

a world in which the Western powers were still in a dominant position. The demands that were put forward had necessarily to be justified in terms of ... conventions of which the Western powers were the principal authors; the moral appeal had to be cast in terms that would have most resonance in Western societies. But as ... non-Western peoples have become stronger ... and as the Westernised leaders of the early years of independence have been replaced in many countries by new leaders more representative of local or indigenous forces, Third World spokesmen have become freer to adopt a rhetoric that sets Western values aside, or ... places different interpretations upon them. Today there is legitimate doubt as to how far the demands emanating from the Third World coalition are compatible with the moral ideas of the West.

Intriguing questions about the future of solidarism are raised by these comments, which foreshadowed the more recent analysis of the coming 'clash of civilizations' and discussions about whether the rise of 'indigenous' values and the development of radical or militant Islamic groups will deepen rivalries with the West (Huntington 1993). Yet nothing in Bull's writings suggests that the breakdown of international society is imminent. As we shall see in the next section, Bull believed that the majority of new states accepted the basic principles of international society including the ideas of sovereignty and non-intervention. Despite cultural and other differences which seemed to be increasing, new states and old could agree on some universal principles of coexistence and on some moral universals such as the principle of racial equality. How different societies come to agree on the universal principles pertinent to either a pluralist or solidarist conception of international society is the central theme in a form of analysis which steers clear of the fatalism of neo-realism and a naïve belief in the inevitability of global progress which occasionally surfaces in triumphalist forms of liberalism. In the end, diplomatic practice decides how far states can agree on moral and political universals which transcend cultural and other differences. On such foundations does the claim to be the *via media* between realism and revolutionism finally rest.

## **The revolt against the West and the expansion of international society**

The impact of the revolt against the West upon the modern society of states was central to Bull and Watson's writings in the 1980s. Their key question was whether the diverse civilizations which had been brought together by the expansion of Europe have similar views about how to

maintain order and belong to an international society rather than an international system. To answer this question it was necessary to recall the world of the late eighteenth century. In that era, there were four dominant regional international orders (the Chinese, European, Indian and Islamic). Moreover, 'most of the governments in each group had a sense of being part of a common civilization superior to that of the others' (Bull and Watson 1984: 87). Although European states were committed to the principle of sovereign equality within their own continent, they rejected the view that other societies had the same sovereign rights. Exactly how Europe should behave towards its colonies was always a matter of dispute. Some claimed the right to enslave or annihilate conquered peoples while others argued that they were equally members of the universal society of humankind and entitled to be treated humanely. The dominant theories of empire in the twentieth century, as expressed in the League of Nations' mandates system and the trusteeship system of the United Nations, maintained that colonial powers had a duty to prepare non-European peoples for their eventual admission into the society of states on equal terms with Western members (Bain 2003).

The Europeans believed that this transition would take many decades if not centuries, in part because other civilizations had to divest themselves of a hegemonial conception of international society in which they were believed to be at the centre of the world. China, for example, saw itself as the Middle Kingdom which deserved tribute from other societies which were thought to be at a lower stage of development. Traditional Islamic views of International Relations distinguished between the House of Islam (Dar al Islam) and the House of War (Dar al Harb) – between believers and infidels – though the possibility of a temporary truce (Dar al Suhl) with non-Islamic powers was allowed. No less committed to a hegemonial view of international order, the European powers believed that membership of the society of states was impossible for those that had yet to reach their 'standard of civilization' (Gong 1984).

What this meant was that different civilizations belonged to an international system in the eighteenth century. With the expansion of Europe, other peoples were forced to comply with its conception of the world and, gradually, most of those societies came to accept European principles of international society. But they came to enjoy equal membership of the international society of states only after a long struggle to dismantle Europe's sense of its own moral superiority and political invincibility.

Bull (in Bull and Watson 1984: 220–4) called this struggle 'the revolt against the West' and argued that it had five main components. The first was 'the struggle for equal sovereignty' undertaken by societies such as China and Japan which had 'retained their formal independence' but were considered 'inferior' to the Western powers. These societies were

governed by unequal treaties 'concluded under duress'; because of the principle of 'extra-territoriality', they were denied the right to settle disputes involving foreigners according to domestic law. As a consequence of the legal revolt against the West, Japan joined the society of states in 1900, Turkey in 1923, Egypt in 1936 and China in 1943. The political revolt against the West was a second phase in this process. In this case, the former colonies which had lost their former independence demanded freedom from colonial domination. The racial revolt against the West which included the struggle to abolish slavery and the slave trade as well as all forms of white supremacism was the third part of the quest for freedom and dignity; a fourth dimension was the economic revolt against the forms of inequality and exploitation associated with a Western-dominated global commercial and financial system. The fifth revolt, the cultural revolt, was a protest against all forms of Western cultural imperialism, including the West's assumption that it was entitled to decide how other peoples should live, not least by universalizing liberal-individualistic conceptions of human rights.

Bull maintained that the first four dimensions of the revolt of the Third World appealed to Western conceptions of freedom and equality and tried to make the colonial powers take their own principles seriously in their relations with the non-European parts of the world. This seemed to signify a desire to emulate the West's path of social and political development. But as already noted the cultural revolt was different because it was often 'a revolt against Western values as such' (Bull and Watson 1984: 223). The inevitable question was whether the expansion of international society which occurred because of the revolt against the West would lead to new forms of conflict and disharmony. The importance of this question has been underlined by the religious revolt, and specifically by certain Islamic forms of revolt against the West, embodied in Al-Qaeda, which are opposed to American support for Israel, to its policy of supporting what are held to be corrupt pro-Western elites in the Middle East and to the spread of Western secular values. Significantly, the 'September 11' terrorist attacks on the United States were not followed by diplomatic demands which are usually compromised as part of the usual 'give and take' of politics. This was a new form of revolt against the West, one in which the use of force did not conform with Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is the continuation of politics by other means.

Where this new revolt against the West will lead, and what it means for the future of international society, will be central questions in the field for years to come. For some, there is no sharper reminder of the value of Samuel Huntington's controversial thesis that, contrary to Francis Fukuyama's belief in the triumph of liberal democracy, new

fault-lines are emerging around ancient divisions between civilizations (Fukuyama 1992; Huntington 1993). Some who find Huntington's view of civilizations too simplistic stress that it is important not to lose sight of what the larger cultural revolt against the West means for international society. Chris Brown (1988) has argued that the revolt against the West has challenged 'the modern requirement', which is the belief that the West can assume that it has the right to make other societies live in accordance with its values. This raises the interesting question of whether an agreement about pluralist principles of world political organization is all that very different societies can achieve, and perhaps all they should aim for.

Bull and Watson's view in the 1980s was that growing cultural conflict and an emerging cosmopolitan culture of modernity were developing in tandem. This is to suggest, contrary to the views summarized in the preceding paragraph, that tensions between the 'pluralist' and 'solidarist' conceptions of international society might well deepen in future. If this was their prediction, then it has turned out to be broadly correct, as we can see from the widening gulf between those who believe in promoting universal human rights (by force if necessary) and those who believe it is necessary to strengthen respect for national sovereignty in the face of the new imperialism. Bull and Watson believed that an international order which reflected the interests of non-Western states had been largely constructed by the 1980s. They were also clear that international society would not command the support of the majority of non-Western peoples unless more radical change took place (Bull and Watson 1984: 429). In particular, there would need to be a radical redistribution of power and wealth from North to South (Bull 1977: 316–17). This is important, given Bull's earlier thinking about the tension between order and justice. Although Bull continued to argue that 'justice is best realised in the context of order', he was much more inclined in his last writings to argue that greater justice is needed to ensure the survival of international order. We see this in his claim that the 'measures that are necessary to achieve justice for peoples of the Third World are the same measures that will maximise the prospects of international order or stability, at least in the long run' (Bull 1984a: 18).

Bull did not live to witness the further expansion of international society through the fragmentation of the Soviet bloc and the disintegration of several Third World societies. New challenges for international society have been posed by national-secessionist movements which argue that sometimes justice can be realized only 'at the price of order' (Keal 1983: 210). New problems have been created by the appearance of 'failed states' (Helman and Ratner 1992–3), by gross violations of human rights in civil conflicts, by regimes which are in a state of war with sections

of their own population, by governments such as the Taliban in Afghanistan which provided a safe haven for terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda and by authoritarian regimes such as Iraq under Saddam Hussein where the United States and the United Kingdom feared that WMD might end up in the hands of terrorist organizations dedicated to causing as much suffering as possible to civilian populations. But, as we shall see, such developments reinforce Bull and Watson's claim that modern international society is increasingly divided between pluralist and solidarist principles of world political organization (Hurrell 2002).

Robert Jackson's *Quasi-States* (1990) offered a new approach to the expansion of international society by focusing on what has become a core issue of world politics, namely the problem of the 'failed state'. Jackson's starting-point was that Third World states were admitted into the society of states as sovereign equals without any assurance that they could govern themselves effectively. Indeed, in 1960 the UN General Assembly consciously departed from the long-standing principle that a people had to demonstrate a capacity for good government before its claim for self-government could hope to succeed. Many new states acquired 'negative sovereignty' – the right to be free from external interference – when they clearly lacked 'positive sovereignty' – the ability to satisfy the basic needs of their populations. One consequence of the acquisition of sovereignty was that ruling elites were legally free to do as they pleased within their respective territories. Violators of human rights were then in a position to appeal to Article 2, para.7 of the UN Charter, which asserts that the international community does not have the right 'to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state'.

Jackson (1990) raised the question of whether a more effective system of global trusteeship could have prepared the colonies for political independence, and some have argued that the international community has to take responsibility for governing states which are no longer economically or politically viable (see also Helman and Ratner 1992–3). A related question in this context was whether the consent of the government of the target state is absolutely necessary before the international community can take action of this kind (1992–3).

Genocide in Rwanda, violence against the people of East Timor, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan in 2004–5 and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans have reopened the debate about the rights and wrongs of humanitarian intervention. The debate over NATO's involvement in Kosovo in 1999 revealed there is no consensus on whether the right of sovereignty can be overridden by an allegedly higher moral principle of protecting human rights. Some observers supported NATO's actions on the grounds that states have duties to the whole of humanity and not just

to co-nationals (Havel 1999: 6). Others criticized NATO for what they saw as a breach of the UN Charter, for its highly selective approach to dealing with human rights violations and for acts of violence which compounded the misery of the local population (Chomsky 1999a). The debate over the war against Iraq has deepened these divisions, with some such as Blair arguing that the war was justified not only because the regime was a danger to other societies but because it was guilty of gross violations of human rights. Others argue that the **American and British governments are guilty of placing themselves above international society by acting outside the UN system where each state has legal equality (although Bush and Blair have maintained that they are defending that society by developing new principles such as the doctrine of preventive war in the face of previously unimagined threats)**. The echoes of an older tension between the 'pluralist' and 'solidarist' conceptions of international society can be heard in these different reactions to how to deal with human rights violators and with regimes that are deemed to be 'outlaws' in international society. It remains to be seen whether the society of states can agree on the need for intervention in the case of supreme humanitarian emergencies while at the same time resisting any more general attempt to weaken respect for the principle of non-intervention' (Roberts 1993; see also Vincent and Wilson 1994). In examining the diplomacy which surrounds such debates, the English School comes into its own.

## **Progress in international relations**

Quite how far progress in international relations is possible is one of the most intriguing questions in the field. In one essay, Wight (1966: 26) maintained that the international system is 'the realm of recurrence and repetition', a formulation which is repeated in Waltz's classic statement of neo-realism (Waltz 1979: 66). The argument of this chapter is that the English School is principally about progress in the form of agreements about how to maintain order and, to a lesser degree, about how to promote support for principles of justice. Bull's writings on this subject often suggested that order is prior to justice, the point being that international order is a fragile achievement and that states have been unable to agree on the meaning of global justice. At times, Bull seems to be aligned with what Wight described as the 'realist' wing of rationalism but, on other occasions, he is much closer to its 'idealist' wing (Wight 1991: 59). Towards the end of his life, it has been argued, Bull moved significantly towards a more 'solidarist' point of view (see Dunne 1998: Chapter 7).