International Relations
in a post-hegemonic age

FRED HALLIDAY*

This article returns to a subject that is perhaps closer to my heart and intellectual commitment than any other, that of internationalism. I have, at one time or another, been a member of four ‘cosmopolitan conspiracies’—most recently, the London School of Economics; before that, the left liberal US think-tank the Institute for Policy Studies and its European affiliate the Transnational Institute, which employed me as a researcher from 1973 until I came to the School in 1983; earlier still, the Marxist theoretical journal New Left Review, on whose editorial board I sat from 1969 to 1983; and, before all of these, the oldest such conspiracy of all, and one that left an enduring intellectual and moral influence on me: the Roman Catholic Church.

Twenty-five years at LSE

In my time at LSE I have had many memorable experiences and encounters, as a teacher, a colleague and, as it were, a participant in a community with members from over 150 countries. To work in an institution where, in one week, you meet students from 30 or more countries, and in the middle of the vibrant international

* This article is an edited version of the author’s valedictory lecture as Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics, given at LSE on 30 January 2008, chaired by Professor Michael Cox.

1 This interest in internationalism was, in origin, not a product of an abstract ideological or moral commitment, but of the dissident political culture of my father and mother, respectively Yorkshire non-conformist and Irish nationalist. The text of my inaugural lecture at LSE, given in 1987, was published as ‘Three concepts of internationalism’ in International Affairs 64: 2, Spring 1988. Subsequent articles and chapters on the theory and history of internationalism have included my 1998 Ernest Gellner lecture, ‘The perils of community’, published in Nations and Nationalism 6: 2, 2000; chapters 3 and 4 of my Revolution and world politics: the rise and fall of the sixth great power (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); ‘Delusions of difference’ in my The world at 2000 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); ‘The fate of solidarity: uses and abuses’, in Christine Chinkin and David Downes, eds, Crime, social control and human rights: essays in honour of Stan Cohen (Oxford: Deer Park Productions, 2007); and ‘Revolutionary internationalism and its perils’, in John Foran, David Lane and Andreja Zivkovic, eds, Revolution in the making of the modern world (London: Routledge, 2008). On the basis of my work during a two-year senior research grant from the Leverhulme Trust in 2003–2005, I am now preparing two volumes of essays exploring this topic in the contemporary context. These articles of a more abstract or historical orientation have been accompanied by a series of case-studies of revolutionary internationalism on the one side (Revolution and foreign policy, the case of South Yemen 1967–1987 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990]; Revolution and world politics [Basingstoke:Palgrave, 1999]), and of critiques of nationalist, religious and other ideologies on the other (Islam and the myth of confrontation [London: I. B. Tauris, 1995]; Nation and religion in the Middle East [London: Saqi, 2000]; 100 myths about the Middle East [London: Saqi, 2005]).
city that is London, is a privilege indeed. Perhaps my proudest moment was the day in 1987 when, on the occasion of his being in London to promote a book, I invited one of the twentieth century’s great men, Willy Brandt—a German democrat, a patriot and a resolute opponent of fascism—to the School. During his visit he was presented, in an emotional and historic moment, to one of the great figures of LSE’s history, Dr Anne Bohm, long the School secretary, and herself a refugee from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. I recall, too, inviting the Kuwaiti sociology Professor Mohammad al Rumaihi to speak in the New Theatre during the Iraqi occupation of his country. Among those I admire whom I have heard speak in the School have been President Bill Clinton, President Nelson Mandela (whom I saw dancing on stage in the Peacock Theatre) and my own country’s president, Dr Mary Robinson, as well as Robin Cook, Kofi Annan and Presidents Fernando Enrique Cardoso and Lula of Brazil and President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, whose meeting I had the honour of chairing in 1988. The late Benazir Bhutto was also among those whom I invited to speak at the School, in February 2000.

The world scene that prevailed when in October 1982, as a Fellow of the Centre for International Studies, I came to the International Relations Department is light years from that of today: Reagan was in his first term, Mitterrand had just come to power in France, Brezhnev still ruled Russia, Mandela had eight more years of jail, Khomeini was in full spate, Thatcher had just won the war of the South Atlantic. In the interim we have lived the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the USSR, the wars of Yugoslavia, the Iran–Iraq, Kuwait and now Iraq wars, not to mention the onset of globalization and 9/11. ‘Post-modernity’ has, like the ‘New World Order’, ‘New Labour’, the ‘Post-Positivist Revolution’ and the ‘Unipolar World’ been, and, in large measure, gone. The ‘End of History’ has been knocked about a bit, but, arguably, endures. The ‘Clash of Civilizations’, an intellectual equivalent of ether and phlogiston, retains its baneful following.

In my time at LSE I have had the pleasure of working with five directors, each someone with a distinct and inspiring relation to the School and, of great importance, someone who has supported the staff and School community in their work, in times good and bad: Ralf Dahrendorf, I.G. Patel, John Ashworth, Tony Giddens and now Howard Davies. That LSE has had directors from, respectively, Britain’s greatest enemy in the twentieth century, Germany, and its greatest colony, India, is itself an index of the international and inclusive policy of this institution. It was I. G. Patel who, in his own valedictory address to the School, and as a former governor of the Bank of India and governor of the World Bank, drew attention to the importance of non-monetary public goods, of which education is one, and of the need not to measure all outputs or services in monetary terms. The conclusion I draw from my varied and rich experiences with directors of the LSE is constant and unwavering: that in modern institutions—and for all the pressures of structure, convention, budget and time—leadership, the character, vision and commitment of the person at the top, is of great importance. It may be hard to define, but you quickly notice, whether you are a student, a porter or a professor, if it is not there. And in that regard LSE has been, and remains, truly fortunate.
Post-hegemony and US dominance

It is against this background that I turn to my specific topic, ‘International relations in a post-hegemonic world’. The topic, and the term ‘post-hegemonic’, I interpret to three ends: first, to reflect upon US power and the difficulties into which US unilateralism has run in recent years; second, to reflect on the discipline of International Relations (IR) itself, and the receding within it of the theoretical and disciplinary dominance of IR by one intellectually hegemonic paradigm, namely state-centred realism; third—in a normative vein, and picking up on the theme of my inaugural lecture two decades ago—to reflect on the vertebral preoccupation of my whole work, namely internationalism. This third concern involves examining how each of the three aspirant conceptions of internationalism has, in its own way, lost credibility and coherence over the past 20 years, even as the world itself has become globalized, and even as—itself a great source of pleasure and encouragement to me—political theory, sociology and IR themselves have produced much new work, of vision and intellectual coherence, on themes of internationalism, cosmopolitanism and world citizenship.

First, then, I turn to the future of American power—or, as those who propagate it in Washington, perhaps too happily, choose to term it, of the American ‘empire’. In this presidential election year, there is great interest across the world in the United States. Never since I was a schoolboy in the early 1960s, when Kennedy and Nixon were vying for office, do I recall such interest in, such enthusiasm about US politics, as if the world wants a friendlier and more open America. The debate on US power has quite a long pedigree. It was de Tocqueville who, in the early nineteenth century, anticipated a future dominated by the two continental states of Russia and America, and the Time magazine editor Henry Luce who in 1941, on the eve of America’s decisive entry into both the Pacific and the European wars, predicted ‘the American century’. Since then there has been no shortage of people who, from the rise of the USSR’s space programme in the 1950s, through the Third World revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s in Vietnam, Iran and elsewhere, to the emergence of Japan, Europe and now China as major economic powers, have predicted that US dominance, predominance, hegemony or, in more recent, post-Cold War terms, ‘unipolarity’, is ebbing away.

That one day the United States’ control of, and dominance over, the world will lessen is indisputable; it is less clear whether another power will emerge in the foreseeable future that is equal to it, or able to rival it, on the world stage, as the USSR did for four decades, albeit from a position of overall weakness. A world of one dominant and several medium powers seems more probable; a state of affairs that I have called ‘contested unipolarity’. America is and will remain number one, though there are many who argue otherwise. Paul Kennedy’s famous 1988 book *The rise and decline of the great powers*, in which he talked of ‘imperial overstretch’, of the mismatch of political and strategic goals with economic and, not least, fiscal, reality, set the scene for a whole range of such works, among which recent examples would include the work of the historical sociologist Michael Mann, *The incoherent...*
empire, and After Suez by the veteran Guardian columnist Martin Woollacott, not to mention the more meta-Hegelian speculations of Tony Negri and Michael Hardt’s Empire or the Islamist triumphalism of Al-Qaeda and its associates and imitators. Meanwhile the financial press has, in recent months, been replete with stories of the US mortgage crisis, of the long-term dangers of the current account deficit, of the dollar ‘overhang’. In the Gulf states, major investors are leaving the dollar, as they left the pound sterling in 1967. In August 2007 total holdings of US long-term securities fell by $69.3 billion, a historical record. More recently, Presidents Chavez of Venezuela and Ahmadinejad of Iran have been hailing the end of the dollar as a global currency.

At a recent seminar in our department Professor Robert Singh of Birkbeck College, London, co-author of a forthcoming book, After Bush, explained why he is not convinced by these arguments and, in a set of crisp summaries of the main points in dispute, laid out the alternative view. First, historical perspective: we have been here before, not least in the late 1980s; yet in the 1990s, be it in military expenditure, international influence, pop culture or information technology, the United States ran further ahead of all its rivals. Second, hard power: the United States has by far the largest military budget and capability, and continues to have the strongest and most dynamic economy, of any state in the world, accounting even today for 20 per cent of world output. It has a per capita income of around $40,000, compared to a corresponding Chinese figure of $2,300. Third, international influence: the United States has treaties with no fewer than 84 countries, and of the total of 200 in the world no more than five—Korea, Iran, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela—are outright enemies. Moreover—and fourth—while US influence has certainly been battered in recent years, be it in the Middle East, Europe or Latin America, it remains resilient and capable of recovering ground, as the initiatives of French President Nicolas Sarkozy indicate. Fifth, the major rivals the United States faces are much weaker than they appear: Russian military power is exaggerated, while the economy and social fabric of China, not to mention its political system, face increased strain. Sixth, for all the hostility to the United States over Iraq, or Guantánamo, people around the world continue to admire and desire aspects of the American way of life, and, not least, demonstrate in large numbers their desire to live there. Finally, and perhaps of greatest importance, there is no evident wish in the United States, either in the political elite in Washington, or in the Democratic party, or in the nation as a whole, to abandon US primacy and exceptionalism. However welcome the new tone of US politics may be, the programmes of the main candidates continue to assume US dominance, and—presumably mirroring the outlook of the voters—show scant interest in, or even awareness of, the need for diplomacy and working with international institutions. The new president of 2009 will alter existing policies only to a degree. Whether unilaterally or multilaterally, Washington will continue to want to lead, if not control, the world.

2 Anatol Lieven, ‘Relearning the art of diplomacy: most candidates have no idea what it involves’, The Nation, 19 Nov. 2007.
At the same time, the back and forth of this debate may serve to obscure other, perhaps more intractable, questions. First, what will be the impact on the US economy, and on the world economy as a whole, of the US campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan? In a world where politics and economics are said to be closely intertwined, there seems so far remarkably little interconnection here. Four decades ago, the Vietnam War was a major factor in the decline of the dollar and the rise of interdependence. That today’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan consume vast amounts of money, and will continue to do so, and greatly reduce US credibility, is evident; yet to date their economic impact seems to be very small. The crisis in confidence in the US financial system is a result of mortgage and trade figures, not of Iraq. The spread of inflation and in particular the rise in the price of oil reflect market conditions, notably Chinese demand and a shortage of refining capacity, not the reduction in Iraqi oil exports or the military and civilian costs of operations there.

Second, why has it taken the United States so long to recognize the crisis in its involvement in Iraq? Those working with the US and British forces there knew from the spring of 2004 that the stabilization of Iraq would not work, and from the latter part of 2005 there were many in Congress, including Republicans with close ties to the military such as Senator John Murtha, as well as combat personnel in Iraq, who were speaking out on the disaster in that country. Great powers are notoriously unable to face up to reality—as the US demonstrated in respect of the Iranian revolution in 1978–9, and the USSR in respect of the erosion of its position in Eastern Europe in the latter part of the 1980s—but, after all the reports, congressional debates, criticisms, ‘surges’ and so forth, the United States today is just as bogged down, and just as lacking in any coherent strategy, political, diplomatic or military, as it was in 2004 or 2005.

Third, how can it be that a major power that has embarked on war with two Middle Eastern states, Afghanistan and Iraq, and is now contemplating a third, with Iran, has almost no one at decision-making levels with expertise or experience in, and on, these countries? The evidence available suggests that those specialists on Iraq and Iran who work in Washington or elsewhere in the United States have been systematically marginalized from policy discussions, their place taken by a motley gang of irresponsible and often corrupt political exiles, ‘terrorism’ experts, ‘security types’ and other mountebanks. Most of those who pontificate about Iran in the United States these days have never been there, and could not write a newspaper article, let alone an academic essay, on the history, culture or politics of that country.

Finally, there is a question that goes to the heart not only of recent US policy in the Middle East, but of the very character and sources of US foreign policy and decision-making itself. It is a question so obvious, if not simple, that it is often overlooked in the welter of polemic and self-justification that besets the story: namely, why did George Bush decide to invade Iraq in the first place? The deception over ‘weapons of mass destruction’ and subsequent policy blunders have left this question unanswered and usually unasked, yet the closer one gets to it, the less clear the reasons are. The standard general theories, whether of the ‘military–
industrial complex’, ‘US imperialism’ or ‘war against terrorism’ variety, do not explain what happened. Many writers have offered immediate, more specific and single factor analyses, ranging from the Saudi Arabian influence to ‘oil’, by way of the Evangelical Christians, the Israeli lobby, neo-conservative bellicosity after 9/11 and the simple desire of George Bush Junior to ‘finish the job’ of 1991 and to avenge a supposed assassination attempt on his father by Saddam Hussein in Kuwait in 1993. The best immediate answer may be some variant of ‘all of the above’, but, if the full verdict of history ever does come in, it will involve an analysis that is both theoretically and empirically grounded. Such a verdict will also be greatly affected by how this conflict ends, neither the form nor the timescale of which can at present be anticipated.

From this general discussion of a contemporary analytical issue I would seek to draw one or two broader methodological and disciplinary lessons. First, no decisive, or proximate, answers to these questions about the mysteries of US empire, and the question of US decline, are ever likely to become available to us, such is the uncertain, qualitative and necessarily indeterminate nature of much social science: the origins of the First World War remain as much as ever a matter of academic dispute. At the same time, the issue of US hegemony suggests, and I hope illustrates, that in regard to many questions of undoubted importance in the world today, academic study cannot, and should not, aspire to a rigid, positivist concept of what is scientific. Faced with the naive quantitative drumbeat in social science, including IR, let us not forget that natural science itself does not follow this model, as those who know chemistry and other sciences from within, such as Karl Popper, Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn, have shown so well. All knowledge, whether natural or social science, proceeds by a combination of technical skills, precise information, comparison, hunch and—very importantly—good judgement. In this sense we must recall, for IR as for all social sciences, the argument of the great American sociologist C. Wright Mills in his classic *The sociological imagination* that sociology, and by extension all social sciences, is in the end a ‘craft’. Crafts require skill and training, but there is something more than that. Although today’s intellectual and professional conformism, and risk-averse intellectual culture, marginalize it, social science as much as any other field of investigation involves imagination and defiance of convention: it was Einstein who once observed that he was not any more intelligent than anyone else, just more curious.

3 Ironically, my first ever visit to the LSE Senior Common Room was in the early 1970s, when I was working for the publishing house Verso, to lunch with the philosophers of science Imre Lakatos and Paul Feyerabend. I had been assigned the manuscript of Feyerabend’s book *Against method* to edit: as it contained footnotes in Latin (these being related to his demonstration of how Galileo came to the right conclusions but faked his evidence) and I had a classical education, I was given the task of preparing the text for publication, an unforgettable educational experience in itself. Needless to say, I disclaim all responsibility for the anarchistic theory of knowledge Feyerabend proposes, or for the remarkable success this book later had. It was a matter of some distress to me that, late in life, my ever-ebullient and unpredictable colleague Susan Strange ‘discovered’ Feyerabend. On a more positive note, I found that my years as an editor with Verso served me well as training in research supervision, and in the necessary leads and, even more, lags of such a relationship. Long before arriving at LSE I had experienced the practice of authors who, after delivering an almost complete first draft, then disappear for long periods, extensively and obsessively rewrite and, in some cases, never reappear at all.
Post-hegemony and IR as a discipline

My view of IR is resolutely loyal, even traditional, in so far as it concerns what we have taught at LSE, which we inherited from an earlier, eccentric but inspirational, generation of teachers. I retain great respect for the core curriculum as established some decades ago and would hope that, whatever fashions and new issues arise, no student will complete a BSc or an MSc in our department without familiarity with the core of the subject as we have long taught it, any more than a student of language should be ignorant of grammar, or a mathematician be ignorant of algebra and calculus. This core would include a knowledge of the history of the international system and acquaintance with the main theoretical schools, with concepts of strategy and security, and with what we term ‘foreign policy analysis’, that is, the study of those factors, domestic and external, that shape foreign policy itself. I would also hope that those students who graduate from LSE would recognize and explore a range of normative issues, relating to justice, human rights, the conduct of war and economic development, that form the other core of the subject, parallel to the analytic issues we teach.

Much of the teaching in our department in past decades has been influenced by what is termed ‘the English School’, a form of state-centred approach that parallels the pure power politics of North American orthodoxy but is tempered by some recognition of the role of international law and of international institutions and norms, and, most importantly, by some sense that the international system is not just a zone of unrelenting and unchangeable conflict, but is liable to change, reform and long-term improvement. It is, in other words, a cautiously liberal view of international relations. I have major differences with adherents of the English School, not least their view of history, their rather benign view of the ‘expansion’ of international society and their concept of the ‘state’, but I recognize, and warmly support, their definition of the field and of the issues, and concepts, we should be teaching and discussing.

Realism, in its power-political US sense or in the ‘English School’ variant taught at LSE, was for decades the dominant, ‘hegemonic’, paradigm within the discipline. In some ways each variant has, in the harsher world of this century, enjoyed a comeback. Yet, while I find some of the alternatives to realism to be unconvincing and too vague, promissory notes without theoretical, historical or empirical purchase, I would argue for a commitment to an intellectual field that is no longer dominated, or hegemonized, by these realisms. In my own theoretical work at LSE I have tried to shift the debate in at least three major respects. First, influenced by what we can term international political sociology, I have argued that we need to replace the vision of history, and the concept of the state, espoused by realism with one broadly derived from Marx and Weber, even while, in the face of alternative trends that deny the relevance of the state or claim that all is swept aside in the carnivals of globalization, I would want to reiterate that the state cannot be marginalized or dispensed with as a category.

As for history, we must acknowledge the insight of sociologists and historians such as Eric Hobsbawm in his work on the last two centuries and see the ideologies...
and conflicts of the international states-system, and indeed the states themselves, as radically distinct from those that preceded it. I am a strong supporter of what Karl Polanyi, in his work on the historicity of markets, termed ‘The Great Transformation’, or of what Ernest Gellner, in the theoretical vernacular that was his trademark, referred to as ‘The Big Ditch’. Such an approach can have many applications, of which I shall briefly mention two. First, in our study of international institutions, such as the UN or the EU, we should step aside from a juridical or institutional perspective, which looks only at the formal structures, and remain guarded about any claims as to the real world application of such concepts (desirable though they may be) as ‘supranationality’. Second, in looking at the spread of radical Islamist ideas and of armed Islamist groups, while we can indeed recognize how ideas and movements cross frontiers, we should continue to see them in their modern, and state-dominated, context: the ideas of radical Islam, be they the ‘Islamic government’ of Ayatollah Khomeini, or the ‘jihad against crusaders’ of Osama bin Laden, are modern ideas, focused on the attainment and retention of control over states, even as the activity of each, and the loyalty of most of their followers, remains concentrated on states. Even in regard to terrorism, while some is transnational in aspiration and recruitment, most is confined to a single state: ‘terrorism in one country’, as it were.

In this context of an IR reconfigured by concerns and concepts of international historical sociology, I would propose for current and continuing research and teaching four areas of innovative—I would say ‘post-hegemonic’—focus. The first centres on the crucial importance of gender in all matters international and sociological. IR was one of the last social sciences to address the issue of gender, and it is to the LSE’s credit that the first taught option on this subject in the world, arising out of a conference held by the International Relations Department in 1988, was taught in this School. In transferring to IR the perception of feminist writing in history, politics, economics, law or sociology, I have argued that there is no process within international or transnational relations—not war or trade, not diplomacy or human rights, not social movements, religion or civil society, not international law or migration, not, for sure, globalization in its manifold forms—that does not have a gendered dimension.

This eminently falsifiable, indeed Popperian, insight may one day be refuted, but it has stood undefeated for two decades now. To take one specific example, particularly notable in Spain with its large Latin American, Arab and Filipino immigrant communities: when women transmit their remittances back home, they send money only to other women—an aspect of globalization that merits much more attention as it shapes the transfer of billions of pounds from North to South every year. It is also high time that more attention was paid to, and more protest registered at, the highly gendered and discriminatory import of two now widespread if contrasted processes: the ‘war on terror’ and the counterpoised jihad; and the spread of the internet. In stark terms, we can say that all that led up to 9/11, and even more all that has followed it, has involved a pervasive, violent and deeply conservative remasculinization of public space, activity and imagery.
International relations in a post-hegemonic age

across the world, be it in the strutting conceit of George Bush, Donald Rumsfeld or Arnold Schwarzenegger, or in the menacing, ranting, rifle-toting culture of Osama bin Laden, Moqtada al Sadr, Hamas, Hezbollah and all the other bearded and bloodthirsty patriarchs whom recent years have thrown up. Not only are there, on both sides, powerful forces that link their respective security policies to the resubordination and silencing of women, but the very nature of these conflicts, and the fear they instil, have served to drive women out of public space and public view.

As for the internet, potentially emancipatory instrument as it is, its gendered consequences, like its consequences for correct writing, orthography and decency of address, have, given a complete lack of political or social authority in this field, led to a normative chaos, and a moral degeneration of striking proportions, one that far too few politicians identify or oppose. In its brutalist portrayal of sexual and human relations, the internet has led to a debasement of human values, of genuine sensuality, of privacy, of respect for others and of decency unparalleled since the barbarian invasions of centuries ago, the gendered dimensions of which have yet to be recognized.

The second area to which I would draw attention is the importance of social revolutions in the history and formation of the international system. One of my central arguments in IR has been that, alongside war and security studies, to which IR has long paid attention, we need also to see the central importance of revolutions in shaping the modern system, not only in the twentieth century, but in the three centuries that preceded it. The evolution of the modern system has been punctuated by the incidence and spread of revolutions, and the reactions, or counter-revolutions, they occasion, be this in 1648, 1789, 1848, 1917 or the regular recurrence of revolutions in the penultimate years of each decade of the twentieth century: China in 1949, Cuba in 1959, Libya in 1969, Iran and Nicaragua in 1979, and—as much a revolution as any that preceded it—the re-emergence of democracy in Eastern Europe in 1989. Coherent as my argument has been, and though it has been repeated high and low, proclaimed to the whole world, it has made little or no impact on the study of international relations in either Europe or the United States; and the book I wrote on the subject, in (appropriately) 1999, passed serenely into oblivion. Indeed, I note with interest, and just a mite of chagrin, that in his latest work, on the forces that shaped the twentieth century, Professor Niall Ferguson singles out three, among which social unrest or revolution demonstrably do not figure. Whether the academic study of world history in the twenty-first century will as easily neglect social upheaval and revolt as its counterpart in the twentieth century is, however, another matter: news from Baghdad, Kabul, Islamabad and quite a few other places suggests otherwise.

The third area of special concern is that of culture and language. On this matter, we in IR have failed to do our job: we have left the field open to simplifiers, pernicious in consequence if not in intent, like Samuel Huntington. Too often work on culture, and on the alleged incidence of cultural differences, is

4 This section summarizes my *Revolution and world politics* and a set of related case-studies.
monopolized by theorists—theologians, philosophers, political theorists—whose intentions are generous, often tolerant, but who actually know very little about the countries or issues they are talking about. We need a study of culture, in its effects on foreign policy, on international institutions, on globalization, that is grounded in knowledge of particular societies, religions and political contexts, and that, drawing precisely from the insights of political sociology, gets away from the abstractions that so many deploy in regard to this field.

In much of contemporary academic life, literature apart, the theoretical and comparative study of language, and its social—and, may I stress, international and globalized—context, is neglected. This is in part, I would suggest, because of the theoretical biases emanating from the mistakenly hegemonic field of economics; but it also reflects the very blindness and deafness of those in the supposedly monolingual Anglo-Saxon universe towards the rest of humanity. The boom in ‘cultural studies’ has been, in large measure, monolingual. To study social behaviour within a country, not least in regard to social change or migration, to study globalization without taking into account the manifold schisms, interactions and sociolinguistics that accompany this process, is a major and solipsist failing of the university system in the western world. Universities like LSE do teach languages as such; but teaching language itself, without an associated theoretical commitment, is like teaching shopping without teaching economics, or balloting techniques without democratic theory. Nowhere, indeed, is the naivety and narrow-mindedness of imperial hegemony, in its cultural dimension, more evident. Here, and in tribute to the special intellectual qualities of the nation in whose midst we work, the English, I would put in a plea for the restoration, at the heart of the social sciences, of the study of this primary field of human activity.

Finally, and on a much more pessimistic and, in an old IR sense, ‘realist’ note, I would urge IR to pay attention—much more attention than it does—to the dark side, the hidden, illegal, dimension, of globalization. There are times when, looking at the literature on global civil society, international institutions, mechanisms of regulation, I feel as if we are looking only at one side of the story, at what, by analogy, would be the bright side of the moon. It is a commonplace of journalistic reporting that in today’s world criminals, of all classes and nations, pay no heed to frontiers. The modern state, even when it is not itself permeated with corruption and falsification (and this is true of around three-quarters of the states in the world), has to an alarming degree lost control of movements across its borders. No one knows how much of the money and goods (including arms), how many of the people, moving across the world are undocumented, illegal, derived

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5 My own sense of concern, if not alarm, about this comes, in particular, from a PhD I supervised by Dr Padideh Tosti at LSE on the international dimensions of the drugs trade (‘Licit and illicit sectors’, 2006): I would like to express my particular gratitude to her here on this matter. Among writers who have addressed this question are the journalist Misha Glenny, in *Mafia: crime without frontiers* (London: Bodley Head, 2008); Peadar Kirby, in *Vulnerability and violence: the impact of globalisation* (London: Pluto, 2006); Moses Naim, in *Illicit: how smugglers, traffickers and copycats are hijacking the global economy* (New York: Doubleday, 2003); and Michael Woodiwiss, in *Gangster capitalism: the United States and the rise of global organized crime* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2005). The annual reports of Transparency International are also important in this regard.
International relations in a post-hegemonic age

from and/or used to promote corruption and illegal practices. And here we need to recognize, loudly and with full responsibility, that none of this narcotrafficking, money laundering, exploitation of women and the rest would exist if it were not for the demand which the rich countries, ‘our’ supposedly superior West, exhibits for such goods and services. I would, moreover, suggest that such activity is not separate from, or marginal to, the workings of our societies and economies; it is integral to it, to repeat, as much as the dark side of the moon is to the bright side: we are looking, in some inchoate and only episodically visible way, at the modern equivalent of the slave trade in the Atlantic economies of the eighteenth century, something that is essential to the circulation of goods, services and people, and which underpins, to an alarming degree, the prosperity of the richer countries.

Cosmopolis postponed

The third dimension of my ‘post-hegemonic’ agenda comprises the issue on which I have been working in recent years in a series of exploratory essays, and which formed the subject of my inaugural lecture here two decades ago, namely internationalism. By ‘internationalism’ I mean a loose set of ideas, as inchoate as their converse, nationalism, which have nonetheless formed much thinking on international matters these two or three centuries past, and which are much in evidence in the world of today; a set of ideas founded on a belief that the world is becoming more and more integrated and united, a belief that this objective process is accompanied by a growing sense of international belonging, identity, responsibility, even citizenship—and, most important, that these two processes, and their interaction, are broadly speaking to be desired, ‘a good thing’.

Here, however, we come to the link with ‘hegemony’ and ‘post-hegemony’, for in my 1987 lecture I distinguished three kinds of internationalism, each exhibiting the modular themes mentioned above: liberal internationalism, a vision broadly derived from Kant, which stresses international institutions and law, and which seeks over time to improve the world by the actions of states, civil society and individuals; a revolutionary internationalism, derived from Marx and Lenin, that seeks to unite the world, and abolish capitalism and war, through social upheaval and transformation; and what I then termed ‘hegemonic’ internationalism, which can also be called imperialism, or ‘empire’, the unification and homogenization of the world through the domination of one state, economy and culture.

Twenty years on, I would broadly repeat and claim validity for this analytical or at least organizing idea, loose as it is. My own sketchy suggestions and insights of 1988 have, moreover, been developed and reinforced, to a degree I could never have imagined, by authors such as Andrew Linklater, Kimberley Hutchings, Chris

6 See Global illicit sectors: an analysis of drugs in international relations (December 2006).
7 Here once again I would cite the particular, globally unique, qualities of the LSE as a research centre, recalling a student from a Central Asian state who came to see me one day and then produced from his inner pocket a list of what it cost, in his country, to buy each of the main ministries in the government, denominated in US dollars.
8 Here Wittgenstein’s term ‘cluster-concept’ may be apposite. A similar usage, with recently enriching consequences in the work of my colleague Richard Layard, may be applied to the term ‘happiness’.
Brown, Mervyn Frost and Martin Shaw in IR, and more broadly by, among others, Tony Giddens, Mary Kaldor, David Held, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Pico Ayer, Stephen Toulmin, Ulrich Beck, Arjin Appadurai and Brian Barry. As for the three variants of internationalism, the balance sheet is a mixed one. Of hegemonic internationalism, incarnated these two decades past in the US aspiration to unipolarity and global dominance since the end of the Cold War, little needs to be added to what has been said above: it has inevitably overreached itself, and provoked a backlash, one that, however, comes as much from other, state-centric, aspirants to regional hegemony (Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela, Brazil) as from the spread of other, non-state, alternatives.

For its part, liberal internationalism has advanced in the expansion and formalization of the European Union: by all accounts, even the most modest, an extraordinary achievement which has, with the incorporation of ten new members in 2005, brought most of Europe to peace for the first time in a thousand years. Some advances in international law, notably the waiving of immunity for former heads of state,9 the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the extension of international law to cover gender crimes in war, reinforce this development. In some respects, too, technological advance, above all the opportunities for international communication, in an instant manner and with no costs, offered by the internet, and the construction of virtual communities and networks, have broadened the potential of global community and construction of shared values. The growth of multiethnic cities, such as London, Berlin, Los Angeles and Barcelona, can also be viewed through a liberal internationalist and multicultural lens.

Liberal internationalism has, however, encountered many problems as globalization has proceeded: many, indeed most, influential states have not ratified the ICC, and many, indeed most, do not permit free exchange of information. The diminished political authority, and resistance to democratic and managerial reform, of institutions such as the UN and the EU, the failure of radical and imaginative changes, and the wilting of other institutions, such as the OSCE, suggests that state, national, interests have become stronger. Equally, the rise of nationalism, of identity politics, of the ‘securitization’ of issues of rights, free speech, migration, travel, even taking cash out of the bank or buying a house, marks an erosion of the liberal internationalist vision. Above all, a question that remains brutally and dangerously unresolved is the fate of the most important, and once most eagerly heralded, form of liberal internationalist action in promotion of human rights and of peace, namely humanitarian intervention: what was a dominant hope of the 1990s has now become the nightmare of Iraq and of Afghanistan. The ‘war on terror’ that exploded after 2001 has also driven backwards a commitment to liberal internationalism, to international law, to respect for the rules and norms of

9 The most unforgettable moment in my LSE lecturing career was on a Monday morning in October 1998 when I informed the students on IR410, the MSc core course, gathered in the Hong Kong theatre, most of whom evidently paid to heed to news over the weekend, of the arrest in London on the previous Saturday of former Chilean dictator General Pinochet. This announcement was greeted with cheers, waving of notepads and, in the person of one Caribbean woman student in the front row, a spontaneous outburst of dancing.
war, to global community, to diplomacy, even as Al-Qaeda and its imitators and supporters preach, to a degree rarely seen in modern times, forms of particularism, rejection of universal norms, and hatred of the ‘other’. Here we encounter, and not for the first time, the problem which Hegel termed that of ‘Minerva’s Owl’, the bird of wisdom that takes flight only at the setting of the sun: for while academic colleagues, myself in a minor vein included, have continued to posit, argue for, imagine forms of international collaboration, citizenship and commitment, not least through the reform of existing institutions, the course of world events has turned strongly in the other direction, as particularist interests, whether those of states, old hegemons or aspirant new ones, have reasserted their dominance and laid claim to exclusive prerogatives, not only in regard to new instruments of international law, such as the ICC, but in regard to the flow of investments and property rights in the world economy, and, of supreme concern to us all, in the world of values.

It would, however, be mistaken to assume that the third form of internationalism, the revolutionary, has had a better record. Certainly we have seen, after a dormant few years in the 1990s, the re-emergence, which can be dated to the election of President Chavez in Venezuela in 1998 and the Seattle protests against the WTO in 1999, of (in most cases) familiar forms of radical internationalism, be this in the Global Justice Movement originating in Porto Alegre, or in the collaboration, in policy and in symbolism, of a new coalition of radical states, including Venezuela, Bolivia and Iran, with Cuba in a supporting role. Enthusiastic, clamorous and global as this movement is, it nonetheless exhibits major flaws, some of them all too familiar from earlier chapters in the history of revolutionary internationalism, above all that of the communist movement: a preference for rhetoric, and rhetorical policies, over considered action or preparation; an elision of what are undoubtedly the enthusiasms of non-state and social actors with the agenda, and manipulations, of states; a presentation of aims and activities under the new term ‘resistance’, a catch-all that too often tends to confuse trends that are emancipatory with those of an authoritarian social agenda. Recent developments in the field of organized transnational violence, above all the spread of Al-Qaeda and its apparently non-state, revolutionary, militancy, show that not all that is revolutionary and internationalist is desirable, or contributes to the goals of peace and equality in the contemporary world.

The paradoxical conclusion of these developments, as of the spread of new and zero-cost forms of communication through the internet, is that while new forms of international cooperation and community may be emerging, the very forces that shape them are also yielding a different outcome. Once again, the internationalist, cosmopolitan vision that has repeatedly come into view over the past two centuries has been blocked, countered and to a considerable degree superseded by contrary, particularist, trends. A truly internationalist order, in which diversity of cultures, and plurality of political communities, are inserted within a global ethical, institutional and social order, remains on the agenda, a project that may one day be realized; but there is little in the contemporary world to lead us to
believe that this is, in any continent, a proximate possibility. There are islands of progress, but this is not sufficient: cosmopolis in one country is not an option.

**Conclusion**

I have made some observations in this article about the state of social science, the state of the world and the state of IR, taking as an initial ordering question the nature of the ‘post-hegemonic’ situation in regard to each. In so doing, I have referred back to 1988 and the publication in this journal of my inaugural lecture on internationalism. There are, however, other, earlier, ‘8’ dates whose anniversaries may be deemed to fall this year, to which I would refer and whose legacy, broadly and critically interpreted and recuperated, I would also wish to invoke.

One is 1968, the year of youth and student revolt the world over, a movement in which I was an active, enthusiastic and rather optimistic participant. It has become fashionable to denounce, as it were ‘slag off’, 1968, as witness the speeches of Tony Blair and Nicolas Sarkozy, and, with some rhetorical stretch, to see it as the origin of many contemporary evils. Certainly there were negative features. Yet for those of us who participated in those events, and shared their hopes, there also remained an intellectual legacy that has, in time, prove itself to have practical and broadly beneficial consequences. First, evident in the campaigns and slogans of the time was an interest in, and commitment to, a worldwide campaign of emancipation and freedom, be it from colonial rule, imperialism or authoritarian communist dictatorship; an internationalist vision, of politics, culture, language and reference, that has, in my case at least, been a central theme of my later work, including as a professor at LSE. Second, 1968 was a time of great intellectual fervour, of exploring alternative ideas of social organization, of psychoanalysis, of literary and musical experimentation, of envisioning an alternative world: the core of any academic institution, and of its inner life, is exactly that intellectual excitement and curiosity, light years away from the tedious wastelands of the managerial and supposedly ‘scientific’ social science that besets us today. This was a time when we read as widely as we could, when artists talked of ideas, not saleroom prices; a time before public discourse was dominated by footballers, chat show hosts, crown princes, architects and others, the throng of airheads, mopheads and mountebanks who now deem to determine public discourse.

Nineteen sixty-eight was, if it was anything, a challenge to the acceptance of the given, of the traditional, the established: a revolt in political and social terms, and, in intellectual terms, a challenging of the fixity, the essentialism, of categories, whether of state or class, of authority or religion, or of family, identity, gender, location. In this vein, I would in particular mention those social scientists who have made it their business to identify and critique the inevitability, the givenness, the fated necessity of social and political forms, and single them out for special praise: the critics of the economy, of political institutions, of gender and the family, of international relations; above all—and please let us not be swayed on this—of superstition, religion and all associated forms of fiction and mumbo-
International relations in a post-hegemonic age

jumbo masquerading as destiny. In particular let me mention six people whom we should honour: Socrates, Ibn Khaldun, Antonio Gramsci, Karl Polanyi, Simone de Beauvoir and our own late colleague Ernest Gellner, the finest intellectual leader to teach at LSE in my time at the School.

Without stretching the temporal pattern too much, I wish to end this article with a short invocation of another ‘8’: 1848, the year when revolt and intellectual upsurge spread across Europe. Of all the works published in that year, none has had greater influence than Marx and Engels’, The Manifesto of the Communist Party, to give it its correct title: a work that certainly posited an alternative world, as it turned out an unattainable and in many ways undesirable one, but which also contained vivid passages on the spread of capitalism worldwide, knocking down all ‘Chinese walls’ in its way, that sound like publicity for contemporary globalization. Here I wish to draw attention only to the final words of the Manifesto, and to a curious, but revelatory, mistranslation which occurred in the first Mandarin Chinese version of 1910, carried out by Chinese students studying in Japan. Instead of the famous, and often misunderstood, words, ‘Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains’, this Chinese version read ‘Scholars of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your shame.’ 10 As in a previous lecture a decade or so ago, 11 I can think of no better words with which to conclude.

10 This from a lecture I attended in my third year as an undergraduate at Oxford during the academic year 1966/7 by Professor Conrad Brandt, an American specialist on Chinese politics and author of Stalin’s failure in China. So far as I know, Professor Brandt never published this lecture, or the source of his story.