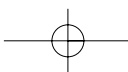
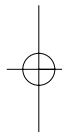
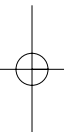


Part I

GENEALOGIES OF EMPIRE



1

Lineages of Contemporary Imperialism

JAMES TULLY

Introduction

THE AIM OF THIS ESSAY IS TO PRESENT a historical sketch of some major lineages of contemporary western imperialism. It is necessary to make two preliminary qualifications. First, the contemporary mode of western imperialism is the product of the last 500 years of immensely complex interactions between European and Euro-American imperial expansion and non-European responses. It is not possible to present more than a brief and partial sketch of the main lines of descent. Second, contemporary western imperialism is studied under a number of different headings: neo-colonialism, post-colonialism, open door imperialism, free trade imperialism, informal imperialism, liberal or neo-liberal imperialism, world systems imperialism, empire, US imperialism, and so on. Each of these descriptions picks out different aspects of contemporary imperialism as the most salient and seeks to explicate them as the key to the whole. This brief historical sketch is restricted to the limited aspects of contemporary imperialism gathered together under the heading of informal imperialism. The essay begins with a synopsis of defining characteristics of contemporary informal imperialism. The following five sections describe major historical lineages of these characteristics. The final section returns to contemporary imperialism with, I hope, a better understanding of its ancestry.

1. Informal Imperialism

The phrase 'informal imperialism' is now widely used by both defenders and critics of contemporary imperialism. It refers to the mode of global governance that came to predominance during the period of formal

decolonisation and the Cold War (1940–1989).¹ The adjective ‘informal’ refers to three features of this new imperial relationship. First, the former great imperial powers, renamed the ‘great eight’ (G8), and their transnational corporations no longer govern the conduct of the 120 former colonies ‘formally’ by means of colonies and colonial administration. Rather, they are able to govern the conduct of the former colonies by a host of informal means, from economic aid, trade manipulation, and debt dependency to military dependency, intervention, and restructuring.

Second, the great powers are unable to govern the former colonies ‘formatively’ in the sense of exercising open and more or less unilateral administrative and military power over them, as in the case of colonial imperialism. Rather, because the former colonies are recognised as formally free and equal sovereign nation states, exercising powers of self-government, although substantively subordinate, dependent, and unequal, the great powers are constrained to govern their development ‘informally’ in the sense of ‘interactively’. They exercise various forms of inducement, constraint, channelling, and response, and employ various means from economic dependency to military intervention, to try to control or govern the way the former colonies or ‘developing countries’ exercise their powers of self-government. It is thus a more interactive and open-ended imperial game between the hegemonic and subordinate powers than in the case of formal colonial rule.

Finally, this form of governance is informal in yet a third and distinctive sense. The great powers and their multinational corporations neither exercise imperial powers directly themselves, for the most part, nor have they established a world government for this purpose. Rather, they govern informally through coalitions of various kinds and with various members at different times (among the roughly G20) and through institutions of global governance set up at the end of the Second World War.² The main institutions are: the concentration of power in the Security Council of the United Nations; the Bretton Woods institutions of the

¹ For the specific dates of decolonisation and one of the best histories of western imperialism, see David B. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires, 1415–1980* (New Haven, CT, 2000). The Latin American colonies decolonised in the 1820s and they have experienced informal imperialism by Great Britain and the USA for a correspondingly longer period than the countries that decolonised in the twentieth century.

² Even when the USA acts unilaterally rather than multilaterally, it usually garners the tacit or explicit consent of a coalition, and when it appears to act in defiance of some institutions of global governance and international law it usually claims to legitimate its action with reference to others. See, for example, Jutta Brunee and Stephen Toope, ‘Slouching Towards New “Just” Wars: The Hegemon after September 11th’, *International Relations*, 18, 4 (2004), pp. 405–23.

International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT), and, in the 1990s, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its transnational trade regimes; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations working to westernise non-western societies and citizens; the acceptance of the USA as the leading or hegemonic power; the establishment of dependent economic, political, and military elites in the former colonies; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and the full spectrum global dominance of the US military over land, sea, and space. The former colonies are members of many of these institutions, their elites often have a say in them, and they have some room to manoeuvre within all of them. Nevertheless, the inequalities of power, knowledge, and influence of the hegemonic and subaltern partners are so great that the informal great powers and their corporations are able to prevail in most of the interactions.³

Since decolonisation, this complex network of unequal relationships of power between the west and the non-west (or the global north and the global south) has sustained and increased the political and military domination, economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and horrific inequalities in living conditions of the majority of the world's population in the former colonial world that were originally established during the first 500 years of western imperialism prior to decolonisation. The inequalities in this new world order are considerably greater than they were at the high-water mark of ruthless colonial imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century. An Oxfam snapshot of the growing inequalities between the imperial and imperialised countries puts it in the following way.

840 million people are malnourished. 6 million children under the age of 5 die each year as a consequence of malnutrition. 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 a day and half the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day. 91 out of every 1,000 children in the developing world die before they are 5 years old. 12 million die annually from lack of water. 1.1 billion people have no access to clean water. 2.4 billion people live without proper sanitation. 40 million live with AIDS. 113 million children have no basic education. One in five people do not survive past 40 years of age. There are 1 billion non-literate adults, two-thirds are women and 98 per cent live in the developing world. In the least developed countries,

³ Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge, 2004).

45 per cent of children do not attend school. In countries with a literacy rate of less than 55 per cent the per capita income is about \$600.

In contrast, the wealth of the richest 1 per cent of the world is equal to that of the poorest 57 per cent. The assets of the 200 richest people are worth more than the total income of 41 per cent of the world's people. Three families alone have a combined wealth of \$135 billion. This equals the annual income of 600 million people living in the world's poorest countries. The richest 20 per cent of the world's population receive 150 times the wealth of the poorest 20 per cent. In 1960, the share of the global income of the bottom 20 per cent was 2.3 per cent. By 1991, this had fallen to 1.4 per cent. The richest fifth of the world's people consume 45 per cent of the world's meat and fish; the poorest fifth consume 5 per cent. The richest fifth consume 58 per cent of total energy, the poorest fifth less than 4 per cent. The richest fifth have 75 per cent of all telephones, the poorest fifth 1.5 per cent. The richest fifth own 87 per cent of the world's vehicles, the poorest fifth less than 1 per cent.⁴

2. Free Trade Imperialism

What, then, are the major lineages of this latest mode of western imperialism and non-western impoverishment? Among the first scholars to use the phrase 'informal imperialism' were two Cambridge economic historians writing in the immediate post-war period, John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson. In 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' (1953) they argued that this type of informal governance was not new but the descendant of free trade imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵ In their view the British policy of free trade at the height of British imperialism was not anti-imperial but an alternative form of imperialism to colonialism. The nineteenth-century great powers, with Great Britain in the lead and the USA in relation to Latin America, realised that they could orchestrate the formation of legal and political regimes in non-European countries so they would function to 'open' their resources, labour, and markets to 'free trade' dominated by economic competition among

⁴ Jeremy Seabrook, *The No-nonsense Guide to World Poverty* (Toronto, 2003), p. 53. Seabrook explains these inequalities in terms of the history of western imperialism. For the measurement of global inequalities, see Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, NJ, 2005).

⁵ Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 6, 1 (1953), pp. 1–15.

European powers, without the need for the expensive and increasingly unpopular old imperial system of formal colonies and monopoly trading companies. In a series of publications in the following decades Robinson, Bernard Semmel, the German imperial historians Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, and their followers went on to document the long and complex history of free trade imperialism since the eighteenth century and to argue that decolonisation and the Cold War comprised its triumph over colonial imperialism. Decolonisation and the Cold War, they argued, involved the dismantling of the remaining formal colonies, mandates, and trusteeships; the transfer of limited powers of self-determination to the westernised elites of nominally sovereign, yet dependent local governments in a global network of free trade imperialism; and the transfer of hegemony from Great Britain to the USA. They called this complex transition period 'the imperialism of decolonisation' and 'the end of empire and the continuity of imperialism'.⁶ In his classic study of theories of imperialism, Mommsen argued that the theory of informal imperialism was the most important advance in the understanding of imperialism in the twentieth century.⁷ At the same time, Harry Magdoff and William Appleman Williams were writing their complementary histories of US 'imperialism without colonies' and 'empire as a way of life'.⁸ As we have seen, since the defeat of the Soviet Union and its Third World allies at the end of the Cold War in 1989, other scholars have gone on to document, defend, and criticise the extension of this mode of governance over the planet.⁹

These scholars made three crucial contributions to the study of the lineage of contemporary imperialism. First, they disclosed the historical continuity of contemporary informal imperialism with earlier

⁶ Wolfgang Mommsen, 'The End of Empire and the Continuity of Imperialism', in Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds), *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London, 1986).

⁷ Wolfgang Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, trans. P. S. Falla (Chicago, IL, 1980), pp. 86–93.

⁸ Harry Magdoff, 'Imperialism without Colonies', in his *Imperialism without Colonies* (New York, 2003). The article was published as a chapter in Magdoff, *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present* (New York, 1976 [1972]). William A. Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament, Along with a Few Thoughts about an Alternative* (New York, 1980).

⁹ For an introduction to this voluminous literature, see Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2002); Taraki Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'Retrieving the Imperial: Empire and International Relations', *Millennium*, 31, 1 (2002), pp. 109–27; and Daniel H. Nexon and Thomas Wright, 'What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate', *American Political Science Review*, 101, 1 (May 2007), pp. 253–71.

experiments with free trade or 'open door' imperialism. Drawing on Kwame Nkrumah's account of 'neo-colonial' (informal) imperialism, Mommsen also highlighted the dual type of corruption characteristic of informal imperialism in the post-decolonisation period. It corrupts the multinational corporations and their support agencies on one side and the local dependent elites and their dependants on the other. Mommsen quoted Nkrumah's famous conclusion that it is the 'worst form of imperialism'¹⁰ because:

For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.

'In other words', Mommsen concurred, 'the socio-economic structures that had formed during the period of imperialism remained unimpaired after the end of formal colonial rule, and were moreover now exempt from any kind of political supervision, and the same was true of one-sided economic relations designed for the benefit of the former colonial ruler'.¹¹ Scholars have gone on to study these ever-widening circles of dependency and corruption in the imperial and imperialised countries.¹²

Of equal importance, their research dissolved the ahistorical and misleading distinction between formal (colonial) and informal (post-colonial) imperial periods and types. It showed that these two types of imperialism co-existed in a much broader range of intermediary and overlapping types of imperial governance during the various periods of western imperialism from 1492 to the present; such as protectorates, spheres of influence, indirect rule, private corporation governance, and so on. Scholars have gone to study and classify this much more complex field and thus to show that there are differences in degree but not in kind between formal and informal types or periods.¹³

¹⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism* (London, 1965), p. xi, cited in Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, pp. 126–7.

¹¹ Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, pp. 126–7.

¹² For the exposure of the corruption of informal imperialism today in the tradition of J. A. Hobson, see Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (Toronto, 2007) and Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (New York, 2006).

¹³ See Abernethy, *Dynamics of Global Dominance*, and Michael Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, 1986). It is noteworthy that Hobson argued in 1902 that British imperialism consisted of more than thirty

Third, they argued that the field of imperial relationships is so complex precisely because it is *not* a concentrated form of power that is imposed unilaterally over passive and uncivilised non-European peoples and which brings about their linear development towards civilisation or modernisation. Yet, this is how the western legitimating narratives of universal stages of historical development from the Scottish Enlightenment to the latest theories of development, modernisation, globalisation, democratisation, and the spread of good governance and freedom falsely frame the history of imperial expansion. Rather, the actual historical practices of imperialism comprise diffuse and 'interactive' and often 'excentric' (reactive) forms of governance that respond to diverse forms of resistance and collaboration of imperialised peoples in localised, ad-hoc, and unpredictable ways.¹⁴ Their insight created a potential opening within the conservative discipline of imperial history to a movement that was already well underway elsewhere. This broad twentieth-century movement, or counter-movement, consists of the criticism or 'provincialisation' of the western-centric modernisation theories that legitimate western formal and informal imperialism and the writing of contrapuntal histories of western imperialism from the standpoints of the imperialised peoples of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, India, and Indigenous peoples of the Fourth World, not as passive victims of the gift of civilisation, but as active agents.¹⁵ It is clear from Mommsen's *Theories of Imperialism* that their own work was influenced by authors in this counter-movement, such as Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah. While scholars on both sides now criticise the legitimating narratives and explore the interactive and corrupting features of informal imperialism, and a few have entered into dialogue across the divide, for the most part these two traditions of historical research on western imperialism remain separate.¹⁶

different types of relationship over imperialised peoples: J. A. Hobson, *On Imperialism: A Study* (New York, 2005 [1902]).

¹⁴ Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, pp. 86–112. More recently, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA, 2002).

¹⁵ See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Walter Dignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); and Robert J. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁶ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1994) is perhaps the best known attempt to bring the two traditions together. See also Bill Aschcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation* (London, 2001) and Young, *Postcolonialism*.

While these three contributions and the research that has followed in their wake have helped enormously in understanding the lineages of contemporary imperialism, they do not address directly two broader historical questions. How has it come about historically that the great powers and their multinationals now occupy a position within a global field to lord it over the imperialised countries in this informal manner? And, what is the lineage of the languages they use to describe and legitimate their position of 'legal hegemony' *vis-à-vis* the subordinate countries of the world?¹⁷ That is, what is the history of the present institutional and discursive features of the broader field in which free trade and informal imperialism become possible?

3. Colonial and Indirect Imperialism

Since 1415 the European and US imperial powers have employed four broad discourses to describe, explain, and legitimate the imperialisation of non-western countries.¹⁸ The first is the commercial or cosmopolitan right (*ius commercium*) of western states and their companies to enter into 'commercial' relations of two types with non-western societies; the first of these are trade relations dominated by the western companies—the right to trade expanded rapidly to include western access to the resources, labour, and markets of the non-western world; the second type is the right of western religious organisations, scholars, and voluntary associations to enter into 'commerce' with non-westerners in the early-modern sense of studying their customs and ways, and trying to convert them to more 'civilised' ways. The second discourse is the duty of non-western peoples to open themselves to western-style commerce in these two senses, often called the duty of hospitality. If non-western civilisations resist, defend their own economic, legal and cultural ways, close their resources, labour, or markets to trade dominated by the west, or send the companies or missionaries home, then they are said to violate the duty of openness to commerce. Third, a violation of the duty of openness to commerce in either sense, originally formulated as a natural duty under the old law of nature prior to the nineteenth century, triggers a right (of self-defence) of the aggrieved western imperial power to intervene militarily to open the

¹⁷ The phrase 'legal hegemony' comes from Simpson, *Great Powers*.

¹⁸ In 1415 a fleet of Portuguese ships left Lisbon to launch an assault on Cueta in North Africa: see Abernethy, *Dynamics of Global Dominance*, p. 3.

closed country to trade and civilisation, and to extract compensation for the company's loss of property and profits. Fourth, the imperial powers have a responsibility or duty to do something more than extract economic profits from the non-western countries. They also have a responsibility or duty to improve the conditions of the imperialised country. This duty to free the lower peoples from their backward ways and guide them up the stages of historical development and progress has been clothed in a number of different names over the last half-millennium: to improve, civilise, develop, modernise, constitutionalise, democratise, and bring good governance and freedom.¹⁹

Obviously, these four sets of rights and duties presuppose a set of western institutions that have to be adopted by or imposed on the non-western world for them to be exercised. The right of free trade presupposes the legal and economic institutions of western commerce and capitalism. Accordingly, the non-western legal and economic arrangements of the imperialised society have to be either adapted to western trade, private property, slave and then wage labour, and market organisation, if possible, or, if not, dispossessed and replaced by the imposition of western-style legal and economic organisations. This massive dispossession and restructuring of the non-west is often called the 'second enclosure'.²⁰ The right of the imperialists to intervene militarily to open societies to trade and protect western companies abroad presupposes a world military, especially a navy, initially called 'gunboat' imperialism. The duty of 'improving' the imperialised peoples of the world presupposes the vast institutions and voluntary organisations of colonial and post-colonial governance whose role is to makeover non-westerners in the image of civilised or modernised westerners.

To simplify a very complex history, these two rights and duties and their corresponding institutional preconditions have been and continue to be spread around the world in three major ways.²¹ The first is the implantation of settler colonies in the Americas, New Zealand, and Australia. In

¹⁹ I have discussed these imperial rights and duties and their institutional preconditions in detail in 'The Imperialism of Modern Constitutional Democracy', in Martin Loughlin and Neil Walker (eds), *The Paradox of Constitutionalism* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 315–58, and in Emiliós Christodoulidis and Stephen Tierney (eds), 'On Law, Democracy and Imperialism', *Public Law and Politics: The Scope and Limits of Constitutionalism* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 69–102.

²⁰ John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650–1900* (Montreal, 2003).

²¹ As I mentioned in the previous section, this is a simplification of a much more complex field of types of imperial governance.

these cases of 'replication imperialism' or 'new Europes' the rudimentary colonial structures of western law, commerce, and political forms were imposed over the institutions and traditions of Indigenous peoples, dispossessing them of their territories and usurping their forms of government, by means of 200 years of wars, dishonoured treaties, and the spread of European diseases. Approximately 80 per cent of the 60 million human beings of diverse Indigenous civilisations were exterminated. The remaining population has been forcefully and unsuccessfully assimilated or removed to tiny reserves and ruled despotically by various ministries. When the colonies freed themselves from their respective empires and established western-style states and economies themselves, they retained the European legal, political, and economic institutions and they continue to exercise what the United Nations calls 'internal colonisation' of Indigenous peoples on four continents.²² The building of the civilising western institutions of free trade and labour discipline in the Americas was carried through by slave labour in Latin America, the opening of Africa to free trade in slaves, the transportation of 12 million to the plantations in Central and North America, and the deaths of millions.

The second major method of imperialisation has been 'indirect' colonial rule. The imperial powers establish a small colonial administration or authorise a private corporation to govern a much larger local population by indirect means. By means of unequal treaties, they recognise the quasi-sovereignty of local rulers, constrain them to adapt their 'customary' laws to trade, private property, contract law, and labour markets, and establish a system of western law at the centre. As Hobson and Leonard Woolf explained, they try to westernize the local elites and make them dependent on their economic bribes and military support, often against their own population, divide and conquer the opposition, train local armies to fight proxy wars to protect the property of foreign companies, and the trading companies often incite local rebellions so they can claim monetary compensation once it is put down.²³ This is the major way the two rights and duties and their institutional preconditions have been exercised in India, Ceylon, Africa, and the Middle East in the twentieth century.

The third major method of imperialisation is free trade or informal imperialism. It has come into practice since the early nineteenth century,

²² See James Tully, 'The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for and of Freedom', in Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton, and Will Sanders (eds), *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Political Theory* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 36–59.

²³ Hobson, *On Imperialism*; Leonard Woolf, *Empire and Commerce in Africa: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (London, 1920) and his *The Village in the Jungle* (London, 1913).

initially by Britain and the USA in Latin America after decolonisation the 1820s, after the institutional foundations of western hegemony had been laid by colonial and indirect imperialism. Once the western institutions are in place, an imperial power can withdraw its colonial and indirect apparatus and govern informally or infrastructurally. The paramount power permits local self-rule and educates the population for eventual self-determination, within a protectorate, sphere of influence, or mandate. It exercises paramountcy (now renamed 'hegemony')²⁴ to induce the local rulers to keep their resources, labour, and markets open to free trade dominated by western corporations and global markets, thereby combining 'empire and liberty'.

The informal means include such things as economic, military, and aid dependency, bribes, sanctions, the education and training of westernised elites in the local military, government, and corporations, and the employment of voluntary organisations to educate the local population to their appropriate place in the global economy. If the local elites fail to act accordingly, then their local laws and constitutions can be overridden by a higher order of law, *lex mercatoria* (merchant's law), the vast body of transnational trade law that has developed in tandem with *ius commercium*.²⁵ If, in turn, these means fail, then the paramount power threatens to intervene covertly (proxy armies and death squads) or overtly. If the threats fail, military intervention follows to open doors to free trade and to ensure that the sovereign country exercises its powers of self-government properly or be overthrown.²⁶ As the naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan argued at the end of the nineteenth century, the ultimate guarantee of free trade and informal imperialism is thus the military capacity of the great powers to intervene. The basis of this—in both British informal imperialism in the nineteenth century and US open door imperialism in the twentieth and twenty-first—is the establishment of small military bases, originally naval coaling stations, in or nearby the countries they govern informally.²⁷ Taking over from the British in

²⁴ John Agnew, *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power* (Philadelphia, PA, 2005).

²⁵ Clare A. Cutler, *Private Power and Global Authority: Transnational Merchant Law in the Global Political Economy* (Cambridge, 2003).

²⁶ Hence the common name 'gunboat imperialism' for both British and US informal imperialism. See Michael Lynch, *The British Empire* (Milton Park, 2005); Magdoff, *Imperialism*; Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*.

²⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (Boston, MA, 1932).

the early twentieth century, the USA now has over 750 military bases strategically located around the world, outside its own borders.²⁸

In summary, the exercise of these two rights and duties over centuries in these three main ways dispossessed non-Europeans of political and legal control over their own resources and economies, and modified, subordinated, or replaced their forms of organisation with the institutional preconditions of western legal and political domination, economic exploitation, and military control. Adam Smith and Karl Marx called this whole historical invasion and restructuring of the non-European world 'previous' or 'primitive' accumulation and agreed that it constituted the preconditions of free trade imperialism.²⁹ Hobson, Lenin, Weber, and Luxemburg analysed this history again under the title of 'capitalist imperialism' and 'accumulation by dispossession' in the early twentieth century and the authors mentioned in the previous sections have done the same for post-decolonisation imperialism.³⁰ All agree that it is the basis of the horrendous inequalities in power and wealth that enable the great powers to lord it informally over the imperialised world.

4. Nineteenth-century Civilisational Imperialism

The two rights and duties that legitimate western imperialism have been formulated in many different ways by the theorists of the different western empires and in response to different historical experiences. Gerrit Gong, Martti Koskenniemi, Edward Keene, and Antony Anghie have shown that they were brought together in their authoritative modern form in the creation of modern international law in the nineteenth century under the 'standard of civilisation'.³¹

The great powers defined their institutions of representative constitutional nation states, private property, openness to free trade, and western 'formal' legal orders as the universal form of a civilised legal, political,

²⁸ See Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA, 2002), and sections 6–7 below.

²⁹ Karl Marx, 'So Called Primitive Accumulation', *Capital* (London, 1990), pp. 873–904. He refers to Adam Smith on the first page (p. 873).

³⁰ For these authors, see Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*.

³¹ Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford, 1984); Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870–1960* (Cambridge, 2001); Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, 2002); Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, 2005).

and economic organisation and thus the standard by which all other human organisations are judged.³² The European states (and the USA after 1895) were said to be 'sovereign' and, as such, the sole subjects recognised by international law. Drawing on the four stages theory of world-historical development developed during the Scottish Enlightenment, all other civilisations were classified as uncivilised and ranked according to their level of development relative to the European standard of civilisation. Their legal and political orders, many much older than the European forms, were classified as 'customary' rather than 'formal'. Since they lacked the defining institutions of civilisation, they lacked 'sovereignty' and thus were not subjects recognised under international law. Rather, they were either in a state of nature, if they had not been colonised yet, or subject to the imperial and colonial legal orders of the respective European empires as a result of colonisation and indirect rule summarised in the previous section. The sovereign imperial states were said to have the sacred duty or mission to civilise the inferior peoples under their jurisdiction. The first part of this duty was of course to open their resources and labour to trade dominated by western companies and impose the institutions of western private property law, competitive commerce, and labour discipline, and to modify or undermine traditional cooperative forms of economic organisation and 'customary' law and politics. These institutions, imposed 'despotically' for their own good, would then start the uncivilised and semi-civilised peoples along the stages of development to civilisation and eventual western-style self-government within an international system of law and commerce established and enforced by the western powers. By 1914, 85 per cent of the non-European population were subject to European empires.

Thus, 'civilisation' refers first to a set of European legal, political, economic, and military *institutions* that are said to be unique and universal standard of civilisation, and, second, to a set of presumptively world-historical civilising *processes* that are said to spread these institutions around the world by means of European imperialism.³³ One of the classic presentations of this imperial vision is given by Immanuel Kant, whose *Perpetual Peace* sets out the European constitutional state form, European international law and a league of European states, and the commercial right of free trade as the universal institutions for every

³² See Gong, *Standard of Civilization*, for the various formulations.

³³ Brett Bowden, 'In the Name of Progress and Peace: The "Standard of Civilization" and the Universalizing Project', *Alternatives*, 29, 1 (2004), pp. 43–68.

people on the planet. And, *Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent* asserts that the unremitting wars of imperial expansion will gradually impose these legal, political, and commercial institutions on the non-western world, moving them up from savagery to civilisation to morality. The end result, according to Kant, will be the perpetual peace of a world made over in the identical image of European state and economic forms and under the leadership of a league of advanced European powers. 'Nature' chooses war as the means to spread the civilising institutions of western law and commerce. While Europeans often use unjustifiable force and fraud, non-Europeans (or Europeans) cannot resist, or even inquire into the unjust world order imposed on them, since the coercive imposition of western law and commerce is the precondition of civilisation itself. He carefully explains that the very existence of non-European societies without western style civil constitutions places them in a lawless state of nature and gives Europeans the pre-emptive right to coercively impose a lawful state over them or drive them off their traditional territories, precisely what they were doing.³⁴ Since openness to trade and the acceptance of the corresponding domestic and international legal orders are the defining features of civilisation, if a political association asserts its right to govern itself by its own civilisational laws and ways, this proves them to be uncivilised, and their resistance justifies military intervention (in one of the three ways of the previous section).³⁵

Western international law was powerless to enforce this sacred duty on the competing imperial states in the nineteenth century. Instead of cooperating in a 'juridical' imperial system based on the new international law, the competing imperial states continued their competitive wars, pillage, slavery, hyper-exploitation, genocide, and destruction, and especially in Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1885, all the while justifying it in the name of civilising the natives. As Wilfred S. Blunt summed up the century in 1900:

The old century is very nearly out, and this leaves the world in a pretty pass, and the British Empire is playing the devil in it as never an empire before and on so large a scale. We may live to see its fall. All the nations of Europe are making

³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. H. S. Reiss (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 41–53, 93–130. I have discussed these two texts in more detail in 'The Kantian Idea of Europe', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 331–58, and 'On Law, Democracy and Imperialism', *Public Law and Political Theory*.

³⁵ Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty* traces this structure of argument (the two rights and duties) from the sixteenth century to the present; and Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer of Nations* from the nineteenth century to the present.

the same hell upon earth in China, massacring and pillaging and raping in the captured cities as outrageously as in the Middle Ages. The Emperor of Germany gives the word for slaughter and the Pope looks on and approves. In South Africa our troops are burning farms under Kitchener's command, and the Queen and the two houses of Parliament and the bench of Bishops thank God publicly and vote money for the work. The Americans are spending fifty millions a year on slaughtering the Filipinos; the King of the Belgians has invested his whole fortune on the Congo, where he is brutalising the Negroes to fill his pockets. The French and the Italians for the moment are playing a less prominent part in the slaughter, but their inactivity grieves them. The whole white race is revelling openly in violence, as though it never pretended to be Christian. God's equal curse on them all! So ends the famous nineteenth century into which we were proud to have been born.³⁶

That is to say, the 'new' imperialism of the late nineteenth century under the duty to civilise was much the same as the 'new' imperialism of the early twenty-first century in Latin America and the Middle East under the duty to bring market freedoms and democracy.³⁷

5. Cooperative Mandate Imperialism

The horrors of unbridled civilisational imperialism culminated in the horrors of the First World War. This 'great war for civilisation' was a global war among the sovereign imperial powers over the control and exploitation of the colonised world.³⁸ In 1919 it was obvious that the great powers were the barbarians. They were confronted with widespread peace movements at home and with decolonisation and anti-imperial movements in the colonies. They realised that they had to make a transition to a cooperative and informal type of imperialism based on international law. This consisted in two tasks that required a century to complete.³⁹

³⁶ Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, 2 vols (London, 1919–20), vol. 1, p. 464, cited in Louis L. Snyder (ed.), *The Imperial Reader* (New York, 1962), pp. 146–7. Compare Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, pp. 98–178, for similar European views.

³⁷ For the twenty-first century 'new' imperialism in this light, see Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York, 2007) and Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Oxford, 2004).

³⁸ John H. Morrow Jr, *The Great War: An Imperial History* (London, 2004) and Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: The Conquest of the Middle East* (London, 2005).

³⁹ For a history of these two tasks from the perspective of the USA, which is important for the following section, see Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, CA, 2004).

The first task was to establish a form of international governance that has the capacity to force the imperial powers to end their military competition over the resources, labour, and markets of the colonised world and to embrace some form of military cooperation and continuing economic competition or face the mutual destruction of the contending parties as wars became ever more industrialised and total. The League of Nations was the first attempt. The destructiveness of the Second World War (started by Germany, Italy, and Japan in part because they claimed to be discriminated against by having been stripped of their colonies), made this task all the more necessary. The establishment of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and the defeat of the Soviet empire during the Cold War brought into being a cooperative military framework of contemporary informal imperialism. As both Karl Kautsky and Hobson predicted at the beginning of the century, unless the economic basis of corporate capitalism was transformed in Europe and the USA, this kind of cooperative solution to competitive military imperialism would simply lead to a kind of 'hyper-imperialism' over the colonised world.

The second task was to take the international law duty to civilise out of the jurisdiction of the rapacious individual sovereign empires and place it under international control, which could then guide the uncivilised peoples to free trade and eventual self-government. The first attempt was the Mandate System of the League of Nations. The League classified the imperialised peoples of the world into three stages of development. The first were those in the Middle East who were closest to self-government and whose elites needed only a moderate amount of 'tutelage' in civilisation and modernisation by their respective imperial tutors. The second were those in Africa who were further down the scale of development and required decades of 'guardianship' by their imperial guardians before they could be granted western-style self-government. The third were those who would never be able to be self-governing and would thus always be colonised by their respective superiors. These included South West Africa, Pacific Islanders, and the Indigenous peoples in the Americas and Australia.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For the Mandate System, see Michael D. Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914–1931* (Brighton, 1999); Callahan, *A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa, 1929–1946* (Brighton, 2004); and Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty*, pp. 115–95.

The Mandate System of the League of Nations and the later Trustee System of the United Nations constitute the intermediate step between colonial and indirect rule and the emergence of informal governance after decolonisation. It recognised an international duty to civilise non-Europeans in the form of a mandate on the respective imperial powers. Reciprocally, it recognised most of the colonised peoples, not as free peoples with their own civilisations and modes of development, but as undeveloped peoples who could and should be moulded into western ways of self-government by the developed powers. The great powers were no longer imperialists but mandatories and trustees. Moreover, this new system would, at least in theory, guard and tutor the lower people towards modernisation and self-government through their subordinate participation, as if they were children and pupils.

The defenders could thus contrast the violence, lawlessness, and corruption of unilateral colonial and indirect imperialism in the hands of competing military states with the new, international law-based, multilateral, cooperative, and proto-informal imperialism of the Mandate System. They could thus equate 'imperialism' as a whole with the former, executive mode, and redescribe the new, juridical, and developmental mode as 'non-imperial' and 'anti-imperial', or at least on the path to a post-imperial age. They could thereby employ a language of description of informal imperialism that made it appear to be post-colonial and post-imperial; a language that had been developed already in the nineteenth century by Hobson, Benjamin Kidd, Herbert Spenser, and, earlier, John Stuart Mill and Kant.⁴¹

This semantic shift gave rise to what are now called the 'two wings' of European and US imperialism. The former is usually unilateral, often in violation of international law, and explicit about the use of military intervention. It is associated with Cecil Rhodes, Theodore Roosevelt, the Bush administrations, and the US National Security Doctrine of 2002. The latter is usually multilateral, in accord with international law, and more reserved and covert about military intervention. It is associated with Woodrow Wilson, the Kennedy and Clinton administrations, and the foreign policy of the European Union. This division between the two

⁴¹ The least known of these authors, Benjamin Kidd, a follower of Spenser, presented one of the most influential theories of international law-based, tutelage imperialism and economic exploitation, *The Control of the Tropics* (London, 1898). For John Stuart Mill and imperialism, see Timothy Smith, *Liberalism and Imperial Governance in the Thought of J. S. Mill: The Architecture of a Democratization Theorem* (Berlin, 2008).

wings of western imperialism, with the latter presenting itself as non-imperial even though its objective is to remake the world in accord with the western standard of civilisation, emerged in, and sets the contours of the debate over, the 'new imperialism' of 1880–94 and reappeared in almost identical terms in the 'new imperialism' of 1990–2007.⁴² As Gandhi and his many followers observe, the idea that the western powers should not only not intervene, but also withdraw their imperial military and economic institutions from non-western societies and abjure the use of violence and economic sanctions remains beyond the limits of public reason and policy.⁴³

With the decline of the League and the dismantling of the Trustee System of the United Nations, the international law duty to civilise could be passed to the new institutions of global governance. In response to the demands of the former colonies at the United Nations, the imperial language of 'civilisation' was removed, yet it was replaced with languages that refer to the same historical processes and institutions: development, modernisation, democratisation, constitutionalisation, freedom, and good governance. The duty to civilise took on the form of transnational trade laws under GATT and the WTO that override the constitutions of the former colonies and open them to exploitation by multinational corporations, neo-liberal structural adjustment and privatisation programmes, the tutelage of civil society and aid organisations, and so on. Informal imperialism could continue apace under a language that removed any reference to imperialism.⁴⁴

Finally, despite its failure at curbing corruption and exploitation, especially in the oil-rich Middle East, the Mandate System also gave the western powers a period to prepare for the eventual transfer of powers of self-determination to the former colonies yet within the continuing field of informal economic and military dependency. This remarkable process

⁴² For the two wings in the USA, see the debate between Robert Kagan, on the unilateral side, and Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, on the multilateral side, in the journal *Foreign Affairs* (December 2004 and January 2005), and William K. Tabb, 'The Two Wings of the Eagle', *Pox Americana*, in John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney (eds), *Pox Americana: Exposing the American Empire* (New York, 2004), pp. 95–103. For the two wings in North American and European political thought, see Tully, 'On Law, Democracy and Imperialism'.

⁴³ For Gandhi and his influence, see Thomas Weber, *Gandhi as Disciple and Mentor* (Cambridge, 2004). One of the most influential anti-imperial and non-violent Gandhians today is Johann Galtung: see www.transcend.org.

⁴⁴ Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty*, pp. 196–244.

of the ‘imperialism of decolonisation’ is the subject of the next and final sections.⁴⁵

6. US Imperialism

The free trade imperialism of Section 2, the colonial and indirect foundations of Section 3, the civilisational legacy of Section 4, and the two twentieth-century tasks of Section 5 are important lineages of contemporary imperialism. However, to understand how western imperialism was able to survive decolonisation in its current informal mode it is necessary to add the specific roles that the USA played in the two tasks of Section 5. As we have seen, the USA has exercised informal governance over Central and Latin America since the early nineteenth century. The most formative justification of this (in terms similar to the two imperial rights and duties) is the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the Corollary to it by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, giving the US army and navy ‘international police power’ over the western hemisphere.⁴⁶ At the League of Nations, President Woodrow Wilson went on to claim that the Doctrine is applicable to the whole world. In the Monroe Doctrine and its corollaries the US government gave itself the right and duty to keep the economies of Latin American countries open to US trade and investment and protect its companies from expropriation. The Doctrine is designed to apply against two types of closure: any attempt by the old European colonial powers to exercise a monopoly over Latin American countries and any attempt by Latin American governments to control their own economies and protect them from foreign investment. The USA intervened militarily in the affairs of the sovereign states of Latin America hundreds of times in the nineteenth century alone.⁴⁷

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Monroe Doctrine came to be called the ‘open door’ foreign policy, associated with the notes of John

⁴⁵ The phrase ‘the imperialism of decolonisation’ comes from Ronald Robinson, ‘The Imperialism of Decolonization’, in James De Le Sueur (ed.), *Decolonization: A Reader* (London, 2003).

⁴⁶ *The Monroe Doctrine* (1823), www.ushistory.org/documents/monroe.htm; *The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine* (1904), <http://theodoreroosevelt.org/life/rooseveltcorollary.htm>.

⁴⁷ For recent surveys, see Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Foreign Policy from the Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 2007) and Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*. The classic study from the Latin American side is Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York, 1997).

Hay concerning opening China to US trade and investment.⁴⁸ In 1898, with the transition to 'corporate' capitalism and the need to expand plants and investments abroad, and a remarkably forthright debate about the future of imperialism in the USA and Europe, Charles A. Conant reformulated it in accordance with the duty of civilisation and laid out four possible modes of imperialism to choose from when intervening in Asia:

Whether the United States shall actually acquire territorial possessions, shall set up captain generalships and garrisons, [or] whether they shall adopt the middle ground of protecting sovereignties nominally independent, or whether they shall content themselves with naval stations and diplomatic representations as the basis for asserting their rights to the free commerce of the East, is a matter of detail . . . The writer is not an advocate of imperialism from sentiment, but does not fear the name if it means only that the United States shall assert their right to free markets in all of the old countries which are being opened up to the surplus resources of capitalistic countries and given the benefits of modern civilization.⁴⁹

The USA continued with the mode of informal imperialism that had served it well in the 'workshop' of Central and Latin America (a mixture of Conant's three non-colonial modes) after the barbaric experiment with colonisation of the Philippines caused a public outcry. The USA initially supported the Philippine independence fighters in their struggle against Spanish imperialism in the Spanish-American War (1898).⁵⁰ President McKinley then refused to recognise the independent Philippine Republic, declared his intention to annex the Philippines, and initiated the Philippine-American War against the independence fighters (1898–1902), killing 250,000 Filipinos and 4,200 US troops.⁵¹

This tradition of informal imperialism through the Monroe Doctrine, open-door gunboat diplomacy, and public opposition to formal colonies (due in part to its own anti-colonial revolution in 1776) is one standard

⁴⁸ John Hay to Andrew D. White, *First Open Door Note*, www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/open_door.htm; *The Open Door Notes* (1899–1900), www.pinzler.com/ushistory/opendoorsupp.html.

⁴⁹ Charles A. Conant, 'The Economic Basis of Imperialism', *North American Review*, 167, 502 (1898), pp. 326–41.

⁵⁰ Spain ceded the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and control of Cuba to the USA under the Treaty of Paris that ended the war. Guantanamo Bay was established in 1901.

⁵¹ The colonisation of the Philippines gave the USA a beachhead into the Pacific and a base to compete with the other great powers to open the Chinese market to trade and investment and put down the Boxer Rebellion. See John Bellamy Foster, Harry Magdoff, and Robert W. McChesney, 'Kipling, the "White Man's Burden", and U.S. Imperialism', in Foster and McChesney, *Pox Americana*, pp. 12–21.

lineage of US imperialism. However, there is another, longer and complementary lineage that helps to explain the persistence of and preference for informal imperialism.

At the same time as Conant was explaining the economics of imperialism and the USA was keeping European powers out of Latin American and expanding into the Pacific and Asia, Frederick Jackson Turner presented his famous frontier thesis. He explained that the USA originally moved its civilising frontier westward by means of hundreds of small wars against the savage Indian nations and by establishing armed forts along the frontier of Indian Country. Now that this frontier was closed (having reached the west coast) and private enterprise had to expand beyond the continent, new ways to extend the frontier had to be found. The dispossession of the Native Americans of their traditional territories provided 'free land' for settlers, but now there was no land left and, with the turn to corporate capitalism and wage labour, there was the threat of a socialist revolution. Corporations needed to expand their frontier of open-door commerce abroad to keep the working class employed and satisfied at home.⁵² Alfred Thayer Mahan provided the answer to this problem in his account of the role of the British navy and coaling stations in the rise of British imperialism, which he applied to the USA's extension of its civilised frontier into Asia by expanding its navy and overseas stations in his immensely influential lecture tours.⁵³

There is thus a continuous lineage of frontier imperial expansion that runs from the wars against the Pequot Indians of the 1630s to Wounded Knee in 1870, through the invasion of Texas and California, military interventions in Central and Latin America, the establishment of Guantanamo Bay (1901), and to the expansion into the Pacific (Hawaii) and Asia at the turn of the century. The militarised frontier was projected further during the Cold War, the overthrow of 'closed' regimes and 'rogue states', and the current war against terrorism. The weaponisation of space is described as the newest frontier by the Pentagon. In each phase, the frontier is invoked to rally public opinion behind the latest step in the

⁵² George Roger Taylor (ed.), *The Turner Thesis* (Toronto, 1972), Supplement, pp. 30–3.

⁵³ A. T. Mahan, *Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (London, 1898), *Lessons of the War with Spain and Other Essays* (London, 1900), and *Armaments and Arbitration, or the Place of Force in the International Relations of States* (New York, 1912). For an introduction to his influence, see Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York, 2006), pp. 33, 37, 83.

‘manifest destiny’ of US expansion, as historians of US imperialism have shown in detail.⁵⁴

The defining feature of frontier imperialism is, Turner explains, the actual encounter at the frontier: ‘the melting point between savagery and civilisation’. As he moves west, he loses his European civility and takes on the savage ways of the Indians or else he perishes. The frontier settler steps from the ‘railroad car to the birch canoe’ and ‘strips off the garments of civilisation and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin’. Not only does he begin to plant Indian corn and plough with a stick; he engages in savage warfare with the Indians. He ‘shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion’. But this transformation is not the endpoint. Once the frontier is secured, the frontier settler gradually ‘transforms the wilderness’, not in accord with ‘old Europe’, but, out of these frontier characteristics, the settlers bring about ‘the steady growth of independence on American lines’. This frontier experience of savage wars and transformation of the Wild West into the American way of life is not a single line but a never-ending renewal. It consists in the ‘return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line’ and the ‘continually beginning over again on the frontier’. It is this unique ‘perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward’ that defines the destiny of the American character. The frontier is important as a ‘military training school’ that develops the ‘qualities of the frontiersman’ and produces ‘individualism and democracy’, ‘free land’, and ‘incessant expansion’. It ‘will continually demand a wider field for its exercise’. In the supplements to the original text, Turner turns to the debate over US imperial expansion abroad and projects this frontier thesis on to the political and commercial expansion of the USA into ‘lands beyond the seas’.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The classic accounts of frontier imperialism are Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Baltimore, MD, 1935); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* (Middleton, WI, 1973); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-hating and Empire Building* (Norman, OK, 1997 [1980]); Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*; and V. G. Kiernan, *America The New Imperialism: from White Settlement to World Hegemony* (London, 2005). For the weaponisation of space as the latest militarised frontier, see Raymond Duvall and Jonathan Havercroft, ‘Taking Sovereignty out of this World: Space Weapons and Empire of the Future’, *Review of International Studies*, 34, 4 (2008), pp. 755–75. For the overthrow of insubordinate regimes, see Kinzer, *Overthrow*.

⁵⁵ Taylor (ed.), *Turner Thesis*, pp. 4–5, 12, 22–3, 31. See Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence*, and Drinnon, *Facing West* for analysis of the Turner thesis in this context.

Turner's influential analysis of US imperialism as a 'perennial rebirth' through the 'return to primitive ways' on the expanding frontier was reinforced by Rudyard Kipling in the famous poem he wrote in support of the colonisation of the Philippines, *White Man's Burden: The United States and Philippine Islands*. Just as Turner argued, Kipling declared that the troops on the frontier had to abandon their civilised ways and engage in 'the savage wars of peace' to defend and extend the frontier of western civilisation. The civilised citizens who protest do not understand why the reversion to savagery is necessary and the uncivilised peoples who resist and hate the imperialists do not understand the gift of civilisation extended to them. The soldier, therefore, must plug his ears to their protestations and stay the course of the civilising mission. This is the thankless 'white man's burden'.⁵⁶ When Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, the Committee praised 'his imperialism' for taking into account 'the sentiments of others'.⁵⁷

In 2003, Max Boot, one of the leading proponents of US informal imperialism today, wrote a celebratory history of the frontier wars that the USA has fought in its rise to world power and an exhortation to continue them. He invoked Kipling's poem in his title, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*. In 2006, Robert D. Kaplan, another influential imperialist, interviewed US troops stationed around the world in the frontier bases and savage wars of the 'American Empire' for *Imperial Grunts: On the Ground with the American Military, from Mongolia to the Philippines to Iraq and Beyond*. He begins with a quotation from 1884 which situates the story in the lineage of Indian wars: 'In a campaign against Indians, the front is all around, and the rear is nowhere.' He links this to a quotation from a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1996: 'Imperialism moved forward . . . mainly because men on the periphery . . . pressed to enlarge the boundaries of empire, often without orders, even against orders.' In the prologue, entitled 'Injun Country', he presents the central thesis: the war against terrorism today is a continuation of the savage frontier wars against the Indians yesterday. This is not an interpretation that he imposed on the interviews. It is how the soldiers themselves understand their situation: "'Welcome to Injun Country'" was the refrain I heard from troops from Colombia to the Philippines, including Afghanistan and

⁵⁶ Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (New York, 1940).

⁵⁷ Cited in Foster et al., 'Kipling and U.S. Imperialism', p. 17.

Iraq.' The 'war on terrorism', he continues, 'was really about taming the frontier'.⁵⁸

During the early years of decolonisation, one of the first leaders to articulate the compatibility of the granting of self-determination to the former colonies with the continuation and expansion of informal, frontier imperialism was President Woodrow Wilson. He argued that most colonised peoples should be able to exercise the right of self-determination.⁵⁹ Yet, at the same time, the USA has the continuing duty to educate the elites, train the military, and intervene from time to time to guide self-determination towards openness to free trade, market economies, and western-style representative democratisation. He saw no contradiction in proclaiming the right of self-determination and intervening militarily in China and Central and Latin America.⁶⁰ Major-General Smedley Butler, the famous marine in charge of implementing the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination and military intervention, called it by its more familiar name in Latin America, 'gangster capitalism':

I spent 33 years and four months in active service . . . I served in all commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major-General. And during that time, I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism . . . I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street . . . I helped to purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.⁶¹

Chalmers Johnson, one of the leading historians of US informal imperialism, summarises Wilson's legacy in the following way:

Wilson . . . provided an idealistic grounding for American imperialism, what in our own time would become a 'global mission' to 'democratise' the world. More than any other figure, he provided the intellectual foundations for an interven-

⁵⁸ Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: On the Ground with the American Military, from Mongolia to the Philippines to Iraq and Beyond* (New York, 2006), p. 4.

⁵⁹ The major exception was the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

⁶⁰ Woodrow Wilson, 'An Address to the Senate', 27 January 1917. See Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 114–16. William A. Williams, in *Empire as a Way of Life*, presents Wilson's doctrine as a 'contradiction' a generation ago, but most historians see the two sides of it—self-determination and informal control—as complementary (see note 54 above).

⁶¹ Smedley Butler, 'On Interventionism' [1933], www.fas.org/man/smedley.htm.

tionist foreign policy, expressed in humanitarian and democratic rhetoric. Wilson remains the godfather of those contemporary ideologists who justify American power in terms of exporting democracy.⁶²

Following in the traditions of Kant, Mill and Spenser in the nineteenth century, a wide range of twentieth-century liberal and social democratic political and legal theorists have endorsed this liberal or 'democratisation' wing of US and European imperialism.⁶³

7. Contemporary Imperialism

In virtue of these several lineages, the USA and the former imperial powers were thus well prepared to govern informally the transfer of political power to the former colonies during decolonisation; to block alternative, non-aligned forms of self-reliant economic and political development; to overthrow insubordinate regimes; and to control the way the nationalist elites constructed the new nation states so their resources, labour, and markets remain open to a global economy dominated by western multinational corporations, as Gallagher and Robinson explained.⁶⁴ They were also able to triumph militarily over Soviet imperialism and its dependencies during the Cold War. Then, as the opening sections foreshadowed, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and official non-governmental organisations continued the civilising processes, renamed democratisation, that the Mandate System began.⁶⁵ New regimes of transnational trade laws that override domestic constitutions and have openness to free trade as their first priority were put in place by GATT and the World Trade Organization. A series of international laws of securitisation after 11 September 2001 through Security Council Resolutions placed further limits on opposition to the neo-liberal order.⁶⁶ The burden

⁶² Chalmers Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York, 2004), p. 51.

⁶³ For the nineteenth century, see Duncan Bell (ed.), *Victorian Visions of Global Order* (Cambridge, 2007). For the twentieth century, see Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 2005); Susan Marks, *The Riddle of All Constitutions* (Oxford, 2002); Simpson, *Great Powers*; Koskemienni, *Gentle Civilizer of Nations*.

⁶⁴ For more recent scholarship, see Prasenjit Duara (ed.), *Decolonization: Perspectives from Then and Now* (London, 2004).

⁶⁵ Alison Ayers, 'Imperial Liberties: Democratisation and Governance in the "New" World Order', *Political Studies*, Online early articles, April 2008, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2008.00723.x.

⁶⁶ Kim Scheppele, 'The International State of Emergency: Challenges to Constitutionalism after September 11', unpublished MS (Princeton University, 2007).

of debt, exploitation, environmental damage, and dysfunctional institutions inherited from colonial and indirect imperialism, especially in Africa and the Middle East, deepened the dependency and inequality.⁶⁷

As in earlier phases of western imperialism, the lineage that underlies all the rest is the global military paramountcy of the leading imperial power. For the majority of the world's population would not acquiesce in the present dependency, exploitation, inequality, and 'low intensity democracy' for a minute if it were not backed up by the overwhelming force of arms.⁶⁸ No one presents the importance of this lineage more forcefully than one of its leading proponents, Thomas Friedman. He states:

[T]he hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without a McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.⁶⁹

The 750 US military bases around the world provide the local base for the covert and overt exercise of this hidden fist of the old imperial right and duty to keep non-western societies open to free trade dominated by western corporations. The bases in turn are supported by continuous surveillance of the planet by navy, air force, satellites, and the coming weaponisation of space. The Pentagon divides the world into five areas, 'similar', as Kagan observes, 'to the way that the Indian Country of the American West had been divided in the mid-nineteenth century'.⁷⁰ These imperial provinces or 'commands' are governed by five US Commanders in Chief (CINC) or 'proconsuls' that report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They exercise, as the Pentagon website states, 'full spectrum dominance' over the planet in the name of 'commerce and freedom'.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Mahood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ, 1995). For the continuity of the war in Iraq with earlier indirect imperialism, see Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil* (London, 2007) and Fisk, *Great War for Civilization*.

⁶⁸ For 'low intensity democracy', see the area studies in Barry Gills, Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson (eds), *Low Intensity Democracy: Political Power in the New World Order* (London, 1993).

⁶⁹ Thomas Friedman, *New York Times Magazine*, 28 March 1999.

⁷⁰ Kagan, *Imperial Grunts*, p. 4.

⁷¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010*, www.dtic.mil/jv2010/jvpub.htm. For this global military network, see Bacevich, *American Empire*, and Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire* (both authors served in the military), and James Carroll, *The House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power* (New York, 2007).

Conclusion

Fortunately for the future of life on this small planet, this half millennium of tyranny against diverse civilisational forms of self-reliance and association has not gone unopposed. Millions of courageous humans have resisted, modified, and outmanoeuvred its reach (and overreach) and continue to do so today. These counter-traditions in the imperialised and imperial countries are both possible and effective because the informal, interactive, diffuse, and manifestly unjust characteristics of informal imperialism make it impossible for the powers-that-be to exercise effectively full spectrum dominance, let alone hegemony. Moreover, millions have turned away from imperialism as a way of life and kept alive, cultivated, and invented alternative modernities in the interstices of western imperialism. These are alternative forms of political, legal, and economic associations based on self-reliance, fair trade, non-violence, deep ecology, and cooperative networks. This contrapuntal story is for another volume, on the lineages of anti-imperialism and of existing alternatives to imperialism.

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