Third World Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp 253–280, 2005

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Locating the Global South in the Theorisation of the Cold War: capitalist development, social revolution and geopolitical conflict

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ABSTRACT *In this article I seek to outline an alternative way of theorising the place of the 'South' in the understanding of the Cold War. In contrast to mainstream theories of the Cold War within International Relations that suggest a rather subordinate or background role, separate from the primary causal dynamic of the Cold War—the bilateral superpower antagonism—I put forward an argument that places the South at the centre of the Cold War. I do this by defining the Cold War as a form of global social conflict between states and social forces associated with the rival social systems of capitalism and communism. Through this I argue that the superpowers should be understood as states with specific socioeconomic properties and contradictions, reflecting forms of politics not confined to themselves alone. Consequently, the Cold War should be seen as a form of globalised social conflict between the expanding and uneven nature of capitalism and the communist revolutionary challenges to it carried through by revolutionary movements in the South. The Cold War, then, was as much about the revolutionary consequences of uneven capitalist development as it was about the bipolar relationship.*

> The very term 'Cold War' may be a misleading description, for unlike its prototype, this 'war' has no centrality in terms of geopolitical space...its contested areas are themselves shifting and non-delimitable.[1]

In the study of the Cold War and the explanation of its end, the role of the regions of the 'South' have tended to be eclipsed by what most cold war scholarship sees as the determining importance of the bilateral US–Soviet conflict and subsequent accommodation.[2] Where the South has been discussed, in both the historical narrative of the Cold War and in the explanation of the Cold War's end, it has been in a way that suggests a rather subordinate or background role, separate from the primary causal dynamic of the Cold War—the bilateral superpower antagonism. Consequently, the

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ISSN 0143-6597 print/ISSN 1360-2241 online/05/020253–28 © 2005 *Third World Quarterly*
DOI: 10.1080/0143659042000339119

understanding of the South in the mainstream[3] discussion and theorisation of the Cold War has been based on the assumption that the South was on the receiving end of decisions, and was 'affected by changes' determined outside the South.[4] The key *dramatis personae* involved in the Cold War drama in the South are largely seen as either 'proxy' agents fulfilling the objectives of their supposed 'masters' in Moscow and Washington, respectively, or are viewed as actors effecting changes separate from, indeed corrosive of, the 'Cold War system'.[5] Furthermore, the 'flashpoints' of crises in the South that punctuated the Cold War tend to be seen as products of superpower manoeuvring rather than the outcome of localised conflicts and crises. What such tendencies suggest is that the Cold War was, in large measure, 'imposed' on the South as superpower conflict spread from the cauldron of postwar Europe to the hinterland of the periphery.

My concern in this article is to outline an alternative theoretical framework to understand the Cold War and, in doing so, to place the South at the centre of the Cold War in its evolution and end. I will do this by defining the Cold War as a form of global social conflict between states and social forces associated with the rival social systems of capitalism and communism.[6] Through this theoretical prism the superpowers are conceptualised as states with specific socioeconomic properties and contradictions.[7] What this means is that although I recognise the geopolitical dominance of the superpowers in the history of the Cold War, I also distinguish the importance of other actors (not just states) and 'fronts' in the Cold War, thereby drawing attention to the sociological character of each superpower, and to how each reflected a *form* of politics not confined to itself alone. Consequently, although the Cold War was most clearly evident in the post-1945 clash between the USSR and the USA, this conflict was *symptomatic* of a wider antagonism between the expanding and uneven nature of capitalism and the communist revolutionary challenges to it. This systemic challenge was manifested in the struggles led by revolutionary and communist movements within and between states as much as it was in the form of the Soviet geopolitical challenge after 1945.

The superpowers, then, were part of a social dynamic associated with the uneven and contradictory outcomes of global capitalist development. It is this social dynamic that links the emergence of the USSR in 1917 (and the wider international communist movement), and the post-war antagonism between Moscow and Washington, to the recurrence of crisis and social revolution in the South after 1945. Simply put, the Cold War emerged out of the crisis wrought by the uneven and differentiated nature of global capitalist development. Whereas the locus of crisis was centred on Europe after 1917, evident in the intensification of social conflict and challenges to capitalist rule in central and southern Europe, notably Germany and Spain, after World War Two the centre of crisis shifted from Europe to the global South with successive waves of revolutionary struggle and social revolution led by radical nationalist and communist forces linked, to varying degrees, with the USSR.

Such an understanding of the Cold War incorporates the South much more centrally into the history of the Cold War. Thus, rather than subordinating developments in the South to the machinations of either superpower or decoupling them from the bipolar conflict, the theoretical framework outlined here argues that developments within the South not only had a significant impact on the superpower relationship, but also emerged, in a number of cases, outside the direct *policies* of each superpower. What this suggests is that the South was a factor in the domestic and international politics of each superpower to a much greater degree than most mainstream theories of the Cold War recognise.[8]

The Cold War was not, then, confined to strategic or ideological conflict but rather demonstrated how these two forms of conflict were associated with and emergent from the wider processes of social conflict, and the challenges to the American postwar capitalist order that shifted in time and space. These challenges were led by a particular form of political struggle mobilising specific social groups to achieve political objectives antagonistic to capitalism in general and the USA in particular. Furthermore, with the end of the Cold War, the contradictions and struggles that bedevilled the postwar international system and the opposition to the American-led order have not evaporated, they have merely changed form. In this sense the Cold War had uneven and contradictory ends, which were obscured during the 1990s by the apparent success and global ascendancy of the liberal democratic formula of capitalist markets and representative democracy. While this liberal formula may have 'triumphed' in eastern and central Europe, the record for the rest of the world and the other zones of Cold War conflict has been more mixed. Indeed, the hostility to American capitalist power has continued but the nature of that opposition has changed; becoming on the one hand 'progressive' when associated with the 'post-socialist' anti-globalisation movement, on the other, reactionary, as in the case of Islamic-inspired terrorism. [9]

My argument has two aspects. The first will examine the impact of developments within the South, in particular the periodic ruptures of revolutionary crisis, on the international relations of each superpower, and also on the 'bipolar relationship'. The second part addresses the way in which each superpower related to states and social forces in the South. My concern here will be to highlight how the differing socioeconomic properties of each superpower conditioned the nature of each one's relations with the South. These two strands of argument combine to produce a more balanced causal dynamic to the evolution of the Cold War, and also bring to the surface a much richer social and political content to the Cold War conflict.

Finally, by emphasising the importance of developments and political actors within the South in the Cold War we are able to better understand the various regions and states of the South in the post-Cold War era; what characterises them and the problems that they confront. The character of the contemporary South, then, is a legacy of the Cold War and, in particular, of the consequences of the containment and/or defeat of the revolutionary left alongside the end of Soviet support/involvement in the South.

Capitalist development, revolution, the South and the superpowers

In conceptualising the Cold War as a global social conflict emphasis is placed on the socioeconomic properties of the states involved in it. It was these differences centred on the relationship between the formal and coercive authority of the state and the realm of socioeconomic production,[10] that provided the defining *and* competitive schism of world politics after 1945 between revolutionary communism and capitalism. The significance of the social constitution of states was not confined to the differences in how the socioeconomic properties of each superpower conditioned the way in which they related to the wider international system and other states, but also, and more importantly, lay in the expansion and contraction of these two forms of socio-economic relations across the globe after 1945.[11]

The global strengths of each social system were determined by the outcomes of the shifting fronts of social conflict within states and whether or not such conflict led to social revolution and the construction of new forms of non-capitalist state. Whereas during the interwar period the spectre of social revolution had hung over continental Europe, as evidenced in the eruptions of revolutionary crises in Germany, Italy, Spain and elsewhere, after 1945 the threat of social revolution moved from Europe to the South, and with it the dynamic of the Cold War. The 'resolution' of the social contradictions that had bedevilled European capitalism through the American postwar settlement highlighted in the projects of European integration and a managed liberal international economic order propped up by US political–military hegemony[12] contrasted with the intensification of social conflict in the South.

Social and political developments in the South were transformed by the boost given to communist and nationalist revolutionary movements as a result of the radicalising consequences of the war, the weakening of the political authority of colonial states and the geopolitical strengthening of the USSR. The outcome(s) of this new historical conjuncture were successive *and* successful waves of revolutionary struggle, shifting in time and space, throughout the South,[13] and having a direct bearing on the superpower conflict and the Cold War. The importance of these political developments in the South was that they provided avenues for the expansion of Soviet international power and at the same time directly challenged the health and stability of the postwar US-led international capitalist order. Furthermore, these crises, particularly those that resulted in the victory of revolutionary forces and the emergence of revolutionary states, as in China, Vietnam/Indochina, Cuba and elsewhere, not only triggered reappraisals in US national security strategy through the outlining of new presidential 'security doctrines',[14] but also provided the most dangerous flashpoints of the Cold War, where the superpowers came closest to military or nuclear conflict.[15]

Revolutionary struggles within the South were centred on overthrowing forms of rule and external domination that were colonial *and* capitalist. The concern of revolutionary movements, as opposed to other forms of anti-colonial and nationalist movement, was not just the foreign nature of domination but rather the ending of the *specific* social character of external

political and economic domination, and of the way such domination was intimately tied to the contradictory and exploitative character of the integration of these 'states' into the capitalist world economy. National liberation meant *social* liberation through the reconstitution of socio-economic relations at both the inter-state and the intra-state levels.

Consequently, national liberation as social revolution locked revolutionary movements and states in the South into direct conflict with the postwar objectives of the USA, as much as such strategies in the Western Hemisphere had faced stiff US opposition and military intervention in the decades preceding World War Two.[16] Thus, despite the USA's formal commitment to the ending of colonial rule, its support for an international capitalist economic order based on the rights of private property, open markets and 'free' trade meant that national liberation struggles against colonial and neocolonial domination amounted to global social conflict and, as such, an antagonism towards an 'open' capitalist economy based on US-designed rules and institutions.[17] The key conceptual and political point here is the specific differentiation of the 'political' and 'economic' spheres under capitalism, where control of the process and outcomes of the extraction of economic surplus from producers is carried out by private and economic means, and not directly through political compulsion. What this meant for the US-authored postwar international economic order was the promotion of this separation, thus allowing transnational capitalist economic exploitation and domination of those states that had not erected political barriers to such social relations.[18]

Although the superpowers were obviously influential in conditioning developments within the domestic politics of states in the South, what ultimately mattered were the periodic ruptures of social conflict within these states, and their political outcomes. My main concerns here are the political outcomes that effected successful revolutionary socioeconomic transformation. However, across time and space, particularly in the South,[19]crises emerged throughout the decades after 1945 that opened up potentials for revolt from below, all of which indicates the qualitatively distinct social structures and fragile political systems of most states in the South. Thus, despite the relatively small number of successful revolutionary seizures of power, the 'spectre of social revolution' cast a long shadow over the South, as, to some degree it continues to do.

Although each domestic political arena was different these arenas also registered important commonalities that were associated with the wider global social struggle between capitalism and communism. These commonalities included the challenges to the relationship between Western states/capital and local political and economic elites from revolutionary movements, based as they were on access to local markets and the control of significant local economic resources alongside security treaties;[20] the conflicting political and economic goals of revolutionary movements based upon land reform, nationalisation/socialisation of property and production organised through state planning rather than private-property-based forms of production integrated into the world market and US-led international

economic institutions;[21] and, finally, the links between local revolutionary movements and the USSR, even when revolutionary movements did not have strong communist influence, as in Egypt and Algeria, for example.[22]

What is also important to consider are the variations in the form of social conflict across time and space both between the superpowers—ideological, diplomatic, economic and, through local agents, military—and local political forces. The absence of *systemic* military conflagration did not correspond to an absence of military conflict, and the absence of a military 'resolution' to social conflict did not mean the absence of social-systemic struggles associated with capitalism and communism. Thus, the global struggle between capitalism and communism was at its most intense in Indochina, and almost reached the point of 'no return' with superpower nuclear conflict over Cuba between October and November 1962. In both of these 'fronts' military power and geopolitical competition were embedded in localised revolutionary socioeconomic transformation. The centrality of developments within the South in the Cold War and the role of local political forces, separate from the agency of the superpowers, could not be more apparent.

While revolutionary struggles were militarised in Cuba and Southeast Asia the absence of military conflict made social conflict between communism and capitalism less pronounced but still present in the machinations of US global power working alongside pro-Washington political and military elites in Chile and Argentina in the 1970s, Indonesia in the late 1960s and central Africa in the early 1960s. Even in Europe, where US power was hidden behind the veil of constitutional democracy, the removal and subsequent marginalisation of the communist left, notably in France and Italy in the late 1940s, suggests the presence of globalised social conflict.

Despite the local differences and the different forms of social conflict, what was central to all these cases was the potential for revolutionary socio-economic transformation, and how such changes would have an impact on each superpower. What this suggests is that the Cold War was made up of individual and localised Cold Wars where local forces and movements were associated with a wider and global struggle concerning the organisation of social and economic life.

These conflicts were not always directly associated with the bipolar relationship, as the shifting moments of revolutionary crisis throughout the postwar decades were produced from the social contradictions found within specific local contexts of capitalist 'development'. Thus, with respect to Vietnam, the emergence of a revolutionary conjuncture was produced from the fusing of socioeconomic contradictions associated with French colonial rule and the economic exploitation of Indochina by French capital with the geopolitical context of the end of World War Two.[23] In the case of Cuba, the 1959 revolution emerged out of the political and economic contradictions produced from nearly six decades of US political and economic domination that resulted in highly uneven economic development and weak and illegitimate political institutions combined with a well established tradition of revolutionary and anti-capitalist social mobilisations.[24]

Furthermore, the actors involved in these and other crises suggest the social systemic nature of the Cold War as opposed to the purely 'ideological' or 'geopolitical' determinants of the Cold War. Thus, in a number of crises that became 'fronts' in the Cold War, especially those outside the Eurasian landmass, the USSR was not directly involved and in some respects was hesitant if not opposed to supporting local revolutionary struggles.[25] The principal agents of opposition to the Western powers and the USA were local radical nationalist and communist forces allied, to varying degrees, to Moscow. In the case of Indochina, up until the early 1960s, the principal external support for the Vietnamese communists was communist China; note also the key role that China played against US and Western military forces in Korea. Indeed, the bipolar or geopolitical aspect of conflict after 1945 and up until the early 1960s was relatively absent other than in Europe. This contrasted with the inter-systemic conflict prosecuted by local revolutionary movements, and how this ignited geopolitical conflict, dragging both superpowers into a localised conflict, again as exemplified by the crisis points of Korea, Indochina and Cuba. What this suggests, *contra* the mainstream debate, is that the *form* of the political agency that the USA (and its Western allies) confronted after 1945 differed from what the USA confronted in Europe, and that the emergence of such challenges to Western power, in many cases, were autonomous of Moscow.

However, in terms of consequences, revolutionary transformation did, directly, have an impact on the superpower relationship. The outcomes of these revolutionary crises contributed not only to an expansion or contraction of one or other social system, but also to the political strengthening of one or other superpower, and thus to the intensification of superpower rivalry and conflict.

As long as this type of revolutionary dynamic persisted the Cold War would continue. However, this was not just an issue that provided the international source of Soviet power but was also a domestic factor in terms of whether or not such developments served to consolidate the fundamental assumptions about how the Soviet leadership understood capitalist development, and thus the future direction of the USSR. Revolutionary crises were seen as symptomatic of the inherent rottenness of capitalism, reflecting its inherent contradictions and weaknesses.[26]

By the mid-1980s the character of anti-imperialist struggle in much of the South had changed considerably in contrast to the post-1945 period. Rather than being dominated by communist or pro-Soviet political movements, post-communist movements were emerging in South and Latin America that did not identify with the experience or leadership of the USSR, and in the Middle East and wider Islamic world, *anti*-communist forms of anti-imperialism were emerging, some of which drew inspiration from the Iranian Revolution. Coincidence or not, these changes in the 'global correlation of anti-imperialist forces' occurred at a time of domestic stagnation within the Soviet bloc and provided the context within which Gorbachev's reforms—in domestic and foreign policy—took place. While not determining the direction of Soviet domestic politics they obviously influenced it.

The high point of the impact of the 'revolutionary' South on the superpower relationship and the US-led international economic order came in the early 1970s. Here, developments in the South, specifically the economic burden and political humiliation of US involvement and defeat in Southeast Asia, and the challenge to Western economic stability and prosperity from the oil price hike of 1973 carried through by OPEC under the leadership of Middle Eastern states hostile to Western support of Israel, were major, if not determining, factors in the collapse of the postwar international economic order. Simply put, the economic costs of both forced the USA to dismantle, unilaterally, the economic system that it had created after the war.

The consequences of these challenges to US hegemony, however, went beyond the realm of the international capitalist economy to include the broader political and military power of the USA. Thus, at the same time that the USA was re-ordering its global economic priorities, it was also re-ordering its political and strategic ones through the diplomatic and strategic concessions it made to the USSR through the process of détente. This is not to suggest that détente was solely caused by the two developments in the South just mentioned, as the increase in Soviet strategic capability in the form of intercontinental ballistic missiles was also highly significant. What it does suggest is that developments emanating in the South were not subordinate to, separate from, or only of significance for the domestic politics of each superpower. Instead, it suggests that the international context of the early-to-mid 1970s, in which the superpowers acted, contributed to an escalation of revolutionary struggle against Western and US interests in the South and, correspondingly, to a much more aggressive Soviet policy to seize the initiative by supporting revolutionary movements and states in the South. [27]

These developments in the 1970s highlight the relationship between global social conflict in the South and the superpower geopolitical relationship and how they combined to produce new 'fronts' in the Cold War. Furthermore, they also draw attention to the role of social movements, classes and nations throughout the world, in the North and the South, in producing new political arrangements within states that contributed to the strengthening of international communism and providing challenges to the international capitalist order.

The conjuncture of the 1970s also shared similarities with other key moments in the history of the Cold War associated with conjunctures of crisis within the international capitalist system: the period immediately after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the postwar period, where, as in the 1970s, international communism managed to expand. All three of these periods were characterised by an international crisis brought about by the breakdown of existing political–economic relationships and/or an escalation in conflict between the major capitalist states. All three conjunctures also highlight the importance of the period of transition from one form of international capitalist structure of production and 'governance' to another.[28]

As much as these periods witnessed crisis and conflict at the international level between states, they also saw instability and crisis within states as pre-

existing socioeconomic arrangements, reflecting particular configurations of social power, were challenged and restructured. Whereas the postwar restructuring saw victories for subaltern social forces in the North and South (with the construction of welfare states and full employment in the North and decolonisation in the South), in the 1970s the outcomes of these social struggles were more mixed. Thus, in the North short-term social conflict gave way to capitalist restoration in the early 1980s, with the ideological and policy ascendancy of neoliberalism and the 'rolling back' of many of the victories won by subaltern classes after 1945. This contrasted with what Zbigniew Brzezinski called 'the arc of crisis,' referring to the wave of revolutions in the South throughout the 1970s. The upshot of this was the collapse of détente by the end of the Carter presidency, and the onset of an intensification of superpower conflict and what some scholars termed the 'new' or 'second' Cold War.[29]

The 'new' Cold War of the 1980s witnessed a reassertion of US global power in both the political–military and economic realms. The former was highlighted by the much more belligerent posture adopted towards the USSR and revolutionary movements in the South alongside a strategy of indirect military 'roll-back' evidenced in the support for the Afghan *mujahadeen* and the *Contras* in Nicaragua throughout the 1980s.[30] The latter was highlighted by the transformed global economic context of the 1980s. Here, US monetary policy led to a draining of surplus capital away from the South towards the USA. This not only led to the revitalisation of the US financial system and wider economy, thus repairing the damage incurred in the 1970s, but also provided the 'funds' of capital for the massive rearmament programme launched by Reagan in 1980. With respect to the South, whereas the 'Reagan doctrine' of armed counter-revolution and 'roll back' sought to crush revolutionary and pro-Soviet forces through armed might, the new economic landscape made it very difficult for states in the South, of any political persuasion, to pursue radical, state-led economic strategies against the interests of the major capitalist powers.[31]

The period of the mid-to-late 1970s, up to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 could be seen as the highpoint of the involvement and impact of the South in the Cold War. During this decade the 'arc of crisis' witnessed not only a sustained bout of revolutionary struggle against the USA and its allies in most regions of the South, but also a significant increase in the global reach of the USSR.[32] This highpoint was to be overturned in the 1980s thanks to the combined political and economic effects of a reassertion of US global power. This reassertion of US power in the South not only led to a rapid demise of Soviet influence and power there, but also to the emergence of new anti-capitalist and anti-American forces, some of whom, such as Islamist political movements and terrorist groups in the Middle East, and non-communist 'revolutionary' movements like the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in Mexico or the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) in Brazil, continue to be of contemporary significance.

With respect to contemporary sources of resistance to US global power, particularly in the Middle East and Islamic world, US policy during the new Cold War played a significant role in promoting such political and ideological currents, as a way of countering leftist and communist power in these regions. As Mahmood Mamdani documents, during the 1980s elements within the US national security apparatus, usually working outside US and international law and Congressional oversight, sponsored terrorist movements from southern Africa, central Asia and Latin America.[33] However, we should be careful in apportioning blame to the USA for the rise of reactionary Islamist terrorism, as US Cold War allies—Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in particular—were much more central to the funding and organising of these movements. What this highlights is that the US national security state, primarily as a consequence of the domestic political impact of its defeat in Southeast Asia was not only forced to use illegal means to combat revolutionary and communist movements in the South from the late 1970s, but was also dependent, to a significant degree, on local allies such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to carry such policies out, notably in Afghanistan.

The contemporary challenge to US power emanating from reactionary political currents within the Islamic world, then, originated in the final decade of the Cold War. After 1979 US anti-communism, particularly in the Middle East and central Asia, was prosecuted via highly *il*liberal states (Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) which supported reactionary social forces and political movements that have rebounded on the USA in the 1990s, as these movements have fixed their hostility upon the liberal and capitalist secular universalisms associated with the USA after the defeat of communism.

The superpowers, geopolitical conflict and the South

The preceding discussion has highlighted the ways in which political and economic developments within the South had an impact on the bipolar superpower contest, and also how such developments contributed to a broader dynamic of the Cold War understood as globalised social conflict associated with the competition between the social systems of communism and capitalism. In this second element of the argument I will examine the ways in which the superpowers related to and conditioned developments within the South during the Cold War. This will bring out the distinct socioeconomic properties of each superpower and how the social constitution of each conditioned the character of its interaction with world politics in general and the South in particular. It will also highlight the importance of developments in the South on the domestic politics of each superpower, that is, to what extent did the socioeconomic character of Soviet communism and US capitalism promote the expansion of each into the South, and the more general objectives of each superpower to overcome the international challenge of the other.

As I have already indicated throughout this article, one of the key determinants of the character of the Cold War was the social constitution of

the political actors involved in it and of the superpowers in particular. The key distinction that differentiated the domestic political character of the superpowers was the relationship between formal state power resting on direct and coercive power, and the social space of socioeconomic production resting on the diffused power of the capitalist market.

The domestic politics of the USSR was dominated by the coercive power of the Communist party-state that not only controlled the apparatus of state power, but was also responsible for directing the economy. Soviet power, then, rested on the unification of the 'political' and the 'economic' held together by the ideology of Marxism–Leninism and the supremacy of the Communist Party, backed-up by the coercive and militarised agencies of the Red Army and secret police. In this sense, the domestic constitution of Soviet power was highly coercive and militarised. This militarised form of Soviet power was evident not only in the character of domestic/bloc political developments—determined as they were by force—but also in the character of Soviet international relations and the way in which the USSR expanded, internationally, in the early 1920s into Mongolia and the Caucasus and into eastern and central Europe after 1945. In a nutshell, the *form* of Soviet international relations was determined by the specific nature of its domestic political character and in this sense the USSR was characterised by relating to the world outside through the institutions of the party-state and only being able to expand through direct political–military 'occupation'.[34]

Such arrangements were significantly different from the character of US international relations. What distinguishes capitalism as a social system is the separation of direct political authority from the sphere of socioeconomic production. Because of this separation capitalist states are integrated into a world economy defined by transnational relations of production, distribution and exploitation. Whereas the ordering and character of social life were dominated by the party-state under communism, with dissent being met by direct political coercion, under capitalism, social life is differentiated between the realm of the state or politics, limited to the states's territorial borders, and the realm of civil society and the market, structured upon private property relations where power is diffused transnationally and does not take on a political or directly coercive form.

Because of this 'domestic' social constitution of politics, the USA was able to relate to the wider international system and expand in a non-direct or non-political form located in transnational capitalist relations that permeated other states, and which could expand without requiring a direct political–military presence. This differentiation was most evident in the way in which the USA related to Western Europe and in the institutions and relations that the USA helped construct with the states of Western Europe after 1945, compared with the character of the institutions and relations that the Soviets developed in eastern and central Europe.

The situation in the South was obviously more complex and contingent than the 'stability' in divided Europe; however, despite this complexity and the much greater intensity of superpower competition, the differing character of the social systems of US-led capitalism and Soviet communism did

condition not only developments within the South, but also the degrees of success and failure in each superpower's attempts to secure influence in the South.

What I will do for the remaining part of this section is to outline the ways in which each superpower related to revolutionary political developments within the South and how such relations were conditioned by the nature of its domestic political system. I will begin with the USSR. As I have already indicated, because of the way that the USSR was domestically constituted, it had a specific, non-capitalist form of international relations defined by the monopolisation of relations instituted *within* the apparatus of the party-state. The expansion of the Soviet social system, then, required the expansion of the institutions and relations of party-state domination, as was most evident in eastern and central Europe between 1945 and 1989. Socioeconomic expansion, that is, the dominance of social relations based on the abolition of capitalist market relations and direct political control of the economy and 'civil society', *necessitated* political–military expansion, because expansion required the political destruction of existing forms of social and political authority and social structures, which, if preserved, would have jeopardised communist rule. This direct form of political dominance could be seen as 'imperialistic' in the sense of the external domination of eastern and central Europe.

Until the end of World War Two Soviet international expansion had been confined to the Eurasian landmass. However, with the climax of the war, not only did the USSR 'occupy' and expand into eastern and central Europe, thus creating what many opponents called the 'Soviet Empire', it also attempted to expand into the northern part of Persia. This, as in the case of eastern and central Europe, was through its military occupation of the area. However, whereas in Europe the USSR stood firm and maintained its hold for over four decades, under combined US and British pressure the USSR withdrew from Persia. It was not until 1979 that the USSR expanded through military force beyond its recognised borders again with the intervention into Afghanistan. In this sense Soviet involvement in the South does not compare to that of the USA after 1945. Despite the exports of arms, and the building of diplomatic coalitions and treaties of friendship, the expansion of the Soviet social system from which communist power derived was incredibly limited.[35]

The only time the USSR expanded directly was during the periods of world war, that is, 'under the cover' of war. Indeed, one might argue that the USSR was a state specifically organised and mobilised for war;[36] in this sense its social system had an advantage over others in prosecuting war. During periods of 'peace', as in the postwar relationship with the USA, the USSR was effectively contained by the military and geopolitical might of the USA. To have attempted to expand its social system through the international projection of its military power would have risked a US military and, in all likelihood, nuclear response.[37]

This partly explains the inconsistencies in Soviet foreign policy, both before and after World War Two, notably in its commitment to international revolution,[38] and in how that commitment was conditioned by the

geopolitical 'facts' of strategic vulnerability *vis-à-vis* the European capitalist powers, in particular, Germany before the war and the USA after it. Thus, the degree to which inconsistency meant that the USSR was not committed to international revolution is disputable. What it does suggest, however, is that, *contra* the Cold War revisionists, it was a combination of domestic political factors, and not just the ideological predisposition of the leadership with the evolving geopolitical context, that determined Soviet behaviour.[39] It also underlines the significance of the conjuncture of the 1970s and the greater involvement of the USSR in the South, climaxing in the December 1979 intervention in Afghanistan. Although the 'arc of crisis' was crucial to encouraging Soviet involvement, what was ultimately decisive was the altered geopolitical context. This was brought about, first, by the USSR reaching nuclear parity with the USA, as recognised by the latter in its first serious engagement with the USSR over limiting numbers and types of nuclear weapons; and, second, by the defeat of US military power by the Vietnamese, which, for the first time since 1945, severely circumscribed the ability of the USA to deploy its military power to contain communist threats.

This is not to overlook the episodes of military adventurism and the use of military power to expand Soviet international power, as in the case of Stalin's support for the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950, the 'sabre-rattling' and threats of Khrushchev over the status of Berlin in 1960–61, and also the attempt to place nuclear missiles on Cuba in 1962. Rather, it is to argue that the USSR was much more limited in the way that it could expand its social system beyond the borders of the USSR because its social system was directly tied to the Red Army and a directly coercive political and militarised apparatus. Consequently, any move towards international expansion risked US military opposition.

The limitations in the form of Soviet international relations were not only determined by shifting geopolitical context, but also because of the inability of the USSR to permeate the interiors of other states through non-political or non-state forms of relations. Thus, although the USSR did cultivate economic and cultural relations with many states, including some of the major capitalist powers, these relations were unable to influence the internal political developments and social structures within these states. In a word, the USSR was unable to shape developments within the socio-economic sphere of capitalist states, and thus the politics of these states, because its relations were effectively confined to the inter-state level. Because of its social constitution it did not have 'autonomous' market actors who could legally operate within other states and, in doing so, alter the structure of the market and thus the political system within other states. Its only way of altering the political structure of other states was through direct and coercive means.

This issue was also significant for Soviet relations with 'allied' states in the South; those that were part of the international communist movement such as China, Vietnam and Cuba, and also those governed by non-communist revolutionary movements such as Egypt, Iraq and Algeria. In the case of the former, Soviet relations with other communist states were particularly

sensitive not only with respect to the bipolar conflict but also in terms of the wider standing of the USSR and the Soviet Communist Party in the international communist movement, and also in the way that relations with other communist states strengthened or weakened the domestic legitimacy and strength of the leading faction within the Soviet party.[40]

The key point here is to what degree other communist states, in terms of their historical experience and ideological perspective, served to consolidate Soviet leadership of the international communist movement, and also the particular leadership faction within the Soviet party. External developments, but particularly relations with other communist states, played an important role in internal disputes and struggles within the Soviet party. This became even more acute in the 1960s with the development of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the fact that much of the Chinese critique of Soviet 'revisionism' was inspired by the apparent hesitancy in Soviet support for international revolution and confronting the USA. In the case of Khrushchev such issues would prove to be defining, in that his removal from power in 1964 was directly linked to the debacle over the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, and to the way his policies had been informed by the need to answer criticisms of his leadership emanating from Peking.[41]

The *form* of Soviet international relations, then, limited the way in which the USSR could determine political developments within other communist states. Although the USSR did gain leverage through economic and military aid, because it had no other means of relating to communist states other than through formal inter-party relations within the international communist movement, its ability to condition political developments within these states depended on ideological and doctrinal consensus with other communist leaderships.

The problematic nature of Soviet relations with other communist states, however, went beyond issues of leadership and ideological ascendancy and also infringed on the superpower relationship. This was most marked over Cuba and the missile crisis of 1962. What this highlighted was not just how the superpowers could be brought to the precipice of catastrophe through their responses to developments within Cuba, but also how the foreign policies of revolutionary states could undermine not only Soviet external security but also political order within the USSR. What the Cuban Missile Crisis and, to a lesser degree, the Vietnam War, highlighted were the attempts by the USSR to 'discipline' other revolutionary states by bringing them into the Soviet bloc and under the Soviet strategic 'umbrella'. The attempt to install nuclear missiles on Cuba in 1962 was not only about attempting to undermine US strategic advantage over the USSR and deterring another US-backed invasion of Cuba, but also to ensure, through the deployment of Soviet military power, that Cuba would be brought into the discipline of Soviet foreign policy not only with respect to Cuban relations with the USA but also over Soviet concerns about Cuban revolutionary doctrine and strategy in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere.[42]

The point here is that US geopolitical policies were as much concerned with the activities of other revolutionary states as they were with the USSR.

What this meant was that US policy towards the USSR was not determined by Soviet actions alone, but also by the activities of other communist states and movements. Any changes in US policy in response to a revolutionary crisis or the activities of other revolutionary states had an impact not only on Soviet external policy, but also on Soviet domestic politics, in the sense of whether or not shifts in US policy required increased resources for geopolitical competition at the expense of the domestic socioeconomic needs of the Soviet people for improved living standards and the principal Soviet objective of outperforming the Western economies.[43]

In this sense, then, the success of international revolution in the South was paradoxical for the overall health of the USSR. On the one hand the spread of revolution tended to confirm the ideological basis of the Soviet regime and helped secure the leadership, as well as weakening, to paraphrase Lenin, the 'imperialist chain'. On the other hand, however, revolutions in the South served to undermine the fundamental strengths of the Soviet system. This was for two reasons: first, through the economic burden that developed with Soviet political and economic support for a number of revolutionary states[44] and, second, in the subsequent US response to Soviet/communist expansion. The clearest example of this was the massive increase in US military expenditure under Reagan in the early 1980s—in direct response to the perceived failure of détente and the Soviet and revolutionary 'offensive' in the South during the 1970s. Both these burdens put severe strain on the Soviet domestic political system, founded as it was on the assumption of constructing a society to surpass Western capitalist forms of economic welfare and the party-state's ability to sustain improvements in the economic well-being of the population within the USSR and Soviet bloc.[45]

The problematic nature of the Soviet relationship with the wider international communist movement and other communist states was also evident in Soviet relations with a number of non-communist radical nationalist states, including Indonesia, Egypt, Iraq and Algeria. Relations with these states were more problematic in that the links and leverage that the USSR secured through common affiliation with the international communist movement in general, and factions and individuals within other communist states in particular, were absent. Indeed, in a number of states, Indonesia after 1965, Egypt in the late 1950s and Iraq in the early 1960s, local communists were subject to severe and bloody repression. Thus, the ability of the USSR to condition internal developments within these states (and thus their international posture) was severely limited without an alternative (socioeconomic) currency of relations, and also with local communists identified as potential threats.

The USSR, then, was dependent on international revolution for the expansion of the communist social system during the Cold War. Because of its domestic political constitution and its militarised character the only alternative to expansion through international revolution risked igniting nuclear war with the USA. However, as I have tried to highlight, revolutions also exposed problems for the USSR derived from the form of Soviet international relations emergent from the socioeconomic properties of the

country. Furthermore, revolutions exposed the fundamental contradiction of the USSR. Moscow promoted a form of politics born of social revolution and yet had internally reduced the revolutionary potential of the USSR by silencing any alternative currents of politics. And while it proclaimed itself to be the vanguard of the international revolution, it had prioritised internal material development and the establishment of a powerful coercive state over all other political goals. Revolutions tested whether the USSR was true to its ideology, particularly when revolutions jeopardised the country's international position by threatening to create crisis situations that would propel it into conflict with other states.

Now let me turn to the nature of US international power and the character of its international relations and responses to revolutionary developments within the South.[46] As I have already stated, the socioeconomic properties of the USA, as a *capitalist* state, were quite different from those of the USSR. Consequently, the manner in which the USA related to the South and reacted to revolutionary political developments in particular were also different.

The first thing to highlight is that US international political power went beyond the territorial expansion and geopolitical reach of the USA. In this sense we could conceptualise US global power as a form of informal and extraterritorial 'empire', akin to Britain's informal empire of the late 19th century, based on economic dominance or exploitation and political dependence rather than direct political domination.[47] The projection of US global power did not rely exclusively on an armed and coercive US political presence. By being at the apex of a global capitalist system the USA could secure political influence without the formal trappings of political power. Whereas the USSR did not have an 'autonomous' economic form of international power, the USA could not only condition international developments through its dominant position within the global capitalist economy, based on its control of huge economic resources (plant, finance, information and so forth), but also through the transnational relations of capitalist production and exchange that permeated sovereign borders, and which ensured the presence of US capital within the interiors of other capitalist states.

In this sense the USA was a *complete* superpower in contrast to the 'incomplete' nature of Soviet power;[48] furthermore, it was able to draw on much larger economic resources, beyond the economic capacity and resources of the Soviet economy, to achieve its wider international political and economic objectives.[49] This was particularly evident during the Reagan administration of the early-to-mid 1980s. Under Reagan the USA embarked on a massive programme of military spending,[50] and, bucking the conventions of macroeconomics, introduced significant tax cuts *at the same time*. Thus, to quote Eric Helleiner, 'international financial markets...helped the United States to retain policy autonomy in the face of large domestic and external imbalances'.[51] The massive deficit (it increased from $9 billion in 1981 to $207 billion in 1983) was financed by huge inflows of foreign private capital (mainly from Japan), with some estimates stating that by 1985 over half the US budget deficit was being financed by foreign capital.[52]

This continues to be the case. The first term of the Bush presidency saw significant tax cuts combined with a huge increase in military expenditure (after September 2001), combined with the costs of the Iraqi occupation. Such policies have contributed to domestic and external deficits (as well as the huge borrowings of US consumers relative to income), a situation that only the US economy can sustain because of its unique place within the global capitalist system.

Thus, in constructing the institutions, mechanisms and rules of the postwar international economic order, the USA, in effect, determined the development and character of the world economy and the distribution of benefits that its operations produced.[53] However, its ability to marshal economic resources, based upon the privileges of the *seignorage* of the dollar,[54] meant that the USA had immense capacity to alter the economic well-being and thus political stability and character of states without having to formally 'discipline' them through political or military means. This disciplining was not only apparent in US dealings with states in the South, but was also operative in US relations with its allies, as in the case of the threat of economic 'sanctions' on Britain in late 1956, which helped ensure a rapid and humiliating British withdrawal from Egypt after its invasion. It was also evident in the way that the USA, in effect, unilaterally reconstructed the international financial system after the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system in 1971.

It was in the South, however, where US 'informal' and economic power and influence was most pervasive and this became particularly evident from the early 1970s, and especially so in the 1980s. In this respect the ability to determine the policy of key international economic organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank was an important source of economic leverage, particularly when these institutions became much more involved in the South through 'multilateralism'.[55] However, the ability of the USA to condition the economic well-being of much of the South was also a by-product of changes in US domestic economic policy. This involved the early 1980s' *volte-face* of the postwar trend of 'exporting' US capital, to a policy of 'sucking in' global capital,[56] thus providing a major squeeze on, and a way of economically disciplining, a range of states, revolutionary and non-revolutionary, in the South which had formerly attempted to pursue economic policy objectives to varying degrees at variance with Washington. The 1980s, then, saw the beginnings of a reversal, not confined to the South, of postwar socioeconomic victories against capital with the dismantling of welfare states and of policies of state-led industrialisation, planning and capital controls.[57]

The consequence of such changes has been a wider transformation in the global political economy, otherwise known as globalisation, and which fundamentally altered the global economic context in which *existing* revolutionary states had to live and try to prosper. Paradoxically, although this international environment made the contradictions and conflict between rich and poor, labour and capital in many states in the South much more acute, it also fundamentally challenged the existing revolu-

tionary model of state-led, 'socialised' economic development.[58] Such challenges were brought home in the late 1980s with the end of the Cold War, but had become increasingly evident in many parts of the South, with more and more states, including 'revolutionary' ones, notably China and a number in the Middle East and Africa, abandoning the 'revolutionary model' of economic development sometime before the 'official' end of the Cold War in 1989.[59]

The dominant place of the USA in the global capitalist economy endowed it with such economic resources that it was able to exert a major influence on the external *and* internal economic environment of most other states. The consequences of this were twofold. On the one hand the USA had a major advantage in the *form* of its international relations *vis-à-vis* the USSR, specifically, in the way that it could use economic means for political ends. On the other hand, however, by being the 'guardian' of the postwar international economic order, the USA was primarily responsible for enforcing the rules and discipline within this international economic order. What this meant was that crises within the economic system and challenges to it, especially from radical and revolutionary movements, inevitably put the USA and such movements and states on a political collision course, and it is this to which I will turn next.

Whereas the expansion of the Soviet social system came through war and/or revolution, the expansion of the US-led system of international capitalism did not necessitate war or direct coercive occupation. American capitalist power could be secured within the existing international political–legal framework; that is, states could be 'sovereign,' as the states of Western Europe and other parts of the world were, but still subject to US political–economic influence.[60] This is not to suggest that the USA did not use force and coercion in its relations with the South, as such a claim has no intellectual credibility; rather that, *contra* the Soviet system, the US-led postwar international capitalist system was not founded on direct political coercion and 'occupation'. Political order, both internally (within the USA and within the Western bloc) and more widely, including the South, did not necessitate the *systemic* use of military power in the way that it did under fascism, and also under Soviet communism. The use of force by the USA, either directly as in Indochina, Korea, Latin America and elsewhere, or indirectly in numerous other cases throughout the Cold War era, was principally *in response* to revolutionary challenges to political order and accompanying social arrangements.

The requirement of the use of force was twofold: in the first instance to protect the social order and, above all else, property rights and US commercial interests in the state concerned, and, second, in response to the political character of revolutionary challenges. The weight of each factor varied in time and space highlighted in the absence of the threat of armed and violent revolution in Chile in 1973 and Guatemala in 1954, which did not prevent the violent and bloody overthrow of radical left-wing governments, as contrasted with guerrilla struggle and conventional warfare in the Korean peninsula and Indochina.

The central and defining difference between the constitution of US international power and that of the USSR was that the global maintenance and reproduction of the postwar international capitalist system did not require a *systemically militarised* form of international power. Indeed, the objective of the US-led postwar liberal international order was to *promote* the separation of the political and economic spheres through de-politicising domestic and international economic structures and relations, and reducing the sources of inter-capitalist conflict by constructing multilateral institutions where decisions were based on negotiation and bargaining.[61]

Whereas the US-constructed postwar international order did contribute to a transformation in the character of the international relations between the major capitalist states after 1945, the nature of capitalism in the South was rather different. Here, capitalist exploitation and dominance was far from de-politicised, and the relationship between the state and the economy was much more volatile and crisis-ridden.[62] The source of these tensions and crises was the manner in which many of these states had been incorporated into the capitalist world economy through imperialism, and the specific character of their social relations within the postwar capitalist world economy. Simply put, local or national capitalist development was determined by the rigours and fluctuations of the world market combined with the subordination of local capital to foreign capital.

In most cases independence and formal sovereignty did not alter this economic fact. Thus, in Cuba and many other parts of the Western Hemisphere large sections of national economies were dominated by foreign and US capital. In the case of China and Indochina revolutionary struggle was focused on expelling the foreign political *and* economic presence. These economic relationships not only exposed a fault line at the point of the national–international nexus between the needs of national and foreign capital, but also between the local state and its subaltern classes. Any substantive transformation of domestic socioeconomic relations necessitated a rupturing of the existing national–international relationship because domestic economies were usually heavily conditioned by external structures and actors through control of local economic resources or penetration of the state and governing elite.

The outcomes of these tensions varied in time and space. In a significant number of cases the political and economic contradictions within many states in the South resulted in revolutionary seizures of power, sometimes led by a communist party and allied to the USSR, sometimes by non-communist revolutions. Other outcomes were more favourable to the USA through the interventions of US-backed military *coup d'états* or the successful repression of revolutionary movements.[63] The point to emphasise is that *all* revolutionary crises and struggles challenged US power, even those that were not led by communist parties or allied with the USSR. In some cases, particularly Cuba, the hostile and coercive US response to revolutionary seizures of power almost drove radical nationalists, like Castro, into the arms of the USSR.[64]

However, it is also important to view the coercive and militarised responses of the USA to most of the revolutionary challenges that it confronted during the Cold War as not simply a series of overreactions to purely local or domestic phenomena, as many critics of US foreign policy have tended to argue.[65] Rather, the coercive nature of the US responses to revolutionary crises and seizures of power reflected recognition of the nature of revolutionary change and the threat such change posed to international socioeconomic arrangements and international political order. Whether Cuba, or any other revolutionary state, allied itself to the USSR was beside the point. Rather, the seizure of private property and the blocking of informal, socioeconomic sources of political influence limited the range of options for the USA to secure its objectives and, furthermore, fundamentally redefined the meaning of politics in ways that went far beyond the borders of Cuba or any other revolutionary state.[66]

In the case of Cuba the attempts to secure political goals through economic channels, e.g. by unilaterally cutting the sugar quota, offering economic aid 'with strings attached', and through the non-cooperation of US oil companies, all indicated the political ends of economic relations and contributed to the further radicalisation of the revolution.[67] Through the overthrow of the previous set of social and political arrangements by force, revolutions politicised *all* areas of social life that previous social and political arrangements had tried (and failed) to de-politicise, most notably in the spheres of the economy and law.

Consequently, during such conjunctures, as in wars, political struggle, violent and non-violent, was always decisive in redefining the relationships between different aspects of social life, nationally and internationally. In this sense, the hostile and coercive US response to revolutions was a mirror image of the revolutionary challenge and overthrow of the state. For the USA to have behaved otherwise would have suggested that it was not concerned with the ramifications of such changes, and the way that they were carried through. The whole essence of the USA, as a capitalist state, rested on the differentiation between the political and economic spheres and the confining of socioeconomic or class conflict to the economic sphere, thus preserving the separation and hence, political order. The paradox in the nature of the US response was that, in responding in the way that it did, it served to highlight the contradictions in the political–economic relationship with the revolutionary state and the wider region. Thus, in the case of Cuba, and reflecting a concern with the future of US relations with the region, the USA sought to address the sources of tension that the Cuban revolution had brought to the surface by initiating the 'Alliance for Progress' in 1961.

The gravity of the political threat from revolutionary seizures of power went beyond the coercive character of domestic social and political transformation in Cuba, China, Indochina and elsewhere. It included a direct and explicit challenge to the wider international system and, thus, to US and capitalist interests *in general*. Thus, paradoxically, although Cuba was integrated into the Soviet bloc by the early 1960s, it continued to criticise official Soviet policy *and* revolutionary strategy, not only in Latin and South

America, but in the wider South, including Africa and Southeast Asia. This went beyond rhetoric to include organising alternative political structures as a way of supporting international revolution and as a way of bypassing local pro-Moscow communist parties,[68] who were committed to non-violent revolutionary struggle. Thus, US hostility to communist Cuba was justified; the country was obviously vexed that a key Soviet ally was only 90 miles away from the US mainland, and right in the country's 'own backyard'. However, the substantive threat owed more to Cuban revolutionary doctrine and strategy than it did to the influence of the USSR.[69]

Revolutions, then, emerged from crises within capitalist development that were particularly acute in many regions of the South before and after 1945; contradictions and crises that continue in the post-cold war era. It was the character of the political transformations wrought by social revolution that reconfigured domestic and international arrangements, which propelled the USA towards coercive and militarised responses to these kinds of change. However, the underlying structure and relations of the postwar international capitalist system, though founded on US political and military hegemony, thus discounting the possibility of the revival of the militarised conflict that dogged inter-capitalist relations before 1945, did not require a *systemic* deployment of US military power.

This is not to suggest that capitalism promotes pacific relations, as the crises that have characterised capitalist development over the last 200–300 years highlights, or that US foreign policy was committed to resolving disputes without resort to force. Instead, what its suggests is that the differentiation between the political and economic spheres that defines capitalism means that social power and domination take on an economic *and* political form, where the market is a space of social discipline and order. This means that the USA was able to organise and manage an international system which, in large measure, served the interests of the dominant social interests within the USA through mechanisms and arrangements where direct and coercive political power did not need to be utilised. The problem, however, in these arrangements, as evidenced in the history of capitalist development and, for our concerns, in the South after 1945, was that contradictions and crises emergent from within capitalist social relations produced crises that could not be confined to the economic sphere or the territorial borders of the state. By posing a fundamental challenge to general social and political arrangements revolutions required a direct and political response.

Conclusions

This article has outlined an alternative conceptualisation of the Cold War from prevailing approaches and, through it, has located the South at the heart of the Cold War. What distinguishes this approach is that rather than giving explanatory primacy to ideational or geopolitical concepts, my conceptualisation interrelates ideology and geopolitics with the wider socioeconomic processes associated with capitalist social development. In

doing so it is able to recognise the geopolitical hierarchy of the postwar era but not reduce the evolution and outcomes of world politics to it. Furthermore, in recognising the 'autonomy' of political and economic developments within the South, the theoretical approach outlined in this article is able to appreciate the heterogeneous and shifting nature of world politics in the era of the Cold War and the distinctiveness of developments within the South, but without detaching them from wider socioeconomic and ideological issues associated with the superpowers and the social systems that each led.

The key claim of this article is that the Cold War needs to be conceptualised as a historically specific form of social conflict, emergent out of the contradictions and crisis associated with capitalist development. What this suggests is that there was a unity and continuity to the Cold War from the emergence of revolutionary communist states and social forces to their eventual demise by the late 1980s. The unifying factor was the character of capitalist social development, in particular, the kind of social forces that it created, the type of social crises that it, periodically and unevenly, produced, and the character of the political movements that emerged to try and take advantage of such crises.

Because of the Cold War's essentially social character, the crises and conflicts that dominated it were manifested in a range of forms, reflecting the dynamic and differentiated nature of capitalism as a social system across territorial space and also through historical time. Thus, whereas the orientation and struggles of an industrial working class were, ultimately, determinant in Western Europe during the Cold War, it was agricultural workers, peasants and other social groupings who determined political outcomes elsewhere. Furthermore, whereas the objective of social and political struggle was national autonomy and independent economic development during the Cold War era, today it is something different.

The social character of the Cold War also draws our attention to the peculiar and uneven character of its end. Indeed, the analysis above suggests that the Cold War did not have a singular end but rather a series of ends based on the shifting nature and paradoxical outcomes of the Cold War conflict. The issue is not to marginalise the significance of the USSR and its postwar relationship with the USA. Rather, it is to reinforce the significance of the USSR and the events of 1989–91 but in a wider historical and sociological context. Thus, it is highly unlikely that Soviet bloc communism would have collapsed when it did had it not been for the ends of other Cold Wars understood as political defeats for the revolutionary–communist form of politics in other parts of the world and the South in particular.

Furthermore, it is not that these other Cold Wars were separate; they were not. Indeed, their outcome was directly linked to the Soviet challenge to the major capitalist states: the outcomes of these shifting fronts of social conflict ultimately decided whether or not the revolutionary–communist form of politics, established by the USSR, was capable of constructing a viable international system to rival and overcome that of the American authored postwar international capitalist order. Thus, by highlighting the importance

of other fronts and ends in the Cold War, we are able to go beyond a fixation with the USSR as a territorial state and instead recognise how the political character of the USSR reflected a *form* of politics not confined to the USSR alone.

The significance of ends rather than a singular end to the Cold War is that political and ideological currents heteronomous of the Cold War were evident in many parts of the South sometime before 1989. These currents, particularly the rise of reactionary Islam, were a product of the Cold War in that pro-Western states and the USA encouraged their growth as a way of countering the radical left. The rise of these movements in the 1970s and 1980s reflected an end to the Cold War social conflict between secular–communist revolution and Western capitalism. They marked the emergence, instead, of political conflict between an Islamist anti-imperialism and states in the Islamic world, supported by Western states and international organisations, committed to deepening integration into the capitalist world economy and into the social relations, culture and lifestyles associated with such integration. The roots of the so-called 'war on terror', then, are to be found in the character of the end of the Cold War in the Islamic world.

Finally, and with respect to the character of post-Cold War world politics, the argument outlined above underlines the seminal importance of the collapse of Soviet communism to world politics. It does so in a way that goes beyond the scope of most existing analyses by highlighting that the end of the Cold War was not only about a reordering of global military power or the spread of liberal–democratic forms of government, but also the historical *social* and *material* defeat of the revolutionary–communist challenge to capitalism. This is not to suggest that the post-Cold War era reflects the 'end of history' or the overcoming of the contradictions and crises associated with capitalist development and the (potentially) revolutionary challenges to it, because any serious survey of world politics since the collapse of communism would highlight the ongoing uneven and violent consequences of capitalist modernity in many parts of the world. This is reflected in the continuation of violent social conflicts in southern Africa, South America and parts of Asia, and by the emergence of new social and political movements that contest Western capitalism. Thus, just as much as capitalist development 'produced' communist cadres and militarised revolutionary movements, so it is producing new forms of political agency that seek its restructuring or overthrow.

However, up to now this varied and disparate anti-globalisation 'movement' has not managed to offer a viable social or political challenge to capitalism and, largely because of this absence of a constraining or 'civilising' influence on capitalism, there have been further social and political defeats for anti-capitalist forces since the end of the Cold War. The nature and consequences of the defeat of Soviet communism should not be detached from these post-communist political struggles, particularly in those parts of the world where, before 1989, revolutionary communism offered an alternative, flawed though it was, to the global dominance of the capitalist market.

Notes

1 D Horowitz (ed), *Containment and Revolution: Western Policy Towards Social Revolution, 1917 to Vietnam*, London: Anthony Blond, 1967, p 9.

2 See the discussions in R Ned Lebow & Risse-Kappen (eds), *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995; S Brooks & W Wohlforth, 'Power, globalization, and the end of the Cold War: reevaluating a landmark case for ideas', *International Security*, 25 (3), 2000, pp 5–53; R Koslowski & F Kratochwil, 'Understanding change in international politics: the Soviet empire's demise and the international system', *International Organization*, 48 (2), 1994 ; and D Deudney & G John Ikenberry, 'Soviet reform and the end of the Cold War: explaining large scale historical change', *Review of International Studies*, 17 (3), 1991.

3 By mainstream, I mean the debate within US-based international relations journals, particularly *International Security* and *International Organization*, which understand the Cold War as postwar superpower conflict with explanatory primacy accorded to 'ideational' or material and military factors.

4 This suggests a kind of 'geopolitical hierarchy', where world politics amounts to the relations between the great powers, epitomised by neo-realist approaches and also reflected in John Lewis Gaddis's argument that the Cold War was the 'long peace'.

5 This reflects a tendency within some liberal explanations of the Cold War. See R Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941–1991*, London: Routledge, 1994.

6 I am, then, drawing on historical sociological conceptualisations of the Cold War and, in particular, Marxist-inspired approaches which take the following basic theoretical assumptions. 1) The socioeconomic properties of the international system and states. 2) The linkage between different spheres of social life—the domestic and international, the political and economic. 3) The importance of social forces or classes in shaping political structures and processes, highlighted by social revolution. See D Sayer, *The Violence of Abstraction: The Analytical Foundations of Historical Materialism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987; and J Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations*, London: Verso, 1994.

7 This has also been emphasised by other Cold War scholars working within the Marxist tradition, whose work I will draw upon. See M Cox, 'The Cold War in the age of capitalist decline', *Critique*, 1986; From Truman Doctrine to superpower détente: the rise and fall of the Cold War', *Journal of Peace Research*, 27 (1), 1990; I Deutscher, *The Great Contest: Russia and the West*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960; *The Ironies of History: Essays on Contemporary Communism*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966; and F Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, London: Verso, 1986.

8 For an analysis of the impact of the regions of the South within the domestic politics of the major capitalist powers, see T Barkawi & M Laffey, 'Retrieving the imperial: *Empire* and international relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 31 (1), 2002.

9 For an analysis of the rise of reactionary Islam, see RG Saull, 'Reactionary blowback and the ends of the Cold War', in A Colás & RG Saull (eds), *The War on Terror and the American Empire After the Cold War*, London: Routledge, forthcoming.

10 For an extended discussion of this, see Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society*; Sayer, *The Violence of Abstraction*; and EM Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

11 Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* and *Rethinking International Relations*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994, has termed this 'inter-systemic conflict'. For a discussion and critique of Halliday's work on the Cold War, see RG Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War: The State, Military Power and Social Revolution*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, pp 15–28, 116–125; and 'The rise and fall of revolution?', *Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory*, 10 (1), 2002, pp 288–303.

12 For a discussion, see G Arrighi & B Silver, *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

13 The successful revolutionary struggles included the following: Indochina (1945–75), Korea (1945–52), China (1927–49), Cuba (1959), Egypt (1954–56), Iraq (1958–63), Algeria (1954–62), North Yemen (1962), South Yemen (1969), Libya (1969), Somalia (1969), Ethiopia (1974), Cambodia (1975), Laos (1975), Guinea-Bissau (1975), Mozambique (1975), Cape Verde (1975), São Tomé (1975), Angola (1975), Afghanistan (1979), Iran (1979), Grenada (1979) and Nicaragua (1979). The unsuccessful included Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), the Philippines (1953), Malaya (1954–60), Congo (1961), Dominican Republic (1965), Indonesia (1965) and Chile (1971–73).

14 See Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*; and Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Great Power*, London: Macmillan, 1999.

15 Here, I differ from the work of Michael Cox (see note 7) who emphasises the significance of internal political–economic developments within each superpower and bloc, particularly the USSR, thus

downplaying the international determinants on superpower behaviour. I also differ from the US Cold war revisionists (particularly David Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*, London: Allen Lane, 1969; and Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969; *The Limits of Power: The World and Unites States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972), who tend to marginalise the importance of the USSR in revolutionary movements and states in the South.

16 See Kolko, *Roots of American Foreign Policy*; W LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad 1750 to the Present*, New York: WW Norton, 1994; M Gilderhus, *The Second Century: US–Latin American Relations Since 1889*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000; and A Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

17 As evidenced in official policy statements: (President Truman) 'our foreign trade, export and import, must in the long run be privately handled and privately financed if it is to serve well this country and world economy' and (Assistant Secretary of State, Spruille Braden) 'The selective processes of society's evolution through the ages have proved that the institution of private property ranks with those of religion and the family as a bulwark of civilization'. Quoted in Kolko, *The Limits of Power*, p 13.

18 Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society*, p 169 sums this up nicely: 'When do the interests of a rising imperial power promote not political subjection but political independence? They do so when the political independence in question is not substantive political possession of resources by an autarchic state [communist or nationalist] but rather the consolidation of sovereignty. This breaks the political link with the former imperial power, while opening the newly demarcated sphere of the "economy" to the private power of foreign capital, that is, to the social form of dependence mediated by things.'

19 But not confined to the global south, as in the case of the 'revolutionary crises' in southern Europe in the 1970s and the revolt of May 1968 in Italy and France.

20 See Halliday, *Revolution in World Politics*; Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*; and M Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution*, London: Verso, 1981.

21 G White *et al*, *Revolutionary Socialist Development in the Third World*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983.

22 See Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*; Halliday, 'Revolution in the Third World: 1945 and after', in EE Rice (ed), *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991; Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*; Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development*; and M Katz (ed), *The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

23 Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 119–133.

24 *Ibid.*

25 For a discussion of the differences in revolutionary strategy between the Cubans and the Soviets and the sponsoring of rival movements by the USSR and Cuba in south and central America, see Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 146–157; F Parkinson, *Latin America, The Cold War and the World Powers 1945–1973: A Diplomatic History*, London: Sage, 1974; and JG Oswald & A Stover (eds), *The Soviet Union and Latin America*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1970.

26 For a discussion of the ways in which developments in the South influenced Soviet political thinking, see J Hough, *The Struggle for The Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985; M Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988; M Kaldor *et al* (eds), *The New Détente: Rethinking East–West Relations*, London: Verso, 1989; and M Goodman (ed), *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992, pp 1–18.

27 See Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, pp 81–104, 172–202.

28 The first period of crisis and transition, in the early part of the 20th century, was associated with the contradictions of a global capitalist system organised in territorial empires, resulting in World War One and the Bolshevik Revolution. The second emerged soon after with the rise of fascism and the great depression, helping to provoke World War Two and a transition based on US hegemony and the decoupling of territorial empire from socioeconomic power alongside anti-colonial revolution and Soviet expansion. The third period of crisis and transition began in the early 1970s with the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system, a weakening of US hegemony and a new wave of revolutionary offensive. For discussion of the long waves of capitalist development, see G Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Times*, London: Verso, 1994; Arrighi & Silver, *Chaos and Governance*; and R Brenner, 'The economics of global turbulence', *New Left Review*, 229, 1998.

29 Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*.

30 M Cox, 'The Soviet–American conflict in the Third World', in P Williams & P Shearman (eds), *The Superpowers, Central America and the Middle East*, London: Brasseys, 1988; and F Halliday, *From Kabul to Managua: Soviet–American Relations in the 1990s*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.
31 See G Arrighi, 'Tracking global turbulence', *New Left Review II*, 20, 2003; and C Murphy, *America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World*, London: Pinter, 1988, pp 138–200.
32 Along with the challenge of the 'New International Economic Order'. See R Mortimer, *The Third World Political Coalition in International Politics*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984.
33 M Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004.
34 Stalin was quite open about this, asserting after 1945 that the USSR would impose its social system as far as the Red Army occupied territory. See M Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962, p 105.
35 This questions the utility of understanding postwar international history and the Cold War as 'the bipolar system' or 'bipolar conflict'. See R Ned Lebow, 'The long peace, the end of the Cold War, and the failure of realism', *International Organization*, 48 (2), 1994.
36 M Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East–West Conflict*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990. According to A Nove, at its peak, Soviet armaments production accounted for 52% of national income in 1942, the highest reached anywhere by any state. Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR, 1917–1991*, London: Penguin, 1992, p 274.
37 The advantage, held by the USA for most of the Cold War, particularly until the USSR reached strategic parity by the late 1960s and early 1970s, facilitated an aggressive US use of its nuclear threat and even serious discussion of the 'use' of nuclear weapons against communist and Soviet forces in a number of postwar crises, such as Berlin in 1948, Korea between 1950 and 1952, Indochina in 1954 and the Middle East in the early 1970s. For discussions, see M Davis, 'Nuclear imperialism and extended deterrence', in New Left Review (eds), *Exterminism and Cold War*, London: New Left Books, 1982; and D Ellsberg, 'Introduction: a call to mutiny', in D Smith & EP Thompson (eds), *Protest and Survive*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980.
38 For an analysis of the relationship between the 'revolutionary rhetoric' of Soviet leaders and actual policy, see G Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics: Coexistence, Revolution and Cold War, 1945–1991*, London: Routledge, 1999. For documentary evidence, see the Cold War International History project at http://www.cwihp.edu.
39 Furthermore, without Soviet support it is highly unlikely that the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions would have triumphed.
40 For an extended discussion, see Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 141–175.
41 See K Nelson, *The Making of Détente: Soviet–American Relations in the Shadow of Vietnam*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995; and OA Westad, *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945–63*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
42 See Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 146–157. On Cuban 'dissent' within the international communist movement, see KS Karol, *Guerrillas in Power: The Course of the Cuban Revolution*, London: Johnathan Cape, 1971; P Brenner & J Blight, 'Cuba 1962. The crisis and Cuban–Soviet relations: Fidel Castro's 1968 Speech', *Cold War International History Bulletin*, 5, 1995; A Furzenko & T Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis 1958–1964*, London: John Murray, 1997; N Miller, *Soviet Relations with Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; and P Gleijeses *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
43 See Deutscher, *The Great Contest*; Deutscher, *Ironies of History*; and M Ellman & V Kontorivich (eds), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System*, London: Routledge, 1992.
44 See P Dibb, *The Soviet Union: Incomplete Superpower*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986; and Cox, *'Soviet-American Conflict in the Third World'*.
45 P Corrigan *et al*, *Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory: Bolshevism and its Critique*, London: Macmillan, 1978.
46 For a more extended discussion, see Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 176–208.
47 See G Lundestad, *The American Empire and Other Studies of US Foreign Policy in a Comparative Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
48 See Dibb, *The Soviet Union*.
49 For general discussions, see Arrighi & Silver, *Chaos and Governance*; D Slater & P Taylor (eds), *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1999; and D Calleo, *The Imperious Economy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

50 The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimated that US expenditure increased by 51% from $197 billion in 1980 to $296 billion in 1985. See SIPRI, *Yearbook: World Armaments and Disarmaments*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp 57–58, 270.
51 E Helleiner, *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance: From Bretton Woods to the 1990s*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994, p 147.
52 *Ibid*, p 148. See also Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*.
53 See Calleo, *The Imperious Economy*; EA Brett, *The World Economy Since the War: The Politics of Uneven Development*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985; and R Cox *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
54 See P Gowan, *Global Gamble: Washington's Faustian Bid for World Domination*, London: Verso, 1999, pp 19–38.
55 See Murphy, *America's Quest for Supremacy*, pp 138–200.
56 See Arrighi, 'Tracking global turbulence'; Gowan, *Global Gamble*; and M Davis, 'The political economy of late imperial America', *New Left Review*, 143, 1984, pp 6–38.
57 It is important to note, however, the contradictory nature of these developments, in particular how surplus capital, in the form of the offshore eurodollar market, which emerged from the US policy of exporting capital to Western Europe in effect created a huge reservoir of finance capital (which was to be significantly augmented in the early 1970s with petrodollars flowing in) beyond the control of state monetary authorities. It was this offshore financial market that was to play a crucial role in the undermining of the Bretton Woods international economic order in the early 1970s and the subsequent economic turmoil during that decade. See Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, pp 299–323.
58 During the 1970s many states, including a number in the Soviet bloc, took advantage of the generous lending terms of Western financial institutions, whose reserves had been swelled by petrodollars and who saw very few opportunities for 'productive lending' in the recession-plagued major Western economies. Much of this lending was meant to promote technological innovation and productivity gains, thus rejuvenating stagnating economies, and in doing so pre-empting any social disturbances. The more restrictive monetary conditions of the 1980s, however, not only cut off the external sources of economic 'support' for these states, but also restricted their external markets, which served to expose their economic problems more acutely. In the medium term these changes ended up fundamentally undermining the ideological basis of state-led, autarchic forms of economic development.
59 On China's turn away from socialism after 1978, see G White (ed), *The Chinese State in the Era of Economic Reform: The Road to Crisis*, London: Macmillan, 1991.
60 Indeed, the 'American Empire', then as now (in the case of Iraq) has been about the promotion of national self-determination as the most appropriate political shell within which to organise and manage global capitalist relations. See L Panitch & S Gindin, 'American empire and global capitalism', in L Panitch & C Leys (eds), *Socialist Register*, London: Merlin Press, 2003.
61 This is emphasised by, among others, JG Ruggie, 'International regimes, transactions and change: embedded liberalism in the postwar economic order', in S Krasner (ed), *International Regimes*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983; and R Latham, *The Liberal Moment: Modernity, Security, and the Making of the Postwar International Order*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
62 See Horowitz, *Containment and Revolution*; S Bills, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of the US–Third World Antagonism, 1945–7*, London: Macmillan, 1990; M Mason, *Development and Disorder: A History of the Third World Since 1945*, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997; and Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*.
63 In one such case, South Korea, domestic military repression was accompanied by large-scale US foreign direct investment, alongside an opening of the US domestic market to East Asian exports. This example, along with that of Japan, highlighted how US economic power was harnessed to promote the economic development of East Asia, which, in the longer-term, contributed to the region's political stability. This has contrasted with other parts of the South, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, that have not been a high a priority in US grand strategy. On East Asia, see B Cumings *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American–East Asia Relations at the End of the Century*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999; and P Burkett & M Hart-Landsberg, *Development, Crisis and Class Struggle: Leaning from Japan and East Asia*, New York: St Martin's Press, 2000.
64 Such an argument is outlined by liberal and radical writers such as R Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution: The United States in the Third World*, New York: Meridian Books, 1972; and LaFeber, *The American Age*. For an analysis of the US response to political developments in Guatemala which is suggestive of this argument, see J Valdes-Ugalde, 'Intervening in revolution: the US exercise of power in Guatemala in 1954', unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 1999.
65 See G Kennan, *The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet–American Relations in the Nuclear Age*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1982; Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution*; and LaFeber, *the American Age*.
66 See Halliday, *Revolution in World Politics*, for the best exegesis on the international nature of revolutions.

67 See Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War*, pp 179–189; and M Morley & J Petras, *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952–1986*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
68 See note 42 for references on this.
69 Cuban influence went beyond the Western Hemisphere, playing a crucial role, through 'Operation Carlotta' in the defeat of South African Forces in 1975–76 in Angola. See Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, pp 300–346.