of state powers in the world has changed, of course, since 1990, and indeed again to a degree since 2001. This does not mean that the most basic principles of International Relations have changed as well. Sometimes it is true that a theory is so specific to the historical period, in which it is formulated, that when conditions change the theory no longer works. Sixty years ago much importance was given to Balance of Power theory. This theory held that when several big states struggle for power, they make alliances so that they keep up a balance of power of roughly equal strength. The theory was based on the period of European history when England, on its island off from the Conti-

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nent, looked upon European struggles and always chose to fight on the side of the weaker coalition, so that no state could ever dominate the Continent. When France was strong, England allied with Germany; when Germany was strong, England allied with France. Balance of power is not a very general theory however; it does not explain why the balance of power disappeared after the end of the Second World War; and it does not explain earlier state systems such as the Roman Empire, or the dynasties of Imperial China. In fact, Balance of Power theory does not even explain England's behavior; at the same time England was maintaining balance of power politics in Europe, it was expanding an overseas empire around the rest of the world.

More recent fashions in International Relations theory include neorealism; and, on the other hand, the theory of hegemonic stability. These theories clash on the question of whether the relations among states are a realm of anarchy, where each follows its own self-interest and no laws or principles control them except their own force; or, on the contrary, that there is an international or interstate order, a framework in which the world carries on its business. In the latter theory, the strongest state or hegemon acts to enforce the rules of the international game, and thus provides stability – in this view it is functionally useful for the world to have a hegemonic power like Britain or the US to keep order. In fact, both things are possible. Under some historical conditions, the world looks like a violent confrontation of self-interested states; at other times, there is more of an appearance of international rules of the game. But this is a continuum, not an all-or-nothing choice between extremes; states exist by controlling military force, but they also tend, to lesser or greater degree, to enter into alliances and coalitions, and to make arrangements even with their enemies. We have seen these throughout history: the Roman Empire was at first a system of alliances before it became an Empire; the Holy Roman Empire (or German Empire) of the European middle ages was chiefly just a diplomatic structure, a kind of early and limited version of the United Nations. Historically, the units do not stay static; sometimes states become bigger or smaller, more independent or more amalgamated, with many possible variations in between: the history of China, Hong Kong, and other parts of East Asia provide good examples. And new state forms emerge; sometimes alliances become stronger and turn into states, as we see happening, perhaps, today in the case of the European Union, and happened 200 years ago in the federation which became the United States of America. New coalitions, including those formed under the rationale of combating terrorism, must judged as to where they will fall along the continuum from a weak decentralized alliance to a centralized structure of world government.

Another theory which is linked to a particular historical time and place is the theory of Chinese dynasties. This is the theory, held by Chinese historians for almost 2000 years, that China goes through a dynastic cycle: first, there is a strong centralized state; the emperor or state leader has high prestige and legitimacy; then the state becomes corrupt, the officials become ineffective, tax collection weakens, bandits appear inside the borders and foreign enemies outside become more troublesome. Eventually the state falls into disintegration; but then one of these small states becomes stronger; it conquers and unifies the rest, and starts a new dynasty. In some respects this is a strong theory, at least for the period from the Han dynasty up through the Qing dynasty, and some think perhaps even later. However, we may ask: does this theory apply only to China? Are there no general principles which apply equally to China and to other states? The Roman Empire, for example, expanded and then collapsed, but it never was reconstituted as a new empire; instead it broke into pieces that have never been reunited. In the Warring States period for about 500 years before the Han dynasty, there was no dynastic cycle but instead there

were many states in north China which acted according to Balance of Power theory; whenever one of these states became strong enough to threaten to conquer all the others, a coalition formed against it which prevented its expansion. Why should Chinese dynastic cycles begin at a particular time in history? And does the principle of a dynastic cycle come to an end, once China becomes part of the larger global world of the 20th and 21st centuries?

Historical questions about the deep past such as cycles in China, as well as contemporary questions about the trajectory of the US military policy in its period of world hegemony, and about the prospects for international law, all hinge upon a more thorough understanding of the conditions of relations among states. Here I will summarize two theories which help explain all of these historical changes, including the situation of the world today. First is the geopolitical theory of the state; and the second is the theory of bureaucratization as basis for formal law. Both theories develop from classic analysis by Max Weber, but have been taken much further by recent historical sociologists.

The Military-centered Geopolitical Theory of State Power

A geopolitical theory of the state has developed from the implications of Weber's point that the state is fundamentally an organization of military force which claims a monopoly over the legitimate use of force upon a territory (Weber 1968 [1922]). If such a theory is to be of use, it should be treated as a set of variables, not as a constant. How much monopoly over legitimate force a state has, and how much territory it applies to, is not a constant, but changes over time as the outcome of political and military struggle. The principles which determine these changes are principles of geopolitics.

What then are the key geopolitical [GP] processes? What makes a state geopolitically stronger in its control over a geographical territory, and what makes it weaker, introducing a degree of geopolitical strain? I will summarize in a series of *ceteris paribus* principles which bring out the causes of variations in the territorial power of states; since all causes may operate simultaneously, we must combine all these principles to explain changes in the power of states.

1. *Resource advantage.* States which mobilize greater economic and population resources tend to expand at the expense of states mobilizing lesser such resources. Big states get bigger; and rich states get bigger, because they absorb smaller or poorer states on their borders – either by conquest and formal annexation, or by means of alliances, protectorates or empires absorbing their economic resources and exercising command over their military forces.

2. *Geopositional advantage.* States with potential enemies on fewer frontiers tend to expand at the expense of states with a larger number of frontiers to defend; this is sometimes referred to as the advantage of marchlands over centrally-located states. Conversely, states in the middle of a zone of multiple states tend to be caught in a web of multiple shifting alliances and to fragment over time.

The first two principles, resource advantage and marchland advantage / interior disadvantage, cumulate over time; relatively resource-richer or geographically better positioned states grow at the expense of poorer and interior states, thereby swallowing up their resources and controlling their territory. Over long periods of time (my estimate is several centuries), a few large states consolidate. This leads to periodic showdown wars (or so-called hegemonic wars; *e.g.,* the Napoleonic wars were a hegemonic war; World War II was another). Such showdown wars are highly destructive and are fought at a high degree of ferociousness, in contrast to wars fought in balance of power situations among many small contenders, where gentlemanly rules of limited combat tend to prevail. A showdown

war may end either by total victory of one side, which establishes a 'universal' empire over the accessible 'world'; or to mutual exhaustion of resources by the contenders, opening them up to disintegration and incursion from new smaller contenders on the margins.

3. *Principle of overextension or logistical overstretch.* The greater the distance from its home resource base a state extends its territorial control, the greater the logistical strain; overextension occurs at the point at which more resources are used up in transportation than can be applied in military force relative to the forces which enemies can muster at that location. Overextension not only causes military defeat and territorial loss, but is a major cause of state fiscal strain and state breakdown. The time-patterns of the growth of large states or empires, and their collapse, are quite different. Whereas the cumulative growth of resources and territorial expansion occurs gradually over a long period of time (on the order of centuries), the collapse of empires tends to occur quite rapidly (in a few crisis years).

Overextension is especially dangerous for a state because it tends to cause revolutions. Not only does the state lose territory, but also its monopoly over force, and its ruling faction or party tends to lose legitimacy; and these are crucial conditions leading towards revolution. This follows from the state breakdown theory of revolutions: the model that revolutions are never successful merely because of dissatisfaction from below, but only where popular dissatisfaction is mobilized in a situation of crisis in the state apparatus of coercion; that in turn is typically due to military strains, either directly or in their effects upon state revenues, with the situation exacerbated by conflict between propertied and state elites over who is to pay for the shortfall (Skocpol 1979; Goldstone 1991; Collins 1995). The link to external geopolitical affairs is both direct and indirect: direct because military weakness reduces the legitimacy of whoever is in control, indirect because military expenses have historically been the bulk of state expenditure and accumulated debt.

Let us see now how GP principles apply to the Chinese dynastic cycle. First: the importance of the economic resource base. Because of the geographical configuration of East Asia, any state, which unified the two great river valleys of the Yellow River and the Yangtse, would have population and economic wealth much greater than any other state in the region. Thus the central state was able to expand against enemies in almost all directions, which were certain to be smaller and poorer. Eventually the overextension principle comes in: successful Chinese armies extend to frontiers which are very far from the home base; this produces logistical strain, and the military budget becomes increasingly expensive, at just the time that armies become less effective. This is what causes rebellions against taxation, the rise of banditry, and the corruption of officials. When the crisis occurs, China finds itself in the center defending attacks from many different directions. Thus the middle splits up, and there occurs a period of fragmentation, the recurrent warring states periods which occur in the intervals between the great dynasties. Eventually one of the smaller states located in a borderland or marchland region, begins to grow, until it attains cumulative advantage and reunifies the great population areas of the center. Now there is a strong dynasty, deriving strong legitimacy from its recent geopolitical success, and the dynastic cycle begins again.

The dynastic cycle follows from GP principles, but only as long as China was in a zone which was largely cut off from other parts of the world, especially by the inefficiency of transportation in early historical periods. Once China became part of the larger space of world power relations, the conditions for the dynastic cycle were no longer present. Thus, the cycle operated in a particular period of history, although it was the result of causal principles which are universal.

Thus although GP principles are first formulated by being abstracted from particular historical periods, it has been possible to broaden the application of such principles by re-

formulating them on the basis of wide historical comparisons. Classic and modern efforts to formulate GP principles, which I have drawn upon in my summary, have been based upon studies of Greco-Roman antiquity as well as early modern through contemporary Europe (Andreski 1971; Gilpin 1981; Kennedy 1987; McNeill 1963, 1982 ranged even more widely in world history). My own initial inductive formulation (Collins 1978) was based upon analyzing historical atlases for the Middle East and Mediterranean regions from the first ancient empires through medieval and modern times, and for China since the earliest dynasties (see also Collins 1992 for application to kinship-based societies). In other words, GP principles (resource advantage, marchlands, overextension, *etc.*) hold across the range of patrimonial and bureaucratic state forms. In addition, I was able to use GP principles successfully in 1980 to predict the strains which brought about the collapse of the Soviet empire (a continuation of the older Russian empire) (Collins 1986, 1995). And finally, geopolitical principles fit into a coherent theory of the state, developed from scholars from Weber through Skocpol, Tilly and Mann, which as we will see, gives a well-supported picture of all major aspects of state growth, state crises, state organization, political mobilization and revolution.

The Geopolitics of War in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan

The early phase of the US war in Afghanistan was not a repetition of the Vietnam war, nor a repetition of the Soviet war in Afghanistan. To apply GP principles, we must summarize the resources on each side, look at their geographical positions, and their problems of logistical extension or overextension. In the cases of the Vietnam war and the Soviet-Afghanistan war, there were two big world power blocs; hence each side in these local wars had support from much bigger chains of resources. In both cases, these were guerrilla wars. The guerrillas did not have to win the war by battlefield victories, but only to continue resistance until their opponents' supply lines became too costly – in other words, to wait until logistical overextension made their opponent withdraw. In addition, in the case of the Soviet-Afghanistan war, the Soviets had multiple military commitments on other fronts – in Eastern Europe, Northeast Asia, the long-distance nuclear weapons race, *etc.* The Soviet weakness was precisely the reverse of the marchland advantage – the USSR was in the middle extending forces in all directions. It was Gorbachev's effort to reduce these multiple military commitments that led to the Soviet policy of giving up Eastern Europe, allowing the wave of anti-Communist revolts that eventually broke up the USSR.

In contrast with this, the war in Afghanistan in October – December 2001 was an alliance of all the big powers against the supporters of the terrorist movement al-Qaeda. From the first GP principle, resource advantage, we would expect the US forces and allies to win. The second GP principle, geopositional advantage or disadvantage, posed no problem for the US forces insofar as it was not fighting multiple wars on widely separated fronts. The main GP danger was in the third principle, overextension: Afghanistan is very far from Western supply bases, and thus the war could become very costly, depending on how long it would continue. The main worry of US policy during the 1990s was to avoid logistical overextension – the so-called lesson of the Vietnam war – not to become bogged down in long and expensive wars in distant places. Thus President George W. Bush, in the early period of his administration, tried to bring the US military into a completely defensive posture, and to withdraw from international commitments. This was changed, of course, by the attack of September 11 – according to the principle that external attack brings national solidarity, and widespread desire for national military action (Coser 1956). This is what happened in the summer of 1914 in Europe, when after an assassination in Sarajevo the states of Austria, Russia, Germany, France, Italy and England began

to threaten each other with war; these threats increased national solidarity in each place, and huge crowds in the streets in Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, Paris, and London demanded that their countries go to war (Scheff 1994). After the attacks of September 11, there was a huge increase in national solidarity in the United States; the level of agreement on public policy temporarily became very high; the popularity of President Bush rose from moderate (about 50 % approval rating) to the highest ratings ever recorded (90 %) (Collins 2004).

The question became: how long would this national solidarity last, compared to how long it would take before the problem of logistical overextension set in? According to my analysis of indicators of national solidarity – especially the display of flags on houses and cars which broke out spontaneously in the days immediately after the 9/11 attack – peaks of solidarity under attack remain high for about three months, and recede back to normal in six months (Collins 2004). The US victory over the Taliban regime was well within this period.

One reason for the rapid victory is that the war was not a guerrilla war, but a conventional war between Taliban troops defending fixed positions, especially around the cities, and the Northern Alliance troops supported by the US. This was exactly the situation in which US superiority in air power would be most effective. A second reason was that the Taliban was not organized as a unified army but as a coalition of warlords and tribal clans, along with some ideologically-recruited troops. We must distinguish between the Taliban movement, which was concerned above all with enforcing its conservative Islamic religious policy, and the wider Taliban coalition. Hence it was very easy for the Taliban coalition of clans and warlords to unravel, once it became apparent the Taliban would lose any direct battles against superior US military resources. This is a typical case of a bandwagon effect (Marwell and Oliver 1993).

Once the US-led coalition destroyed the Taliban regime and installed a favorable regime in office in Afghanistan, the situation did indeed shift back towards a situation more resembling the Soviet war during the 1980s. Through 2009, that war was essentially a stalemate: the Taliban guerrillas failed to overthrow the central government, the US coalition was unable to destroy the guerrillas. In addition, the guerrilla war spread across the border into Pakistan. Geopolitical principles have not as yet been applied extensively to guerrilla war; as a step in this direction, I suggest that guerrillas play for different stakes than conventional military powers. Guerrilla war is not a useful tactic for invading foreign territory, nor of holding territory; thus, the Taliban was easy to defeat when it held conventional government power. On the other hand, guerrilla war is quite efficient in denying a conventional military power full control of a territory – preventing it from establishing a Weberian state of monopoly over violence – since guerrilla war requires much fewer resources in manpower, weapons, and logistical base than conventional war. Guerrillas largely avoid problems of logistical overextension, since they operate close to their home base. In contrast, opponents of guerrillas are at a particular disadvantage the further from their home base they operate – not only are logistical lines of supply longer and more expensive, but an army from a distant land is more culturally alien and thus likely to generate more cultural resistance by its very presence.

The spread of the guerrilla war into Pakistan is explainable in part by the geopolitical pattern that power-prestige increases inflow of resources via recruitment to alliances. Power-prestige is always relative to what a military force is attempting to do; guerrillas have only to survive to build their reputation as invincible; whereas a conventional force has the goal of defeating an enemy fully and thereby establishing monopoly of force on the territory. The longer the Taliban/al-Qaeda guerrillas hold out in Afghanistan, the more it makes them appear a permanent feature of the local scene; it is this local growth in power-prestige that helps account for their successes in recruiting allies and reinforce-

ments in nearby areas of Pakistan. And these additions to local resources need not be large – need not even be a majority of the local population – to be effective as resources for the goals of guerrilla war.

Nevertheless, although fighting against guerrillas in Afghanistan, and by proxy, in Pakistan, has increased strain on US military resources and thus the amount of overextension, the issue was not decisive for US power-prestige either at home or internationally, because the focus of attention during this period had shifted to Iraq. When the US (together with a limited number of allies) invaded Iraq in March 2003, its military success followed geopolitical principles: large resource advantages, overwhelming concentration of those resources in a single theatre of operations (the Afghanistan war having been reduced to a small scale of anti-guerrilla operations); logistical overextension would not come into play as long as the war was short. Here we must elaborate on the character of geopolitical resources and how they are transformed into military resources. The US had a much bigger economic resource base and population than Iraq in 2003, while the latter was essentially isolated and without allies.

In addition gross economic and population advantages, US military organization had over the past 20 years been engaged in a so-called 'revolution in military affairs', which transformed both weaponry and organization into a high-tech, computer-centered mode. The development of aerial surveillance by global positioning satellites, of laser-guided missiles, infra-red sensors and other devices made US forces much more accurate in hitting targets with long-distance weapons. High-tech development also allowed relatively smaller armies (although still on the order of several hundred thousand troops) to carry the firepower equivalent to far larger conventional armies of the mid-twentieth century. By these means, US/coalition forces were able to destroy the command and control structure of Iraqi military organization very rapidly, and to overrun the country in a period of weeks. The relatively larger Iraqi army and its numbers of armored vehicles and artillery were immobilized by the high-tech weaponry and coordination system of the invaders. My point here is not to extol the dominance of technology; rather we must understand that technological advance is itself a means by which superior economic resources are turned into military power. Decades of US investment in military research and development, based on a substantial portion of the world-leading US economy, culminated in the high-tech military organization which won a blitzkrieg over the older and more 'low-tech' Iraqi military forces. (This is not to say Iraqi military equipment was entirely 'low-tech' – the war has been described as an army of the year 2000 fighting against an army of the 1960s.)

High tech is the mode in which geopolitical resources manifest themselves today. Indeed, this was already true at the time of the World Wars of the 20th century, but the disparity in technology between the sides was minimal in the First and Second World Wars and hence not apparent. The importance of high tech was masked during the US-Vietnam war, because the guerrillas had only to hold out, rather than actually win, until the power-prestige of the long-distance US occupation had declined and brought political pressures for settlement. Only in the brief 1991 Gulf War, and in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, was the importance of a wide disparity in military technology apparent, since these were wars which matched pairs of conventional military forces against each other.

After the successful invasion of spring 2003, the war in Iraq changed from a conventional war into a guerrilla war. Here high-tech weapons are less decisive. Guerrillas extend the trend of modern warfare in the sense that as long-distance firepower has become more lethal, military forces have dispersed instead of concentrating where they would be easy targets (Biddle 2004). Guerrillas take this principle to the extreme, by hiding among

the civilian population in very small groups, and concentrating on attacking enemy logistics lines. Guerrilla war is a war of attrition, above all aimed at increasing not just the material cost but the political cost of persisting in attempts to hold foreign territory. Nevertheless, geopolitical principles still hold in a guerrilla war. The side with large resource advantages can persist in fighting guerrillas as long as the actual rate of material attrition is not too high; and this becomes largely a matter of political will. Viewed sociologically, political will is the pattern of emotional solidarity around government leaders during a period of conflict.

As I have indicated above (in regard to the period of intense national solidarity in the months following the 9/11/01 attack), solidarity is highest at the beginning of a conflict; it also peaks at moments of victory; otherwise it gradually declines. Thus popular support for the US war in Iraq declined over the years, especially during the period of guerrilla war. These matters are always difficult to judge at the time when they are happening, especially by observers who are politically engaged and have strong feelings about the propriety of policy decisions. From an analytical viewpoint, it should be apparent that although popular enthusiasm for a war tends to decline the longer the war goes on (as was apparent in all countries during the First and Second World Wars, as well as during the long US wars in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq), nevertheless anti-war sentiment has rarely if ever become high enough to cause a Great Power – *i.e.* a state with strong international power-prestige at the beginning of a conflict – to voluntarily pull out of a war when it had not yet been thoroughly defeated on the battlefield. Thus it should not be surprising that President George W. Bush was able to win re-election in 2004, despite impassioned opposition both inside the United States, and elsewhere (especially in Europe) where the rationale for attacking Iraq in 2003 was strongly criticized. By the time an ostensible anti-war candidate won the US Presidency, Barrack Obama in 2008, the war in Iraq had already been winding down, and US troops were in the process of withdrawing and turning over the task of fighting guerrillas to Iraqi government forces. In the immediate perspective of 2009, it is striking how little real difference there was between the military policy of the Bush and Obama administrations, the latter carrying over the trajectory of the former. This supports the sociological point that state leaders tend to go along with the exigencies of military power-prestige, and that the rhetoric of being a candidate in opposition is different from the actions of an elected head of state.

The political criticism of the US invasion of Iraq was largely focused on the question of international norms and rights. The Bush administration held that the US had the moral right to invade what it called a terrorist state; domestic opposition in the US (mostly from the internationalist liberal/left) and in Europe held that only an international consensus could decide such a move, and that the US unilateralism was illegitimate. The use of military power by individual states was held to be superseded now by international organization and international law. To put this in sociological perspective, we need to examine the conditions underlying diplomatic solutions to international crises and their relation to military actions.

The Geopolitics of International Coalitions

GP principles do not mean that states are always threatening to go to war. On the contrary, states often pursue diplomacy instead of fighting. But it is a mistake to regard GP and diplomacy as separate from each other. Diplomatic strength depends on GP strength; successful diplomacy takes account of GP principles rather than ignores them.

GP principles do not become superseded, even in a world rule of humanitarian law. It is important to emphasize that GP principles do not require the bounded independent state

actor as the unit of analysis. Instead, GP analysis focuses upon the organization of force, and derives the territorial and organizational configurations into which this organization is shaped under different historical conditions. The formation of a new type of organization of force, at the level of international alliances or even world government, is compatible with these principles. GP principles were first developed by analyzing the relations of separate states, but they apply to any organization which attempts to exercise military force over a territory. It could be an international alliance, or a world government. Examples are the United Nations, which is as yet a rather weak world government, but one which nevertheless attempts to define as legitimate solely that force which it sanctions; or the European Union, which is a federation moving towards becoming a European government; it will become a such at the point at which it has an autonomous European army. There are many other kinds of international organizations and alliances, such as NATO in its recent phase of expansion, and ad hoc alliances such as the anti-terrorist alliance assembled by the US after September 11, 2001 to invade Afghanistan; and the much smaller coalition put together to support the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

To the extent that the UN, EU, NATO or any other such international alliance become effective in enforcing a new world order, it is because they have GP advantages over their potential opponents. That is to say, they must be superior in resources and in organization to mobilize those resources. They are subject to geopositional constraints, since it is easier to project force at some targets than others. It is easier to project Western forces in the Balkans than in Central Africa, which explains why there was an intervention to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, but not in the genocide in Rwanda-Burundi. And international organizations will be in danger of logistical overextension, like all previous states. If there can be mega-states and world governments, there is also the possibility of state breakdowns in these units. There is always the possibility that international organizations may undergo revolutionary breakdowns, driven by the classic pathway of GP strain, fiscal crisis, intra-elite struggles, and coinciding popular resentments from below. Even if there is a real world government or massive world federations in the future, they will be subject to the restrictions of GP principles. The possibility that a world government might some day be established does not mean that it would necessarily be permanent; it could undergo a revolution or state breakdown, just like previous states.

Such a development remains in the hypothetical future. Thus far the transnational coalitions and their righteous crusades in favor of international law and justice look a great deal like previous alliances and federations. NATO's role in the Kosovo intervention of 1999, and the negotiations of recent years to expand NATO membership into the old Warsaw pact, can be interpreted as a project to keep the US involved in the center of European power, at a time when it has been implicitly in rivalry with the EU as alternative way of organizing military force upon the Continent. Such rival and overlapping coalitions have happened before; the geopolitics of medieval Europe was to a considerable extent a struggle between the opposing claims of Christendom unified under the papacy, as against the German (or Holy Roman) Empire; there were also some smaller confederations which battened upon the fall of the Empire to create federal states such as Switzerland and the Dutch Republic (Collins 1999). NATO in the 1990s looks a good deal like the German Empire of the late Middle Ages, in the sense that it was mobilized for wars against external enemies (in the case of NATO this was first the Soviet bloc, then rogue states; in the case of the medieval German Empire it was mainly the Ottoman threat); this collective enterprise was always led by the strongest state (in the modern case the US, in the medieval case the Habsburg ruler) which took military command and provided the bulk of the troops.

Historically, alliances and federations have often exercised military force under strong control from its dominant member; in effect the entire alliance operates to enhance

the power-prestige of its leader. In ancient Greece, the Athenian League against the Persians was also the Athenian empire coercing participation and punishing withdrawal. It is a plausible argument that whatever the surface emotions and humanitarian ideals involved, the various US-led coalitions of the post-1945 period are manifestations of the desire of US political leaders to keep up power-prestige in the international arena. Nor is the idealism of today's transnational coalitions new; the crusades of medieval Christendom which bolstered the power of the Pope were equally idealistic, and in general every large military enterprise acts in an atmosphere of emotionally charged belief. The big test of a truly transnational political order would be if a major coalition were to go into military action against the desires of its strongest member: if the UN were to take action, for instance, against the USA.

As of today, the UN has a long way to go to become a state in the strong sense of the term. The UN assembles military forces by a feudal-like levée, in which each partner to the alliance raises and pays for its own troops and keeps them under chains of command which are largely separate, except for temporary international combinations of officers at the top. Under these conditions, the effect of warfare in galvanizing national identity is not transferred to the coalition, but reinforces the ethnonationalism of the states identified with each body of troops. A true UN army, and thus the basis of a strongly held world-identity, would depend upon the UN being able to recruit its own soldiers from throughout its member countries, combining them into formations irrespective of origin. The state penetration of the UN (not to mention other alliances) is shallow; it does not wield coercive power to discipline its own members, but thus far has intervened only in the internal affairs of non-members. In this respect these international coalitions have operated like empires of conquest expanding their spheres of control.

State Bureaucratization as Basis for Rule of Law

Let us return to the question: is the world of the early 21st century moving towards a new era of international rule of law to support universal human rights? Such claims have been made increasingly in recent years, and some organizational apparatus has been developed to attempt to put them into action. Nevertheless, this idealized goal in the use of force is not so new, and that it happens in accord with existing sociological principles.

Law is a set of ideals and procedures; but law always has an organizational base. Laws do not enforce themselves. Thus it was naive, on the part of some political commentators on the September 11, 2001 attacks, to say that Osama bin Laden and others responsible should be brought to trial; but at the same time to say there should be no war against the Taliban coalition. The notion that criminal justice is an alternative to war is an inaccurate extrapolation of the domestic power of the state into the realm of inter-state relations. The organizational base of law is the power of the state; and that in turn depends on geopolitical power, and on the extent and effectiveness of state organization.

In the modern ideal of the rule of law is that there should be general principles designating individual rights and responsibilities, and formal procedures for judging who has which rights, and who is responsible to be punished for violations. The organizational basis for this kind of law is the rise of the modern bureaucratic state. The rise of the modern state is a topic on which there has taken place in the last 25 years of scholarship a cumulative development of historical sociology. I will briefly summarize three points: the military revolution, state penetration into society, and the extension of bureaucracy.

The full-fledged ideal type of the force-monopolizing territorial state gradually developed since 1500 in the West, although there have been variations along this continuum elsewhere in world history. The story that we have become familiar with through the work

of Mann (1986, 1993), Tilly (1990), Parker (1988) and others begins with the military revolution which drastically increased the size and expense of armed forces. State organization began to grow in order to extract resources to support current military expenses and past debts, above all by creating a revenue-extraction apparatus. This was the pathway towards bureaucratization and centralization. State penetration into society brought a series of effects in economic, political and cultural spheres. State apparatus now could increasingly regulate the economy, provide infrastructure, compel education and inscribe the population as citizens in government records. These same processes mobilized people's collective identities into social movements operating at a national level: in part because the state itself now constituted a visible target for demands from below; in part because state penetration provided the mobilizing resources of communication, transportation, and consciousness-raising. State penetration thus fostered both its own support and its domestic opposition; as Mann has demonstrated, both nationalism and class conflict were mobilized as part of the same process. The modern state became a breeding-grounds for social movements; and whenever a social movement has been successful, it has institutionalized its victories by creating new laws which are administered by the bureaucratic state.

The rise of the modern state leads directly to the theory of bureaucracy. In terms of organization, the rise of modernity is best characterized, not as a move from feudalism to capitalism, but from the *patrimonial household to bureaucratic organization*. What Weber called patrimonial organization exists where the basic unit of society is the household, and larger structures are built up as networks of links among households. It is important to note that the household mode of organization is not the same thing as the family mode of organization, although they are related. The household typically had at its core a family, the head of household with his wife (or wives) and children, perhaps with some other relatives; and thus property and authority were hereditary. But households could never be very large if the only people they included were family members. Patrimonial households were full of pseudo-familistic relationships; a household of the upper classes would include servants, retainers, guards, guests, hostages and others, all supported from the household economy, and all expected to provide some resource: work, loyalty, or military forced. An important house contained within it enough armed force to be powerful; it was a fortified household. Links to other households of lesser or greater power constituted the political structure of the society; under certain legal arrangements, these might be called properly 'feudal', but a variety of other structures were possible. The economy was also organized in patrimonial households or their linkages; the labor force consisted of servants and apprentices under familistic protection and discipline rather than independent wage relationships. To refer to a great 'house' was both literal and metaphorical; the aristocracy and the great burghers or merchants were the possessors of the largest household units with the most retainers.

The rise of bureaucracy was the dismantling of the patrimonial household. Workplace was separated from home, private force was superseded by professional military and police units belonging to the state. The physical separation among buildings where production, consumption, politics and administration took place was also the creation of the division between public and private spheres. Bureaucracy was the creation of offices separate from the persons who held them, the creation of a sphere of interaction apart from family ties and pseudo-familistic relationships of loyalty and subordination. The impersonality of bureaucratic organization depends upon paperwork, codifying activities in written rules and keeping count of performance in files and records. Bureaucracy is thus the source of modern ideologies: the rule of law, fairness, justice, impartiality; the previous practices of loyalty to the patrimonial household, and the consumption of organizational property

became condemned as nepotism and corruption. Bureaucracy is the source of individualism since the unit of accounting and responsibility is the individual who can be appointed, promoted, moved from one position to another, paid, reprimanded, and dismissed, all with reference only to their personal dossier rather than their family and household connections. The shift from patrimonial households to bureaucracy promoted the ideology of individual freedom, but also the ideology of alienation from the impersonal public order; both are sides of the same coin. The shift to bureaucracy also made possible modern mass politics: ideologically, it fostered the conception of the individual's rights to democratic representation and legal status apart from the jurisdiction of the household head; structurally, it made it possible for workers, women, and youth to mobilize in their own places of assembly and their own cultural and political movements. One reason class conflict became possible in the modern era was because penetration by the revenue-extracting state created a centralized arena for political action; a complementary reason was that class and other conflicts were mobilized by being freed from the constraints of patrimonial household organization (Tilly 1978, 1995; Mann 1993).

The great historical transformation was the shift from patrimonialism to bureaucracy. These Weberian concepts are of course ideal types, and actual historical configurations were often mixtures. Weber used a concept of 'patrimonial bureaucracy' for intermediate forms, typically a more centralized governmental structure than feudalism or local chiefdoms ('caudillismo' in Latin America). Egypt, late Imperial Rome, many Chinese dynasties, and early modern Europe all had particular mixtures of these ideal types, which slid up and down the continuum of patrimonial and bureaucratic forms.

What caused the transition from patrimonial to bureaucratic organization? Weber's answer has usually been interpreted as a series of material preconditions (existence of writing, long-distance transportation, a monetary system, *etc.*) or as a functionalist argument that bureaucracy arises because it is the most efficient way to coordinate large-scale and complex activities. For the grand historical transition we are concerned with, there is a more directly political answer. Recall that we are considering the state processually, as a struggle to monopolize legitimate force upon a territory. The state is a project, an attempt to control and coordinate force in as definite a manner as possible; under particular historical conditions, what is possible along that line may be quite limited. How then do organizations move along that continuum towards increasing monopolistic control? Weber sees the shift from kinship alliance politics towards patrimonial household domination as one move towards centralization and monopolization; the shift to the bureaucratic state is a much stronger move higher up the continuum. What enabled some states to make that move earlier or to a greater degree than others?

Bureaucratization was a move in the struggle between whoever was the paramount lord at any particular moment and his allies and rivals among the other great patrimonial households. A crucial condition was the geopolitical configuration. Decentralized chiefdoms and hereditary feudal lineages raised less military resources for their paramount lords and thus tended to be conquered, or were forced to imitate the bureaucratizing manners of the more successful states. Dynastic states proved geopolitically weak because far-flung marriage ties produced scattered states, in effect subject to the effects of logistical overextension. History of course is more complicated than a simple winnowing out of non-bureaucratic states by bureaucratic ones; resource advantage is not the only GP principle, and some states favored by marchland positions might survive with more quasi-patrimonial structures (as Britain did down through the 19th century); and bureaucratizing states might nevertheless fail to expand their territorial power because of logistical overextension. Nevertheless, the long-run trend is towards the victory

of the bureaucratizers. The successive waves of the military revolution were steps in the development of bureaucracy, first within the military itself (especially logistically-intensive branches such as artillery), then in the revenue-extraction service. State penetration was largely bureaucratization at the expense of the patrimonial household. Extensive market capitalism and especially its industrial form prospered under particular versions of state penetration and military mobilization; in this way bureaucracy spread from government into the economic sector; and this in turn fed back into still further government bureaucracy.

I have sketched a theoretical perspective of causality from the outside in: the various ramifications of the military revolution and the revenue-extracting state. In important ways, geopolitical processes are prime movers, even as they play into a multi-causal situation. Not to say that states cannot take alternative pathways, but they do so at a risk: if they are too weak geopolitically *vis-à-vis* their neighbours, they become swallowed up into an expanding state which has successfully negotiated the military revolution and thereby have state-penetrating structures imposed upon them.

Bureaucratization underlies both the positive and negative features of modern societies. In contemporary discourse, the term bureaucracy is a negative one: it implies inefficiency, paperwork, impersonality, and endless complexity. In some parts of the world, the term bureaucracy also has the connotation of corruption, a regime of bribery; but this is not a sociological use of the term; it would be more accurate to describe corruption as a form of patrimonial organization – the rule of personal connections – which reemerges inside the framework of bureaucracy. The cure for bureaucratic corruption is more rule of law, which is to say bureaucratic administration in the strict sense of the term. Structurally, bureaucracy is the basis of the rule of law; and hence the question of a new world order is a question of the future of bureaucracy.

Social Conditions for Expansion of World Law

The transition now being proposed at the beginning of the 21st century, to a world rule of law and universal human rights, is an extension of bureaucratic organization and its ideological ethos. The rule of law and the focus upon individual rights are central to the way bureaucratic organization functions. What may be afoot now is not a transition beyond bureaucracy but an expansion of legalistic bureaucratic organization from the national to a global scale. To put this more precisely, there have long been in existence networks organized on bureaucratic principles which have overlapped the boundaries of national states; what is happening today is that the sheer quantity of such transnational organizations has increased, and they have moved more intensively into attempting to regulate human behavior everywhere in the world according to an explicit formal code. We are seeing efforts which are analogous to the state penetration which took place earlier at the national level, both in conjunction with fledgling international government, and in international business, charitable, and social movement organizations whose networks overlap even wider than today's international alliances. What determines whether this movement to spread universal law will succeed?

The rule of law developed first inside those states which became bureaucratic and penetrated deeply into their own societies, so that every individual became subject to the law. For there to be a world law of human rights, there must be an organization which carries out an analogous penetration into every society around the world. This could be some kind of international organization or coalition. But – and this is my main point – its degree of success depends on its geopolitical strength. And that is to say that the expansion of universal rights and protection of those rights must go through a phase where the organiza-

tions upholding world law are geopolitically stronger than those who oppose it. This extension could be diplomatic, but it is bound to be at least partly military. International organizations will sometimes have to fight and win to establish world law. This may be accompanied by some peaceful extension, if the power-prestige of the international coalition grows stronger, attracting other societies who want to join, in another bandwagon effect.

The ideal of world law is where individuals are held responsible for crimes against human rights. But in order to get to that point, world bureaucratic organization has to penetrate all societies; and the struggle against this penetration is carried on by groups, not individuals. Struggles are bound to produce group animosities – following the principle that external attack increases group solidarity – so there are always processes like Islamic groups supporting al-Qaeda because it is perceived as a form of loyalty to embattled Islam. And when conflicts are violent, there are always individual members of groups who are caught in conflicts for which they as individuals are not responsible. This is particularly true in war, where some civilians and noncombatants always get killed – since warfare is a very crude and dangerous instrument. But there seems to be no escape from this on the pathway to world law. On the opposing side, the crimes against humanity which some people are attempting to control – genocide, murderous ethnic cleansing, terrorist attacks – are by their very nature attacks on groups, not on individuals, and largely on civilian populations. It is only at the end of this process – in a territory where the rule of law prevails, and there is an organization to enforce it, which people consider legitimate – that law can successfully treat conflicts as crimes for which individuals are to be held responsible.

Finally, let us ask: where does the opposition to universal human rights come from? Much international ideological conflict of the last 20 years has pitted those regions with bureaucratic ideals against parts of the world which are still relatively more patrimonial. Interventions against ethnic cleansing and genocide are attempts to impose the universalism of bureaucratic regions upon the patrimonial ethics of non-cosmopolitan, relatively closed communities whose structure fosters ethnic particularism and reinforces the bloody ritualism of group vendetta. Conflicts over the rights of women in the Islamic world also have this character: the bureaucratic part of the world pitted against patrimonial households that Islamic conservatives struggle to preserve. The conflict over international terrorism is a struggle between these two organizational forms. We see this organizational conflict in Afghanistan. 'Taliban' means students of a madrasa teacher, which is to say a traditional Islamic school in which the teacher acts like head of household for his students; and they are bound to him throughout their lives by ties of patrimonial and religious obligation. The Taliban was thus based on explicitly patrimonial organization, although it has to take on some bureaucratic elements as it attempts to administer the state. Fundamentalist or conservative Islam is a form of religious organization which is both patrimonial in its own church structure, and which sees itself in a violent struggle to maintain itself against the threat of the outside world based on bureaucratic organizational principles.

Over the long run of history, modern bureaucratic organization has everywhere prevailed over the patrimonial household. Much of international terrorism today is an attempt to defend the patrimonial structures remaining in parts of the world, against the structures and ideologies of bureaucratic organization. If world law and rights for individuals are based on bureaucratic organization, it is realistic to expect that the organizational procedures claiming to protect human rights will increase during future history. This will not be a smooth and continuous trend, since the international organizations for administering and enforcing rights are part of the struggle for geopolitical power, and are subject to geopolitical tensions and possibilities for breakdown. Human rights will become an increasingly widespread ideological theme, but their realization will depend on the contingencies of organized state power. And that has always been a process of ongoing tensions and conflict.

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