IF WE PAUSE TO ASK OURSELVES, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, which political institutions constitute the world's major depositories of power, we would have to reply: states. It is the same answer that any seasoned observer would have given in 1815. In the course of the last two centuries, state structures have only increased in the scale and scope of their dominion—a fact strikingly illustrated by a glance at the political map. With the exception of Antarctica, the entire land-surface of the planet is now divided into the bright, bold blocks of colour that denote states’ territory. If the United States is green, Canada is red: while inside states' borders, the colours are homogeneous. The cartographical convention testifies to a certain political reality: however mixed the human experience—social, religious, ethnic—within its borders, unitary state power predominates overall. It is states that have armed forces; control police; mint currency; permit or refuse entrance to their lands; states that recognize citizens' rights and impose their duties. Since states began, there has also been a slow, complex interaction between those who held power and those who were subject to it. In part of the world—fortunately, a growing one—the arbitrary use of government force is now subject to the checks and balances of a wider political community. The state has evolved, under the pressure of citizens, to become not only a tool of dominion but also an instrument of service. Never in the history of the human race has there been such a successful structure, one which has, defacto, become of crucial importance to all the inhabitants of the planet. No single religion—not even all the religions put together—has ever held as much power as the world's states possess today.

Since their inception, states have had to come to terms with their own internal heterogeneity: their populations are made up of people who speak different languages, have different traditions, profess different
religions and belong to different races. Some states may be more homogeneous than others, but none can consider itself totally uniform. In the course of centuries, states have used a variety of means to pursue a greater degree of homogeneity: some have sought to found their own national identity on religion, others on language, blood or race; the concept of the nation—not to be found in nature—has served precisely for this purpose. States have tried to impose homogeneity on their populations through treaties and negotiations, wars and revolutions; by altering their borders, provoking exoduses or incorporating new territory. Populations have been forcibly converted to the dominant religion and vernacular languages rooted out; where this proved impossible, the die-hards have been deported, repressed or even slaughtered. States have attempted to drum up support by fomenting nationalist or patriotic sentiment against a foreign menace or internal threat; they have tried to strengthen themselves internally through the creation of a unified cultural identity, drawing on the flag, national achievements, even sports teams and television programmes. Other states, more enlightened, have looked for institutional devices to regulate, rather than homogenize, diversity; they have legislated for religious tolerance and, for over two hundred years, have developed forms of consensual government endorsed in constitutional charters.

States have always faced constraints, of course, both at home and abroad. International power politics imposes limitations on sovereignty: only a few states have been fully independent and not had to account for their choices to other, more powerful rivals, whether under threat of open military intervention or through lower grades of pressure. Internal adversaries have posed a different sort of threat. Neither nature nor civil society are great respecters of a state's frontiers. Men and women love travelling and describing what they see, imitating what their neighbours do, allowing themselves to be convinced and even converted. Trade—the movement of goods and people—has flowed across state boundaries.

Only the most obtuse and despotic regimes, however, have attempted to prevent their subjects from travelling abroad and seeing what life is like elsewhere. Most states have merely sought to regulate international exchange through passports, customs authorities and financial rules. Until a short time ago, state authorization was even needed to translate books, or profess religious beliefs different from the established creed. The apparatus of norms and permits imposed by the state...
was a sign of its attitude towards the individual: You are mine, the state authority seemed to warn, but I benevolently allow you to travel.\(^1\) Going further, states have set up transnational arrangements, bilateral agreements and multilateral institutions to regulate events outside their own borders. An impressive array of sophisticated juridical constructions now exists, including international law, diplomacy and numerous intergovernmental organizations whose services states can draw upon to regulate relations among themselves.

*Globalization and the state*

Recently, however, the state system has been showing signs of pressure. The new fissures have not appeared overnight and there is no reason to believe that it will collapse like the Roman Empire; many critics probably exaggerate the size of the cracks. But irrespective of the depth of the present crisis, it is evident that many of the problems of the political organization of contemporary society go beyond the scope of the nationstate. Firstly, a significant number of the problems that states have to address lie outside their autonomous jurisdiction. The planet is experiencing a process of growing interdependence: the US Federal Reserve’s decision to raise the interest rate may provoke a substantial rise in unemployment in Mexico; the explosion of a nuclear power station in the Ukraine can trigger environmental disasters throughout Europe; the lack of prompt information about the diffusion of AIDS in Nigeria may cause epidemics throughout the world.\(^2\) Here, state sovereignty is not called into question by armies, missiles and armoured cars, but by elements which spontaneously escape national government control. This process has for some decades now been known as globalization.\(^3\) States have naturally sought to react to it, though the traditional response of creating intergovernmental institutions to manage specific systems—trade, industrial property, nuclear energy or epidemics—has met with only partial success.

---

Secondly, in the course of the eighties and nineties the state has been challenged by a new critique from within. I am not referring here to the classic process of revolution, whose fundamental aim is to replace one government (or form of government) with another, but to the belief of growing numbers of people that their existing state is too centralized for their needs. Political forces bent on greater local autonomy, or even secession, have gained in strength—witness the myriad smaller states that have sprung up since the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. In Canada, Spain, Great Britain and Italy, separatist forces have consolidated their role. We have also seen the painful phenomenon of peoples left stateless, or oppressed by the alien state to which they belong. The interstate system has so far failed, for example, to provide an adequate political community for Palestinians or for Kurds.

Globalization has also brought the problem of mass migration in its wake. In Western cities whole immigrant communities with a language and culture of their own have taken root. Turks in Berlin, Chinese in Los Angeles, Arabs in Paris, Bangladeshis in London, Vietnamese in Montreal, all pose new challenges for consolidated political unity. These are minorities who do not aim at the creation of independent states but do want their cultural identity to be respected and protected. Such enclaves within existing political communities—will grow in importance in the course of the next century. Will the state system be capable of meeting their needs?

Taken together, the external threats to the state from the process of globalization and the internal demands for greater autonomy give new force to the old aphorism that the state is too large for small issues, too small for bigger ones. It is here that pressures arise for a new form of world governance, more potent than anything that exists—an ideal evoked so often after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But what form should this take?

States have best met the needs of their populations where they have involved the people in running public affairs, and it must be said that one of the great successes of the state system over the last two centuries

has been the quantitative extension of democracy. Despite all the uncertainties and ambiguities of
the process in neophyte countries, and the persisting contradictions of low turnout and high
candidacy costs in the developed nations, parliamentary democracy is increasingly emerging as a
legitimate—and legitimizing—form of government. The last decade of the twentieth century will
be remembered for the interminable queues of men and women in the East and South, waiting
patiently outside polling station s to partic ipate in the sacred rite of democracy— free elections—in
countries where it had previously been prohibited.

**Internal democracy and international system**

To what extent has the new wave of democratization washed over into the international system?
International political choices have never been dictated by anarchy alone. From the Congress of
Vienna to the end ofthe Cold War, threats, wars, accords and diplomacy have regulated affairs
between states; but this process has never been inspired by the principles of democracy. In place
of transparency of action, there have been summits held behind closed doors; cunning diplomats
and secret agents have usurped the functions of elected representatives, and judicial power has
been overshadowed by intimidation or reprisal. In the final analysis, it is force—political, economic
or, ultimately, military—that has regulated conflict. International institutions—the League of
Nations, the UN—founded on such democratic principles as constitutional charters, transparency
of action and independent judicial authority, have been hamstrung in carrying out the noble tasks
that their statutes envisaged. Democracy has achieved real gains within states, but very meagre
ones in the wider sphere, both in terms of relations between states and on global issues.

What explains this paradox? One argument advanced is that it is impossible to deal in a
democratic fashion with undemocratic governments, and that the opportunistic conduct of
democracies in foreign policy is actually caused by the existence of auocratic regimes. This thesis
has been used to justify the Cold War policies of the liberal democracies: troops sent to Vietnam
to check the advance of Soviet communism;

5 The prolDlems of democratic consolidation are discussed in a growing literature. See J. Linz and
A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South
America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore 1996.

**ARCHIBUG I: Cosmopolitics** I41
apartheid in South Africa justified as a means of keeping out the 'red menace'; the elected government in Chile overthrown to avoid a 'second Cuba'. We might, then, have expected a radical change in the foreign policy of liberal states after the fall of the Berlin Wall: this has conspicuously not been the case.

A further contention is that democracies do not fight each other. New statistical evidence has recently been adduced in support of this thesis, which proposes that if all states were democratic, the problems of war, self-determination and human rights would automatically be solved; global democracy itself would result through the simple adjustment of national systems. As an argument this is gravely flawed. Firstly, it is not clear which countries deserve the licence of 'democratic', or who would be authorized to issue it in the first place. The attitudes of other states—friends or foes—will clearly be distorted by prevailing interests. To cite a few glaring examples: are we really convinced that Indonesia is more democratic than Iraq, Guatemala than Cuba, or Turkey than Serbia? If, as suggested by scholars who have tried to measure the actual levels of democracy within different countries, it emerged that in all these states democratic participation was either non-existent or merely formal, how do we justitT the difference in attitude towards Turkey—a full member of the military community of western democracies (NATO)—and Serbia, whom they bombed?

Secondly, the huge social and cultural variations that exist in the world inevitably entail a corresponding unevenness in political practice. The long march towards democracy has to be made by countries that walk at different speeds: the institutional system has to accept diversiTy. Finally, there is no historical or theoretical proof that the more democratic states really are more respectful of international legality than other powers. The United States, Great Britain and France—industrial powers who vaunt their long-established liberal-democratic traditions—do not hide the fact that they defend their own interests in the international sphere. The foreign interventions of democratic states are not always inspired by the principles of their own constitutions: the non-democratic peoples

ó An articulated exposition of this thesis can be found in B. Russett, Grasping the Democratic Peace, Princeton 1993. Some of the most significant contributions to this debate are now collected in M. E. Brown, S. M. Jones and S. E. Miller, eds, Debating the Democratic Peace, Cambridge, MA 1996.

I42 N L R 4
of Indochina had to conquer their independence by fighting first against the troops of democratic France and then against those of liberal-democratic America. The history of democracies is sadly scarred by aggression against communities which, if not democratically constituted, certainly had the sacrosanct right to their own independence. The history of colonialism shows that Britain, France and the United States—the last two famous for their declarations of human rights—while they may have respected these principals with increasing rigour inside their own borders, have not given a second thought to trampling over the rights of Indians, North Africans or Native Americans. To be democratic with your 'own' people does not necessarily entail being democratic with others as well.

In short, something more than internal democracy is called for if we are to attempt to solve the social, political and environmental problems facing the world. What is needed is the democratization of the international community, a process joining together states with different traditions, at varying stages of development. This has been defined as the cosmopolitical democracy project.

Cosmopolitical democracy

Cosmopolitical democracy is based on the assumption that important objectives—control of the use of force, respect for human rights, self-determination—will be obtained only through the extension and development of democracy. It differs from the general approach to cosmopolitanism in that it does not merely call for global responsibility but actually attempts to apply the principles of democracy internationally. For such problems as the protection of the environment, the regulation

of migration and the use of natural resources to be subjected to necessary democratic control, democracy must transcend the borders of single states and assert itself on a global level.

Many projects have envisaged a universal republic or world government founded on consensus and legality. There are real conceptual and political difficulties, however, in importing the democratic model conceived and developed at the state level on to a meta-state dimension. It is clearly not enough simply to project the process of internal development that states have undergone over the last two centuries on to a world scale. Fundamental aspects of that experience—the majority principle, the formulation of norms and the use of coercive power—will have to be reformulated, if they are to be applied globally.

Cosmopolitical democracy does not argue—as the federalist tradition does—that existing states must be dissolved to create a world state. Certain political and administrative functions can only be performed by states; but neither can the problems that states currently face be solved simply by increasing their size. The global extension of democracy thus involves both a new form of organization, which does not seek to merely reproduce the state model on a world scale, and a revision of the powers and functions of states at an international level, which will deprive them of the oligarchic power they now enjoy.

Above all, what distinguishes cosmopolitical democracy from other such projects is its attempt to create institutions which enable the voice of individuals to be heard in global affairs, irrespective of their resonance at home. Democracy as a form of global governance thus needs to be realized on three different, interconnected levels: within states, between states and at a world level.

Within states themselves, the aim must be to encourage the wave of popular participation that has swept the planet for the last decade, above all within countries—half the world’s states—that still have autocratic regimes. We should caution, however, against democratic fundamentalism; paraphrasing Robespierre, we cannot make people democratic

against their will. There is a widespread attitude among some supporters of democracy (more accurately: some Western politicians) which may be summed up as: ‘I, democratic state, teach you what you have to do—by fair means or foul.’ Ineffective in practice—and intolerably paternalistic—this approach is itself the very negation of democracy, which presupposes the existence of a dialogue between speakers of equal dignity. The community of democratic states may make an important contribution to the development of democracy in autocratic countries, but such support will be all the more effective if it anchors itself within civil society and works to further existing claims, in compliance with international rules.

Between states, the existing network of intergovernmental bodies—the United Nations and its various agencies—clearly needs to be strengthened. Numerous proposals have been made for the democratic reform of the UN, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Court of International Justice and so on: all too often it has been the western democracies that have shot them down—another example of how loth the West can be to accept democratic procedures that conflict with its own interests.  

*Global democracy*

Further problems arise on issues such as environmental protection and the defence of human rights where a democratic state contains no representatives of the communities that suffer the—direct or indirect—consequences of the policies it employs. It can be argued that it is consistent with the interests of French people for a democratic French government to carry out nuclear experiments in the Pacific Ocean, if all the advantages go to France and the radioactive waste only harms people in another hemisphere.  

9 Ambitious proposals to reform the world order have been formulated by the Commission on Global Governance: *Our Common Neighbourhood*, Oxford 1995. On the issue of democratization, the former Secretary-General of the UN, Boutros-Ghali, has released a specific Agenda (*Agenda for Democratization*, New York 1996) which, unfortunately, received much less attention than his previous *Agenda for Peace*, New York 1992.


ARCHIBUGI: *Cosmopolitics* 145
Italy, France or Great Britain if Iraq, Iran or Turkey commit genocide against the Kurdish population; and even if these states decide to intervene outside their borders, how can it be decided whether their actions are motivated by self-interest or ethical responsibility? A parallel series of democratic institutions needs to be developed on a global level, in order to involve the world's citizens in decision-making in areas such as these, irrespective of the political role they are allowed to play within their own states.

Why is international democratic practice so backward and so slow? Given the dramatic growth and efficiency of multinational enterprises and military force (think of NATO), it seems astonishing that political parties should still be confined almost exclusively to the national level. The Socialist and Christian Democrat Internationals are devoid of effective power, while the Communist International, founded on the idea of the unity of the world proletariat, ceased to have an independent role long before Stalin suppressed it. Europe now has a single market, a single currency and a parliament elected by universal suffrage; yet European parties operate essentially on a national basis, the most evident demonstration that political representation has remained locked inside state borders in an era in which civil and economic society has come internationalized. This is the true deficit of democracy: the existence of organized transnational interests far removed from any popular mandate. Simultaneously, new social and political subjects are appearing in international life. Movements for peace, human rights and environmental protection are playing a growing role which, while it should not be overestimated, nevertheless demands appropriate institutional channels if all the world's citizens are to participate.

What form should these institutions take? A world parliament on the model of the European parliament is one proposal, and the Italian Peace Association has organized world assemblies, taking care to invite representatives of peoples rather than states. As far as individual duties are concerned, the statute of the International Criminal Court has now been approved; if it is effectively instituted, it will at last allow due procedure against the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. Progress is unlzear

12 See Democracy and the Global Order, pp. 16-17.
13 See On a Humane Governance, p. 17.
ably slow, but political institutions must adjust eventually to the boom of globalization. Why shouldn’t the process of democracy—which has already had to overcome a thousand obstacles within individual states—assert itself beyond national borders, when every other aspect of human life today, from economy to culture, from sport to social life, has a global dimension?

**Humanitarian intervention**

The model of cosmopolitical democracy summed up here has immediate policy implications. In what circumstances is the international community entitled to interfere in the domestic affairs of other states? How should it react to instances of ethnic cleansing, repression and the violation of human rights? It should be clear by now that the cosmopolitical project does not base itself upon the stubborn defence of state sovereignty. Immanuel Kant noted over two centuries ago that people had already reached such degree of association that ‘a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere’. Yet international human rights protection devices can only respond to a few of the thousands of abuses committed or consented to by governments every year; in such a situation, humanitarian intervention is too precious a concept to be decided on the hoof or, worse still, invoked to mask special interests or designs on power.

During the NATO air raids on Serbia, Tony Blair (the shrillest of the supporters of ‘humanitarian’ war) claimed: ‘It’s right for the international community to use military force to prevent genocide and protect human rights, even if it entails a violation of national sovereignty.’ Yet his argument—clearly paving the way for future military adventures in the post-Cold War era—says nothing about which authority may use force to violate state sovereignty, who such force should be used against or which human rights have to be protected. Studying the statements of politicians and commentators in support of military intervention to defend human rights, it becomes clear that a coherent philosophy to guide the international community (inevitably spearheaded by the liberal democracies on such occasions) simply does not exist.


While the accuracy of military technology has increased so much that 'smart' missiles now have a margin of error of mere metres, there is a total short-sightedness about the social objectives to be achieved by war. A decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the seventeenth-century notion of state sovereignty is threatened by something older still: the law of the jungle.

In contrast to this, the cosmopolitical perspective on humanitarian intervention is informed by three principles: tolerance, legitimacy and effectiveness. Tolerance serves to set the violations of law within the appropriate political and anthropological framework. The history of the human race is marked by amazement at the customs of others. Europeans have been at once leaders in studying the habits of other populations, developing the whole field of anthropology, and ferocious oppressors of customs different from their own. The disease of violence and the saving antibody of toleration have cohabited here. The Spanish Conquistadors justified their genocide of the pre-Colombian peoples on the grounds of the Aztec practice of human sacrifice, during the very years in which the plazas of Spain blazed with the bonfires on which heretics and witches were put to death—while the outraged cries of observers such as Bartolomé de Las Casas set another standard, opposing violent repression with appeals to tolerance. Nothing could be further from the principle of global responsibility than a policy of religious or racial prejudice. Far from demonizing 'otherness', cosmopolitical democracy would seek to understand the underlying reasons behind human rights conflicts and apply positive pressures to solve them.

Secondly, it is important to establish a clear gradation of methods to be used when the international community does decide to intervene within a given state. Economic or cultural sanctions (as used against the system of apartheid in South Africa) are quite a different thing to air raids. 'Humanitarian intervention' at present is an umbrella term comprising an array of practices which differ widely in their juridical and political impact. Military force should only be used as an extreme measure, and then only on the basis of recognized international legitimization. By this I mean, first and foremost, the application of existing procedures, as envisaged in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

These procedures are by no means perfect and may require alteration; what would be unjustifiable would be to rewrite them unilaterally, for the convenience of major states. Where these norms have proved themselves to be totally inadequate is in regulating intervention in cases of rights being violated inside a sovereign state—as so frequently in the last ten years. Here it is necessary for intervention to be legitimated by new, meta-state institutions, to prevent the slogan ‘humanitarian intervention’ being used as a cover for narrow geopolitical interests.

There is undoubtedly a contradiction here: the cosmopolitical project would delegate to structures devoid of coercive powers (international judicial bodies, institutions of the world's citizens) the job of establishing when force should be used, while asking states, who monopolize the means of military might, to acquiesce in their decisions. But if the governments that defined themselves as 'enlightened' during the Gulf and Kosovo wars intend to perform their democratic mandate effectively, they should consult global civil society and international judicial authorities before flexing their muscles. Once humanitarian intervention in another state has been legitimated, a rigorous separation must be made between the responsibilities of the rulers and those of the ruled, especially where force is involved. It is intolerable to apply sanctions indiscriminately to all members of a community. If humanitarian interference is justified as an operation of international policing, the principle of protecting individuals and minimizing so-called 'collateral damage' must be fully espoused. A democratic order is founded on the premise that sanctions should affect only those who have violated the law.

If a government commits any offence against a neighbouring sovereign or subject, and its own people continue to support and protect it . . . they thereby become accessory and liable to punishment along with it . . . In a like manner a nation must either allow itself to be liable for the damages, or give up the government altogether,' wrote Adam Smith. On this basis, the international community has felt authorized to repress the Iraqi and Serbian people for the actions of Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Miloevic.

In the cosmopolitical perspective, on the contrary, the citizens of an autocratic country whose government performs unlawful actions would be treated as hostages in a kidnapping: force should be used precisely to guarantee the security of the citizens of the enemy country. What is striking about the interventions in Iraq in 1991 and Serbia in 1999 is the total lack of correspondence between the culprits of the crimes and the individuals who suffered the sanctions. Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic are more firmly in power than ever, while fresh waves of suffering have been inflicted on their people. 'Humanitarian intervention' may be judged effective if it saves victims and brings presumed criminals to justice, and it is this criterion of effectiveness that should be borne in mind in planning an operation.

These principles are clearly different from the ones which inspired the Gulf War and the 'humanitarian' intervention in Kosovo. In both cases, the international alliance, guided by the democratic states, resorted to the use of military force long before other means, such as diplomacy and sanctions, had been exhausted. The cosmopolitical deontology proposed here would have envisaged a very different course, basing itself on the civilian populations, the first victims of war. It would have offered a prospect of development founded on social and economic integration, depriving the warmongers of mercenary arms and support. It would have asked the peoples in question to turn against dictators who spoke of ethnic cleansing or the annexing of other states. It would have risked sending in huge numbers of 'blue helmets' on the ground, accompanied by numerous representatives of civil society and peace workers.

Would this have proved effective in restoring sovereignty to Kuwait or ending the attacks on Albanians in Kosovo? It is hard to say. But one only has to see the results of interventionism in Iraq to realize that the international community's cure was much worse than the sickness. Almost a decade after the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein is still in power in a country crippled by his dictatorship and the West's embargo. Milosevic rules virtually unchallenged in Serbia while, in Kosovo, ethnic cleansing continues, the only difference being the identity of the people on the receiving end and the direction in which the refugees are walking. This is not the cosmopolitical responsibility we are fighting for.