

[World] War makes the [World] State, and the [World] State makes [World] War (with apologies to Charles Tilly)¹

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[T]he nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary.

– Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 13 –

Introduction

The world is at war and has been since 1950. It encompasses and is aimed at the people of the world. Moreover, this *world* war is creating a *world* state, one whose outlines are emerging from the fog but whose final constitution will not be fully apparent for some decades or even centuries to come. To invoke the title of Dean Acheson's autobiography, we are "present at the creation." What, exactly, is being created by world war is not so very clear.

These might seem odd claims to make at this moment. War is in decline, major war obsolete, according to many. Wars have ended in Sri Lanka and are winding down in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and the Sudan (Syria remains uncertain and the Great Lakes region of Africa unresolved). None of these is anything like a world war. Those are not the wars of which I write here. Nor is this war anything like World War Two, which encompassed much of the world but had a clear beginning and ending and was conducted in defined spaces of

¹ Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-making," in C Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1975), p. 15. As this paper is, as yet, more of a thinkpiece than a scholarly article, it is not fully sourced. The paper develops a number of themes addressed in my earlier books and ongoing projects, but can be seen as a turn away from a strong focus on capitalist accumulation as a driving force in the global political economy to more emphasis on the joint accumulation of power and capital. In this respect, I lean somewhat toward the arguments of Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, *Capital as Power: A Study of Order and Creorder* (London: Routledge, 2009).

strategy and battle. Today's world war is different. It has been more than 60 years in the running, launched initially as the two superpowers struggled for world domination and extension of their spheres of influence, and continued since then. This war did not end with the collapse of the USSR, carried on since 1991 by the surviving superpower, the United States. under different names. Most recently, it was called the "Global War on Terror," but even then it was much more than just a war on terrorism. Indeed, this war has enmeshed many of the world's countries in a project of global state-building as much as global war-making. This war is as much about liberal peace as it is about liberal violence, and it is as much about rules as about rule.² This war is the kind of world war George Orwell had in mind in *Nineteen-Eighty Four*, in which he coined the dogma "War is Peace," one of Oceania's three ruling slogans.

As many historians and political scientists have pointed out, wars are important drivers of both technological change and social reorganization.³ That new technologies and tactics emerge from war is hardly surprising. Nor are the military origins of many civilian products and services, such as consumer electronics, biotechnology and communications networks. What is less often noted, however, is that war often has revolutionizing and revolutionary effects on societies and their internal organization, operation and practices. In fact, war may can even generate seemingly-contradictory social consequences, including broadened civil and political rights and freedoms,

² Nicholas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

³ Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

expansion of social service institutions such as education and public health, on the one hand, and expanding state functions, discipline and power, on the other. Once such changes occur, moreover, it is almost impossible to return to the *status quo ante bellum*, no matter what people might imagine, desire or demand.

The present world war—let us call it “World War Infinity” (WW ∞) to denote its seemingly total character across space and time—has effected such social transformations in the United States and across the world as a whole. These changes are usually summarized in the term “globalization” which, in turn, is attributed to the broadening and deepening of late-20th century capitalism, imperialism and Imperium.⁴ But capitalism does not spread by itself nor, for that matter, is it autonomous from the modern liberal state. Trade does not “follow the flag”; it is the “flag” that forces trade. And globalization, however it might be defined or disputed, has followed the American flag. It is a concomitant of WW ∞ and its survival requires that WW ∞ and its instruments of coercion be sustained and expanded.

Between the world-girdling infrastructures of war and the military-origin modalities of mobility and flows that facilitate global capitalism, yet another revolutionary transformation is taking place: creation of a world state. This is the consequence of the relative success of America’s project of world militarization, especially over the past 20 years. Over three broad stages (so far) of WW ∞ —roughly speaking Cold War I during the 1950s and 1960s, Cold

⁴ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *The Constitution of Imperium* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm, 2009).

War II during the 1980s, and the Global War on Terrorism during the first decade of the 21st century—a world congeries of notionally sovereign nation-states has become an increasingly singular bricolage of culturally-differentiated societies, yoked together by a “steel web” of economy and security. To be sure, the world is not now, or is ever likely to resemble, the sovereign state of canonical international relations theory, the teleological world state of Alexander Wendt’s musings,⁵ Dan Deudney’s “nuclear federalism”⁶ or the pacific federation of republics mapped out by Immanuel Kant. But even the Westphalian state was something of a hypocritical fiction, as made clear by Stephen Krasner,⁷ one approaching the theoretical ideal only during total war. Indeed, the future world state is something we can hardly imagine, let alone describe or name in words, but that is in the nature of such change: just as generals always fight the last war, so do we look to the past for models of the future. The error is to believe the future will fully recapitulate the past. Not everything remains the same.

The argument I present here proceeds in four steps. First, I summarize the transformative political, social and economic impacts of war on societies. Here, I draw primarily on the work of Siniša Malešvić, whose recent text, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, offers an admirable and coherent discussion of

⁵ Alexander Wendt, “Why a World State is Inevitable,” *European Journal of International Relations* 9, #4 (2003): 491-542.

⁶ Daniel Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, 2006).

⁷ Stephen R. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, 1999).

these matters.⁸ Second, I describe how American plans for world order, put in place at the end of World War II, failed to work as intended. To keep the train on the rails, the United States and its allies fell back on a series of ad hoc tactics that, after 1950, were articulated largely through instruments of war and militarization. Central to this process of war-making were the increasingly intertwined policies and practices of security and economy, which never constituted distinct spheres of action as is usually assumed. Third, I trace the rise and role of what is commonly called “neoliberalism” in facilitating the expansion of state mechanisms of rule and regulation, this taking place through a globalizing “civil society” of business associations and corporations, civic groups (religious and secular), and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations.⁹ Ironically, the “shrinking state” of neoliberal theory (or fantasy) has actually been growing, gaining social power and, like some monstrous amoeba, assimilating into its body the so-called private sector.¹⁰ Finally, I argue that the resulting globalized surveillance and regulatory systems are constructing a bureaucratized, governmental “steel web” in which all the world’s people are becoming enmeshed. The result, I argue in conclusion, is a “world state” germinated and cultivated by “world war.”

⁸ Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁹ Laurence McFalls, “Benevolent Dictatorship: The Formal Logic of Humanitarian Government,” pp. 317-34, in: Didier Fassin & Mariella Pandolfi (eds.), *Contemporary States of Emergency—The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

¹⁰ Shelley Hurt & Ronnie Lipschutz, “Bringing Politics Back In,” in: Shelley Hurt & Ronnie Lipschutz (eds.), *The Public-Private Hybridization of the 21st Century State* (forthcoming, 2012).

War-making and state-making

It is the policy of the United States to seek and support democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. In the world today, the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them. The goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.¹¹

The extraordinary technological and social impacts of war can hardly be overstated. Not only do wars overwrite the geopolitical landscape—in palimpsest fashion overwriting new boundaries, languages, and cultures on older ones—they also introduce different and new ways of living, doing, working and making, rearranging, reconstructing and redistributing relations among society's members, in ways that are often little less than revolutionary. Even as the world wars of the 20th century were enormously destructive of life, limb and property, they also acted as a major impetus to the development of new weapons and civilian products, giving rise to entire industries and infrastructures that had not existed *ante bellum*. Paradoxically, perhaps, even as total war imposed strict discipline on mobilized societies, it also played a central role in the creation and spread of civil and political rights, the practices of national self-determination and the rise of today's global human rights regime.

A brief scan of the past 200-odd years finds this proposition about war and rights repeated over and over. The war between the nascent United States and Great Britain gave birth to democracy. The Napoleonic Wars spread the

¹¹ U.S. National Security Strategy, 2006, p. 1.

concept and practices of citizenship that, although suppressed during much of the 19th century, were not forgotten, as evidenced in repeated uprisings. Were it not for the American Civil War, liberation of the slaves would have been put off for decades (as the long life of Jim Crow demonstrated). Were it not for the two world wars, autocratic European empires might have survived much longer and postponed decolonization to the end of the 20th century. World War One opened the “prison house of nations” and let to the vote for British and French workers. Were it not for the genocides of World War Two, it is unlikely that individual human rights would have become as recognized and widespread as they are today. That war also led to democracy in Germany and Japan and ultimately the creation of the European Union. Arguably, integration of U.S. armed forces and the Cold War were critical factors in launching the Civil Rights movement and the War in Vietnam played an important role in the emergence of a range of identity-based social movements. While WW∞ has undoubtedly imposed restrictions on individual freedoms and rights, in its absence, the telecommunications and color revolutions would probably not have flowered in formerly autocratic societies, much less democratic ones.

Paradoxically, however, this expansion of rights and freedoms does not displace state power; indeed, human rights and freedoms are possible only with a broadening and deepening of a state “social” power. As Thomas Hobbes made clear, without the authority and power of a sovereign, the individual in the state of nature is “free” but hardly in a position to enjoy her “freedom.” In particular, the granting, protection and exercise of human rights, especially

in the context of liberalization and democratization, depend on a state with authority, legitimacy and the police power to surveil and punish those who violate such rights. Moreover, the extension of new rights to individuals and groups previously denied them depends on the state's ability to legitimate and enforce observance of those rights. In other words, the very regimes of political and economic liberalism that are so highly-valued around the world for the freedoms they offer are not the result of natural human propensities to spontaneous liberation, as libertarian theories would have it. Rather, such regimes and rights are the very deliberate constructions of active, interventionist, *socially-powerful* states and institutions.

Wars that give rise to the broadening and deepening of the human rights are also mechanisms of state formation and state-building. Could the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1793) have had such revolutionary effects across Europe and the world had it been proclaimed in the Ile de France alone rather than across a large state unified through war? And would the unification of Germany and Italy or even Europe have been possible without war? In this light, as Roland Paris and others have pointed out, interventions by the West in countries experiencing civil war and social disorder are not merely meant to bring peace and freedom to them. Rather, peacemaking and peacekeeping missions seek to establish orderly and well-policed systems of rights and rules, maintained by governments with the power to make them work (not that such projects always work themselves; state-building is hard

work). Less government, fewer freedoms—Somalia illustrates the consequences of a minimalist state.¹²

To be sure, wars don't always lead to the expansion of political and social rights, and they can facilitate the metastasizing growth of state power and despotism. World War One gave rise to fascism and Nazism, and World War Two strengthened the repressive powers of the Soviet Union, enabling it to use force to dominate and control society within and satellites without for many decades. In the longer run, however, such forms of police power have proved a vanishing asset, undermining regime legitimacy, generating grievances, dissent and resistance, and often contributing to regime collapse.¹³ The states that democratized in the aftermath of the Cold War have often been relatively weak and had difficulty effectively guaranteeing those freedoms and liberties that “strong” states can regulate and protect.

Another feature of WW∞ commonly claimed central to the growth of human rights and freedoms has been the global deployment of electronic communications, new media and social networking over the past several decades. These are more a reflection of capitalist globalization than a cause of it—through compression of space and time, in Manuel Castell's phrasing¹⁴—but we must remember that the emergence of such communication tools and practices occurred in tandem with the expansion of intelligence-gathering

¹² Roland Paris, “International peacebuilding and the ‘mission civilisatrice’,” *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002): 637-656; McFalls, “Benevolent Dictatorship,” op. cit.

¹³ While freedoms and rights were constrained in Egypt under Hosni Mubarak, the uncertain state of rights and freedoms after his fall suggest that the new military government has only limited social power.

¹⁴ *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

capabilities and surveillance networks. Nor should we forget that, before the Internet was the Web, it was ARPANet, designed to survive nuclear war. Some might argue that PDAs, smartphones, heads-up displays and other semiconductor innovations originated in the civilian sector and were “spun on” to the military, but the underlying research, development and deployment were all birthed by the U.S. defense sector.¹⁵ Even widespread demands for democracy and rights have not been only on offer in the “marketplace of ideas,” they have been a staple of American strategic diplomacy and war propaganda for more than a century as well as the stuff of political rhetoric and promises for the past 50 years. Such notions are articulated even by autocratic governments seeking international approval.

In other words, state formation and state-building are not limited to peacetime practices and goals; war plays a critical role before, during and after. At the same time, peace does not always provide the basis for successful state-building, a caveat illustrated by the finding that countries in the process of democratization also tend to be highly prone to civil and social instability.¹⁶ What WW∞ has facilitated and even legitimated are myriad forms of American and European intervention in the domestic affairs and structures of notionally-sovereign states (including each other), usually in the name of peace and stability but frequently in the form of aid to militaries, police and

¹⁵ Jay Stowsky, “From Spin-off to Spin-on: Redefining the Military’s Role in Technology Development,” Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy, Working Paper 50, May 1991, at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0tf8v3c7#page-1> (accessed Oct. 2, 2011). See also Sheldon David Pollack, *War, Revenue, and State Building: Financing the Development of the American State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Lars-Erik Cederman, Simon Hug & Lutz F. Krebs, “Democratization and Civil War: Empirical Evidence,” *Journal of Peace Research* 47, #4 (July 2010):377-94.

state bureaucracies. As we shall see, even the “spin-off” of social welfare security and other state-like responsibilities to NGOs and corporations (usually called “privatization”), strongly encouraged by international development agencies and financial institutions, in the name of fiscal rectitude, also expand rather than diminish the social power of states. Through development assistance, loans surveillance and supervision, the associated instantiation of norms, rules and practices associated with liberal governance are melded into networks of state-like social power, extending from local spaces to global ones. All of this is part and parcel of WW ∞ , and contributes to the building of a world state.

Planning for global laissez-faire, getting global planning

How did this state of affairs come about? How is it that WW ∞ has continued for so long without being recognized as such? And why did world war become the means through which such broad transformations were sought and wrought? To fully comprehend the archeology of this process, we must apply Foucault’s method of genealogy, whose critical principle is the following:

The forces operating in history do not obey destiny or regulative mechanisms, but the destiny of the battle. They do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and their attention is not that of a conclusion, for they always appear through the singular randomness of events.... The world such as we are acquainted with it is not this ultimately simple configuration where events are reduced to accentuate their essential traits, their final meaning, or their initial and final value. On the contrary, it is a profusion of entangled events.¹⁷

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” pp. 351-69, in: Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), *The Essential Foucault* (New York: The New Press, 2004), p. 361.

In effect, argues Foucault, decisions, actions and events do not follow one another in an orderly, logical or planned fashion, even though they might appear that way in Whiggish retrospect.¹⁸ Long-term strategic plans, as carefully made and laid as they might appear in retrospect, fall victim to contingency in real time, leading to unanticipated consequences and to the strategic and tactical desires and responses of others who have made their own plans. In the real world, responding to such unexpected events means that planners are formulating and applying *ad hoc* tactics all the time, perhaps in keeping with broader strategic principles but generally designed as short-term attempts meant to bring things back to the desired path. But planners' goals are rarely achieved as hoped or intended, and outcomes are often quite different from what might have been envisioned by the plans' creators. The post-war plan for an Anglo-American led world order nicely illustrates these points.

In *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi observed that “laissez-faire was planned, planning was not,”¹⁹ referring to the fantasized freeing of markets during the 19th century and warning against repetition of that fantasy in the 20th (eventually attempted through “neo-liberalism”). His dictum could be applied, as well, to security policies and practices. In any event, the Bretton Woods agreements and institutions represented extensive and detailed planning designed to establish internationalized liberal markets,²⁰ but those

¹⁸ That is, in the Whiggish sense that “it must have happened this way by necessity.”

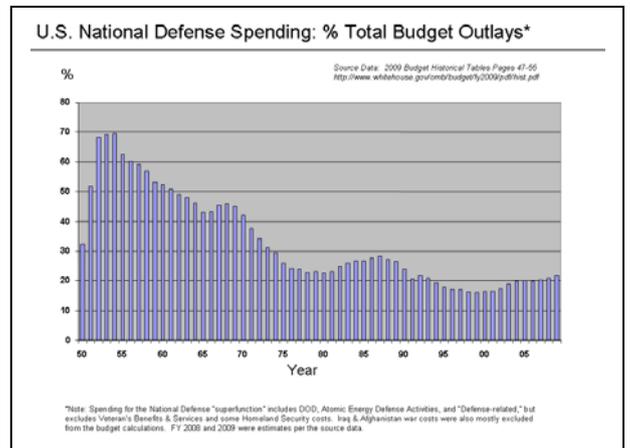
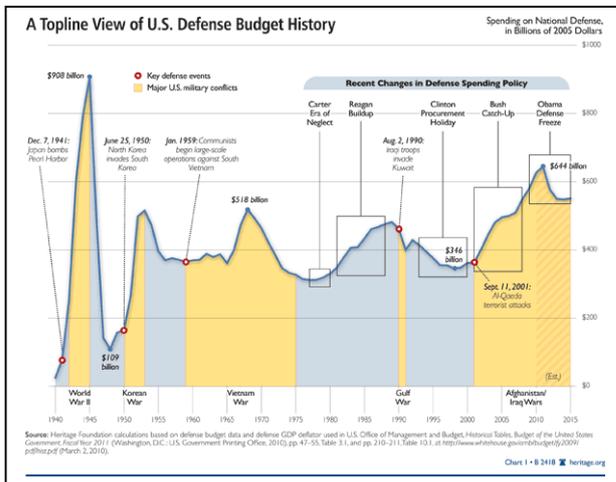
¹⁹ *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 2001; 2nd ed.), p. 147.

²⁰ John G. Ruggie called this “embedded liberalism,” reflecting the central role of planning in creating the Bretton Woods institutions.

arrangements did not even see the end of 1946 before an unplanned intervention was necessary, in the loan made to Britain after the unsuccessful attempt to return sterling to convertibility. The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan were similarly interventions never envisioned by the Bretton Woods institutions yet absolutely essential to keeping the overall “plan” close to the track. Indeed, it is probably safe to say—and notwithstanding the mythic version told to all political science undergraduates—that Bretton Woods *never* worked as designed or imagined. Only repeated “planning” allowed it to operate in ways that resembled the planners’ intentions. In the end, these interventions have led a long way from Bretton Woods.

If there was a point at which *ad hoc* “planning” came to dominate long-term strategy, it was with NSC-68 and the Korean War. Paul Nitze and his colleagues as much as urged the Truman Administration to ramp up defense spending in order to provide much-needed liquidity to America’s European and Asian allies—in quantities that even the Marshall Plan was unable to fully meet—so as to sustain foreign demand for U.S. goods. This represented the mix of security and economy required to sustain the “Free World.” Truman rejected NSC-68 out of hand, at least until June, 1950, when South Korea was invaded. Thereafter, the U.S. defense budget grew from \$12 to \$50 billion overnight, with the bulk of those funds going to rearm Europe rather than to fight the war in Asia. Truman recognized that domestic politics would not allow those levels of military spending without the continuing threat of world war, a game in which the Soviet Union proved a willing and robust collaborator.

The Korean conflict was broadly seen as the first skirmish of World War Three, so it became relatively straightforward to maintain war tensions at home and facilitate militarization abroad. Notwithstanding Eisenhower’s “New Look,” in 1953, wholesale reliance on nuclear weapons was not only risky, it could not justify high levels of military development and expenditure. Nuclear weapons were cheap—although defense against them was very costly—and the United States was not interested in giving them to its allies, who were not regarded as wholly trustworthy (atomic bombs to the Germans?). Only reliance on non-nuclear forces and planning for conventional war in Europe justified the expense, only deployment of U.S. troops and weapons abroad facilitated export and recycling of dollars—forcing America’s foreign customers to accept dependence on the reserve currency—and only foreign military aid for defense against Communism could pass muster with Congress.



In contrast to the Keynesian effects of high military spending levels during World War Two, however, large defense budgets since the 1950s have been insufficient to suppress or smooth out macroeconomic volatility in the United States and the world. Nonetheless, *reduction* of security-related expenditures, broadly defined, have often been critically-important in electorally-important places—Seattle, Silicon Valley and Los Angeles—and the political consequences of budget cuts have made both Presidents and Congress reluctant to liberate a “peace dividend.” Still, it is difficult to imagine that either the economic miracles of the 1950s and 1960s or the short, halcyon decade of gold-backed, fully-convertible European currencies would have been possible without the injection of almost \$5 trillion (2005\$) by the United States into the global economy between roughly 1950 and 1970.

By the end of that now-fabled era, the volume of dollars flowing abroad was so great—partly a consequence of financing the Vietnam War without corresponding domestic tax increases to pay for it—that inflationary pressures led to Nixon’s “closing the gold window” in 1971. The same forces provoked oil-producing countries, led by the Shah of Iran, to lobby for an increase in the price of oil, which the United States supported so that the Shah could purchase the American weapons required by the Nixon Doctrine.²¹ These increases later outstripped anything imagined by the White House and the world was flooded with (petro) dollars, further contributing to the virulent inflation of the 1970s,

²¹ See Franz Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power* (New York: Pantheon, 1974).

the extreme militarization of energy policy and, arguably, even the Carter-Reagan military buildup of the 1980s.

But there were other consequences, as well, arising from these events. First, notwithstanding major fluctuations in the exchange value of the dollar in currency markets, it became even more important in the international economy as the only source of adequate liquidity to finance global trade and speculation. The American government found itself largely freed from the fiscal discipline supposedly imposed by a limited gold supply, and the growing dollarization of the international economy fed speculation in both real and paper investments, enmeshing the formerly distinct economies of the “Free World” with each other and reducing their ability to act autonomously. That foreign creditors were only too willing to finance American debt, during the 1980s and the 2000s, was as much due to the absence of sufficient liquidity among other currencies and alternative stores of value as anything else. Notwithstanding many complaints about the massive dollar overhang now challenging the world, no one has yet dared to move away from the dollar for fear of the massive losses and hyper-inflationary consequences that might follow.²² There may be no alternative (TMBA), but no one wants to risk finding out if there is.

As repeated economic crises and burst bubbles have roiled the global economy, various G-number groups have been forced to engage in *ad hoc* planning, sometimes in concert and often individually, as illustrated by the

²² Note that the current purchasing power of the dollar is approximately 10% or less of what it was in 1950.

EU's efforts to "save" Greece. The result has not been the disentangling of national fiscal and monetary matters as might be hoped or expected but, rather, their further imbrication together as equity markets mirror each other, with massive institutional gains and losses every 24 hours, and the ripple effects of bank insolvencies, sovereign debt crises, investors' doubts and consumers' fears are felt around the globe.

More to the point, the massive increase in dollar-based securities and U.S. government obligations over the past few years might be regarded as a form of economic warfare on both allies and partners: deal with America on its terms or you'll get no deals at all. It might also be noted that, without such international deals, both the Bush-Obama tax cuts and financing of their multi-trillion dollar wars would not have been possible. None of these crises or their consequences were wholly intentional, or "planned," but all of them have necessitated state interventions and ad hoc "planning," with outcomes that have led further and further away from "Bretton Woods" or anything like a truly "international" economic system.

Is it fair to call this "economic warfare?" In conventional terms, the concept is understood as the deliberate attempt by one or more states to affect the policies of other, usually hostile ones, through disruption of the latter's economic system by boycotts, sanctions and embargoes, freezing or confiscation of overseas funds and transactions, denial of travel rights to high

state authorities and even counterfeiting of currencies.²³ Certainly, none of these steps have been taken by the United States against its allies and partners, yet the *ad hoc* economic “planning” of the past few decades has had not entirely dissimilar effects. For example, in the name of free trade and comparative advantage, the U.S.-dominated trade regime has substantially reshaped national economies in particular directions, rendering many of them highly-dependent on flows of goods and commodities from foreign sources and increasingly subject to domestic restructuring (this is not that different from the German economy of *Mitteleuropa* described by Albert O. Hirschman²⁴). Inflationary dollarization has been critical to global economic growth and its widespread benefits but it has also rendered national economies more vulnerable to American fiscal and monetary policymaking, investment and spending. When the United States sneezes, the rest of the world immediately engages in hygienic practices, which usually fail to do the job. “Interdependence” is not necessarily a two-way street.

Neoliberalism as war

Some observers have described neoliberalism as war against the poor and Global South. Others have written about neoliberal “states of emergency and exception” and the central role of threat and fear in making liberal society possible. For the most part, however, no one has analyzed the role of the

²³ Traditionally, economic warfare has been intended to undermine the foreign policies of target states. Increasingly, however, such tactics have been applied in response to domestic policies (as is currently the case with Syria).

²⁴ Albert O. Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1945).

neoliberal turn (and its subsequent undoing) in the prosecution of WW∞. While the virtues of the free market and the burden of the expansive state have become dogma since the 1970s, and even with the end not yet in sight for the most serious global financial crisis since the Great Depression, the libertarian mantra of “more markets, less state” remains a guiding light in American politics. Paradoxically, close to three decades of neoliberal policy and practice around the world seems not to have led to any diminution in state size or power. Those with conservative (i.e., “liberal” in Europe) inclinations might argue that true neoliberalism has never been tried—much as those on the left once argued that “real socialism” was never tried—because of the resistance, sabotage and duplicity of liberals and government bureaucrats. But although “really-existing” neoliberalism does differ from the Keynesian economics that preceded it, the effects have been rather different from those predicted.

Even when starved of revenues, growth in state authority and reach continue; as Stephen Vogel put it, “freer markets, more rules,”²⁵ and more rules require more rulemakers and rule monitors. Even “privatization,” the prescribed means of shrinking the state, appears to have had quite contrary effects, as any casual look at government budgets will show. Recent research suggests strongly that privatization has been much less widespread than is often assumed, that it has not worked well where instituted, that it does not result in the spinoff of public goods and services into the market sector and

²⁵ Steven Vogel, *Freer Markets, More Rules* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

that it does not necessarily lead to more efficient delivery of services.²⁶

Entities that take on formerly-public responsibilities often find themselves subject to considerable government oversight and treated as extensions of state authority rather than independent operators. Thus, private security contractors in Iraq discovered that their considerable freedom in battle zones did not mean they were free to do whatever they wished, and private water providers in Bolivia found that local governments were not about to give them a free hand in setting rates. Delivering services privately does not mean that the services are private goods or of no interest to the state.

Why, then, have neoliberalism and privatization been so widely touted as the “solution” to state growth, especially when they seem to lead to the opposite outcomes? The enrollment of corporations, business associations, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups in the execution of public functions has actually extended government into the private sector, and the scope of governing has grown apace. As societies become more complex, they also require greater management and managers with appropriate competencies. As societies face complicated problems, they rely more and more on experts and specialists to tell them what to do and how to do it. And as societies engage in growing numbers of cross-border transactions, they need agents with the skills and knowledge appropriate to navigating other bureaucracies, languages and cultures. All of this is part of “government,” of regulating forms of action and exchange in an orderly and predictable manner

²⁶ Hurt & Lipschutz, “Bringing Politics Back In,” op. cit.; Beatrice Hibou, *Privatizing the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

and of incorporating the agents of civil society into the process of governing.²⁷

We are reminded repeatedly that the international realm is an anarchic one in which there is no such government—the term of art there is “governance”—and that individual countries remain reluctant to yield their sovereignty to a more authoritative and bureaucratic authority, the most that can be hoped for are “international regimes” and even those are doubted by some. Nonetheless, the sheer volume of transactions that take place in and through international “space” suggests that something or someone is taking responsibility for rules and rule. Who or what is it?

Within countries, there exist political systems through which decisions are made about government, and bureaucracies whose responsibilities involve seeing to government. Among countries, however, there is no such clearly-established political system. There is only the market. But markets are highly-political institutions, requiring “government” in order to function. Thus, in recent decades, government through the market has come to be utilized in pursuit of political ends, both domestic and international.²⁸ And rather than political struggle over ethical values and goals, a rationalistic, utilitarian logic comes to define normative ends. The pushing and hauling that takes place in international summits, gatherings, conferences, conventions and so on closely resembles the bargaining and negotiation that goes on in a flea market or *souk*:

²⁷ If this sounds similar to “governmentality,” that is no accident.

²⁸ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, with James K. Rowe, *Globalization, Governmentality and Global Politics: Regulation for the Rest of Us?* (London: Routledge, 2005).

buy cheap, sell dear.²⁹ Decisions are made and policies are implemented not because of plebiscites or referenda, or because representatives have been elected to high office with responsibilities to their constituents. Instead, delegates from various interests and sectors calculate costs and benefits and who will pay and who will free ride. Businesses develop programs in “corporate social responsibility” and take on the role of protecting workers’ rights and the environment both within and without their home countries (if they even have one). International agencies use the market to dispense various forms of aid and assistance, and non-governmental organizations contract with them, as well as states, to dispense social goods and services in otherwise disorganized spaces where government fear, or are reluctant, to tread. The very same NGOs may also be commissioned to teach locals about democracy, human rights and voter participation, in the hope that these beliefs and practices might take root and disseminate a kind of naturalized market culture.

These examples do not resemble war in any conventionally-understood sense; they do not involve evidently hostile forces arrayed against each other, seeking to kill and destroy as much of the enemy as possible. Still, many such activities are undertaken as forms of outside intervention into the domestic affairs of countries, whether as prescriptions recommended or imposed by international agencies or as education and assistance provided by businesses and non-governmental organizations. As Roland Paris and others have argued, such projects represent a new *mission civilisatrice*, a mission whereby in his

²⁹ It should not escape the perceptive reader than this is also what goes on in legislatures such as the U.S. Congress.

words, “International peacebuilders have promulgated a particular vision of how states should organise themselves internally, based on the principles of liberal democracies and market-oriented economics.”³⁰ Paris write about rescue of societies destroyed by internal war, but a similar argument can be applied to other, less visibly violent interventions: the deployment of “soft power” is meant not only to curry a favorable view of that power’s source, it is also designed to “teach” modernity and inculcate its principles and practices in the subject audience. Those who refuse will pay dearly.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, efforts by regimes to absorb or assimilate citizens who are culturally distinct from the majority have come to be regarded as near acts of war. Turkey’s long-standing attempts to turn Kurds into “Mountain Turks,” and China’s efforts to transform Tibet into a Han redoubt are two examples (neither instance lacking in considerable violence). In other instances, states have committed atrocities and even genocide, or expelled groups who refused to assimilate into the dominant group. By contrast, we would be reluctant to label as “acts of war” the foreign acculturation efforts of the U.S. government or American businesses and organizations, or the financial “reforms” imposed on supposedly free-spending governments or the processes of economic development that destroy the livelihoods of indigenous groups and devastate their homelands, since these do not appear to rely on overt coercion, murder or cultural destruction. Yet, as Native Americans, First Nations, aboriginals, indigenes and others—including, it

³⁰ Paris, “International Peacebuilding,” *op. cit.*

would seem, minorities across Europe and the working classes in Britain, Greece and other “advanced economics”—have discovered, the results are not much different. What matters is not that they, or any others, fully assimilate into the new regime; all that is important is that they comport themselves according to prescribed rules and regulations and communicate in forms comprehensible to the new regime of government.

Is it fair, then, to claim that neoliberalism *is* war? Perhaps war by other means.³¹ Vivienne Jabri has written about the constitution of the state through violence and the state as a form of violence.³² Tamara Lea Spira has argued, “war-making become[s] encrypted into neoliberal definitions of ‘peace’ and ‘freedom’ and violence becomes subsumed into normative structures of daily life.”³³ Peace *is* war. While there is nothing new about the incorporation of the language and metaphors of war into everyday language, practice and social relations—this principle forms, after all, the central metaphor of Hobbes’s *Leviathan*—it is nonetheless plausibly arguable that Herbert Spencer’s articulation of violence and struggle as the base principle of Western military-capitalist imperialism remains germane, even today.

³¹ Michel Foucault, *Society must be Defended*

³² Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³³ Tamara Lea Spiro, “Neoliberal Captivities—Pisagua Prison and the Low-Intensity Form,” *Radical History Review* 112 (Winter 2012), p. 128.

Weaving the steel web

War-making is state-making, and state-making is war-making. As Max Weber famously pointed out, a primary feature of the state is its claim of a monopoly of legitimate violence across a specific territorial space.³⁴ According to this principle, therefore, a world state would exist only if it could claim a *legitimate* monopoly of *global* violence, a condition that does not yet seem to have come about. We should recognize, however, that establishing such a monopoly is likely to be a long, drawn-out process, one that takes as long or longer than historical cases. The French state took centuries to conquer the rest of what is France today; members of the European Union continue to resist the full transfer of military sovereignty to Brussels, even though the likelihood of war among any of them is vanishingly small. Moreover, and notwithstanding warnings of a “rising” China or a nuclear Iran, the global distribution of power remains as IR theorists told us was impossible: a world unbalanced. Although there are serious questions about the *legality* of violence as wielded by the United States, there is no gainsaying Washington’s claim that its violence is *legitimate* (such claims are rarely accepted by the targets of such violence).

This project is being implemented through the two essential requirements of warmaking as defined by Siniša Malešević: organizational materialism and ideological rationalization.³⁵ The organizational element consists of the “domestication” of the world’s sovereign militaries, and the

³⁴ Max Weber, “The Profession and Vocation of Politics” (1919), p. 310, in: P. Lassman and R. Speirs (eds./trans), *Max Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁵ *Sociology of War and Violence*, op. cit.

militarization of the world's domestic police forces. This is taking place via American tutelage of both types of organized violence, as well as deployment of social modalities of pacification and control through increasingly dense webs of surveillance and assimilation accessible to all kinds of "security" organizations. The ideological element is found in the relentless discourse of democratization, human rights and "freedom," framed as the near-transcendent One True Path to individual happiness and world order. Through its organization resources, the world state has mobilized and inducted several billion of the world's people into WW ∞ . Through its relentless ideological missionary work, at least as many have internalized that True Path.

And who is targeted in WW ∞ ? As many have pointed out, conventionally-understood world war is a contradiction. Hot war would turn nuclear and destroy humanity. It cannot be waged. Conventional war may be endemic but it is not worldwide. Cold war cannot happen because there is no commensurate enemy. And such wars are generally focused on retention or seizure of power, and involve rulers of and challengers to states. WW ∞ , by contrast, is waged against *individuals* (or, in the jargon of the trade, "non-state actors"), including those who are loyal to the order being imposed by the world state and those who are not. Distinguishing these two groups from each other, and forcing people to choose sides, relies on forms of psychological warfare. Nuclear deterrence during the Cold War was nothing more than this, built on a very real material foundation. The nuclear "peace" relied on fear of war through speech acts and a state monopoly of epistemic violence. The nuclear

war of words was designed not only to terrorize the enemy but also to induce the collaboration and acquiescence of citizens exposed to this imaginary war. Around it was constructed a vast military and bureaucratic infrastructure, one whose reach extended into schools, churches, living rooms, media, cars and landscapes.

The so-called End of the Cold War appeared to render such warmaking irrelevant and obsolete, but an even more insidious challenge to the war-making state emerged: metastasis of the means of destruction, not only through diffusion of the technics of war-making (e.g., in the form of AK-47s and Toyota trucks) but also the spread of “dual-use” knowledge and practice. Thus, cars, trucks and aircraft become not only means of transport, but also delivery systems for high explosives. Communication technologies can be utilized not only for commerce and “friending” but also for hacking infrastructure, organizing disruptive mobilizations and planning terrorist attacks. Even mundane cooking, cleaning and farming materials can be used to destroy. And these are all available to anyone who might want to use them, for whatever purpose. To ban or restrict them in the name of “security” will interfere with “economy.” What to do?

Remember that “guns don’t kill people, people kill people” (that, at least, is the cliché). The threat lies not in the means of destruction, whatever their origins and purposes but, rather, in the thoughts, desires and wills of

those who have access to those means.³⁶ Inasmuch as there is not yet any reliable way of reading minds,³⁷ of determining individual intentions, there is also no reliable way to separate out threats and malcontents from those who are loyal and reliable. Hence, everyone must be considered a suspect and everyone must be surveilled 24/7.³⁸ As with Milo Minderbinder's Great Loyalty Crusade in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, only repeated professions of allegiance and loyalty keeps the professor in line. That requires, in essence, induction into the ranks of the militantly obedient, active participants in the "eternal struggle" against those who are below suspicion.

In the absence of hot war with its organized civilian mobilization, how can participation in this war by other means be sustained? Fear and compulsion are a much more powerful motivators than peace or opportunity, and fear of the mundane and banal can be communicated constantly through the myriad communication channels and transaction practices of modern electronic society. That paper bag over there might be an abandoned lunch or a bomb. That sweaty, shifty-eyed individual in an airport might be an anxious passenger or a terrorist with explosives. That unsolicited email could be an offer too good to be true or yet another attempt to steal you blind. Automobiles don't only help us get around and employ many people, they also sap our precious hydrocarbon fluids and contaminate our atmosphere. Birds,

³⁶ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "Imperial Warfare in the Naked City: —Sociality as Critical Infrastructure," *International Political Sociology* 3, #3 (Sept. 2008): 204-18.

³⁷ As Rebecca Hester and I have discovered, however, mind reading is very much on the contemporary research agenda; see "We are the Borg! Human Assimilation into Cellular Society," chapter prepared for Katina & M.G. Michael (eds.), *Ubervveillance and the Social Implications of Microchip Implants: Emerging Technologies* (forthcoming 2012).

³⁸ Armand Mattelart, *The Globalization of Surveillance* (Oxford: Polity, 2010).

swine, cats, mosquitoes, pharmaceuticals: all potential threats.³⁹ Weather can kill, water can poison, foods can sicken. However great mistrust of the state might be, when the FBI warns of a heightened terrorist threat, people don't just listen, they also watch everyone around them with trepidation. The only ones I trust are you and me, and I'm certainly not sure about you! Ultimately, loyalty can be certified only through the repeated practices and articulations demanded by those who ask questions. Whether you packed your own luggage and are clean as you pass under the watchful eyes of airport "security" is less about identifying terrorists than inculcation of self-consciousness and subjectivity in the loyal if ever-fearful traveler. The objective is not so much to find bombs on board as to make clear that everyone, and not just young, bearded men, are either soldiers or suspects.

This "steel web" of surveillance makes us "secure" even as it also enchains each of us so that we must go along to get along.⁴⁰ We become the obedient subjects of a regulatory system that must be obeyed, lest we be identified, isolated, interrogated and imprisoned. One can resist, of course, eschewing the many comforts and conveniences of modern life, but escape from the global electronic grid is no longer so easy. Moreover, this panoply of entanglements and entrapments grows daily, as new forms of electronic exchange and transaction proliferate, bringing with them all kinds of new

³⁹ Bruce Braun, "Biopolitics and the Molecularization of Life," *Cultural Geographies* 14 (2007): 6-28.

⁴⁰ Susan Landau, *Surveillance or Security—The Risks Posed by New Wiretapping Technologies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010).

bureaucratic and organizational tools, forms and contracts.⁴¹ The need to ensure “security” requires new and more complicated passwords, images and personal questions, and more and more forms of identification verification are introduced, relying on fingerprints, iris scans and facial recognition. Can blood draws and on-the-spot DNA tests be far behind? Ultimately, as we are enjoined to accept near-constant surveillance as the price of safety, we are also self-disciplined into ensuring that our behaviors and practices comport with the requirements of the entity waging world war on the world.

Whence a world state?

To claim that world war is general, and has been for more than half-a-century, might seem hyperbole. To argue that world war is creating a world state, and that the world’s people are active participants in this process, might seem implausible. To propose that contemporary world disorder is anything other than really-existing international anarchy seems to go against both theory and action. Certainly, there are few signs that the world’s fissiparous governments are accepting international hierarchy or collaborating in ways that might point toward a world state. The evidence is not, however, as weak or absent as it might seem. Unsurprisingly, the relevant data are visible in both “economy” and “security.”

The Great Recession of 2008, and the subsequent economic difficulties to which it has given rise, tend to illustrate the increasingly-organic

⁴¹ Lydia Polgreen, Scanning 2.4 Billion Eyes, India Tries to Connect Poor to Growth,” *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 2011, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/02/world/asia/02india.html> (accessed Sept. 12, 2011).

connections among the world's notionally independent economies. These relationships are not so much a matter of trade levels or interdependence, as some might have it but, rather, of the underlying financial architecture, whose proper functioning relies on pools and flows of capital and debt that bind financial institutions into a singular system of economy. American banks hold substantial quantities of European debt, and vice versa. Other governments, banks and institutions hold each others' debt and bonds and cannot liquidate their assets lest they suffer grievous financial losses in the ensuing currency collapse. Global growth and prosperity depend on sufficient international liquidity and, notwithstanding talk of new reserve currencies, no one can figure out how to live without the dollar. Notwithstanding concerns about the value of the dollar, and large speculative investments in Euros, yen and Swiss Francs, for most of the world the dollar remains the only available store of value. None of this is to suggest that the burden of this financial system is borne equitably, or that it can continue forever. But systemic stability and sustainability are essential to security which, in turns, plays a central role in maintaining the system.

This is followed by an even more preposterous claim: global "security" is sustained through a singular global military-knowledge architecture. It is common knowledge that American security spending is greater than the rest of the world's combined, and that the United States has something like 700 foreign military bases plus a significant FBI presence at many of its embassies, that that many national militaries are supported and trained by U.S. military

officers and advisors. It is less well-known that U.S. Military Commands literally “cover the earth.” Members of NATO, as well as other American allies, have limited military autonomy and, as the organization’s intervention in the Libyan conflict illustrated, it is hardly an independent actor. Russia and other ex-Soviet republics and those former satellites not yet members of the EU, all consult with or seek some kind of security relationship with the United States. Even China, supposedly the “rising power” that will, some day, challenge America’s military dominance, is very cautious in its military actions, and acts freely only where internal security is judged to be at risk. Cooperation among national intelligence agencies is rife and U.S. Special Forces seem to be ubiquitous around the world.

To a significant degree, this extensive security architecture is directed toward social order and stability, via networks and practices of intelligence and surveillance rather than external defense, ensuring that individuals and groups are not in a position to disrupt societies and chasing them down if they can be identified and located. “Thought Police” may soon become reality, as vaporization already has. The Obama Administration’s authorization of assassinations, including Americans judged to be aiding and abetting terrorists, anywhere in the world (except, possibly, the United States) may constitute potential violations of national sovereignty and even elicit outraged protests from governments. But those in power are probably happy to remain in power, even if they are not as powerful as they might like. Better to rule a province of the world state than to rule nothing at all.