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Counter-revolution, order and international politics

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Abstract. Every social revolution has elicited some form of counter-revolutionary response from the international system. The impulse to reverse revolutionary transformation has much to tell us about the dynamics of social revolution as well as the nature of international order. The purpose of this article is to investigate the relationship between counter-revolution and international order. First it establishes a basic conceptual framework of international counter-revolution and argues that counter-revolution should be understood as more than just an active opposition to revolution and also examines the motives of counter-revolutionaries. Second, using two interpretations of the international system – those of Henry Kissinger and Raymond Aron – the article draws several conclusions about the international tendency to attempt to overturn revolution and concludes that there exist international systemic pressures, of a non-neorealist kind, which provide the basis for international order. These pressures not only produce order but, at certain times, impel states to counter radical transformations in parts of the world which seem, at first glance, to have little consequence for the functioning of international order.

Revolution and counter-revolution

Social revolutions have been fundamental to the development and dynamics of international politics in the modern age. Hobsbawm goes so far as to claim that revolution was 'a global constant in the [twentieth] century's history'.[2] Yet many in the field of International Relations (IR) argue that revolutions, as domestic level events, are of no particular relevance to the field, at least no more than any other form of domestic rupture or transformation. To deny the significance of a particular social phenomenon – revolutionary transformation – to international affairs is to deny the character of those events which have defined much of the social, political and economic development in the twentieth century. While IR, a field ostensibly well placed to understand and explain these processes, has tended to ignore or avoid social revolution,[3] a body of work has explored the international dimensions, both causes and consequences, of revolutions.[4] This work has shown the centrality of the

[1] I would like to thank Jason Ackleson, Adam Roberts and Fred Halliday for their comments on earlier drafts of this article, as well as the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions.
[2] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes (*London: Michael Joseph, 1994), p. 54.
[3] On which see Maryam Panah, 'Social Revolution: The Elusive Emergence of an Agenda in International Relations', in *Review of International Studies*, 28:2 (2002), pp. 271–91.
[4] For example, Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics (*Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order (*Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); and Peter Calvert, *Revolution and International Politics*, 2nd edn. (London: Pinter, 1996).

international in the playing out of revolutions, as well as their importance to the evolution of the norms, structures and principles of the international system.

As Armstrong notes, revolutions offer 'sequences of events and patterns of interaction that share sufficient similarities across continents and centuries to suggest the possibility of a true science of human affairs'.[5] Indeed, revolutions do share a set of general characteristics which distinguish them from other forms of social transformation such as coups or rebellions. This article argues that a social revolution refers to a significant transformation of the social, political and economic structures of a given state in which change is violent, wrought by an uprising from below, occurs reasonably rapidly and projects a unifying aspirational ideology.[6]

Revolutions also tend to share a set of consequences which derive from the changes wrought by revolutionary upheaval. As Walt shows, revolutions are not only caused by the destabilising effects of interstate war, but they change the 'balance of threat' at the international level and increase the chances of interstate insecurity and conflict.[7] Revolutionary states also construct radical foreign policies which seek to reinforce and advance their domestic social programmes, and seek to export themselves in an attempt to universalise their vision.[8] Revolutions share one further characteristic which is often overlooked: all social revolutions of the modern period have elicited some form of international counter-revolution.

From Paris to Managua, Hanoi to Havana, revolutionary powers have remade the political and strategic maps of the world, and in so doing they have extracted responses from those who felt threatened by their presence. International counter-revolution is so pervasive in histories of revolution that it should be thought of as fundamental to the idea of revolution itself. One cannot write the history of any revolution without reference to the efforts from the international sphere, failed as they often are, to turn the clock back. The pertinence of counter-revolution to IR is due to its pervasiveness, its relationship with international order, and to the role it plays in the course of specific revolutions which are shaped by, and in turn themselves shape, the international system. As the examples of France, Russia, Iran and China all make clear, counter-revolutionary activity aids revolutionary consolidation as international hostility facilitates nationalist mobilisation strategies to buttress the revolutionaries' position. Khomeini's shift from a pan-Islamist ideology to a rhetoric rich in Iranian nationalism subsequent to Iraq's invasion is perhaps the most glaring example.[9] Equally, the counter-revolutionary character of the Versailles Treaty and the Allied intervention in Russia in 1918–21 gave Stalin much to work with.

Counter-revolutions, and their consequences, have altered the strategic balance and hence the behaviour of great powers. The American intervention in the second

[5] David Armstrong, 'On Revolutionary Chickens and International Eggs', *Review of International Studies*, 27:4 (2001), pp. 669–74, at 669.

[6] This differs from Skocpol's classic definition: 'social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried out by class-based revolts from below' see Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 4.

[7] Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 18–45.

[8] For example, Fred Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Stephen Chan and Andrew Williams (eds.), *Renegade States: The Evolution of Revolutionary Foreign Policy* (Manchester University Press, 1995).

[9] On the use of Iranian history see Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism* (London: Tauris, 1993), pp. 88–110.

Indo-China war led directly to the adoption of the Guam Doctrine by Richard Nixon and brought about a greater sensitivity to American battle-deaths in US strategic decision-making. Had counter-revolution been more successful in South-east Asia, it is doubtless that the character of America's role in world politics in the 1970s–90s would have been radically different. Counter-revolution also lends credence to the revolutionaries' claims that they are surrounded by hostile forces and infiltrated by insurgents supported by the circling reactionaries. From France to Iran, all revolutionary states have created autocratic state forms and the fact of international hostility and domestic fifth-columns has helped, or at the very least helped to justify, its production. Counter-revolution is of central importance to the development of specific revolutions but, as this article argues, has much to tell us about the way in which domestic and international forces influence the workings of international order.

Despite their significance, there is scant systematic work which deals with the causal, consequential and normative dimensions of counter-revolutions.[10] One of the underlying aims of this article is, therefore, to give some conceptual shape to a neglected dimension of revolution and to emphasise its international character. The other major purpose of this article is to consider the relationship between counter-revolution and international order.

The article will be set out in the following fashion. First, it will establish a basic conceptual framework of international counter-revolution and argue that it should be understood as more than just an active opposition to revolution. Second, it will consider the counter-revolutionary impulse and the motivation of counter-revolutionaries. The article will then consider international order explicitly and, using two interpretations of the international system – those of Henry Kissinger and Raymond Aron – will conclude that there exist international systemic pressures, of a non-neorealist kind, which help to provide the basis for international order. These pressures, which result from state actions, not only produce order but can impel states to counter radical transformations in parts of the world which seem, at first glance, to have little consequence for their interests. The article argues that recognising counter-revolution as more than just opposition to revolution helps to make the case for a more nuanced notion of international order which takes seriously domestic politics as well as social sources of international norms and their role in structuring the principles and practices of international politics.

Counter-revolution: a conceptual framework

Counter-revolution refers to efforts to overthrow a revolutionary state. It can also refer to pre-emptive efforts which attempt to prevent revolutionary challenges from emerging, such as the set of economic development policies pursued by the ASEAN states after 1967 or the military coup which ousted Salvador Allende in Chile in September 1973. Counter-revolution can also refer to the self-destructive or

[10] The only book-length study is Arno Mayer's somewhat tendentious *Dynamics of Counter-revolution in Europe, 1870–1956 (*London: Harper Torchbooks, 1971).

paranoid sense of revolutionaries themselves who fear betrayal from within. Our concern is with the former; counter-revolution as international attempts by other states to oppose and overturn a revolutionary power using force of some kind to achieve these ends.[11]

The term owes its origins to the French revolution and, in the first instance referred to *domestic* efforts to resist and overthrow the revolutionary government and to other royalist movements.[12] Counter-revolution is often associated with domestic attempts to oppose a revolutionary regime. While the domestic dimensions of counter-revolution are important, the underlying purpose of this article is to show that counter-revolution, like broader revolutionary processes, has a distinctly international character. The external efforts to topple revolution can be linked with domestic struggles, however, the main concern here is with those external actors, primarily states, who feel compelled to remove the challenge posed by a revolutionary state.

There are a range of forms which counter-revolutionary policy takes. The first and most vivid is intervention, that is the deployment of military force on the sovereign territory of another state with the aim of removing the revolutionaries from power.[13] While the Allies' invasions of Soviet Russia in 1918–21,[14] and American involvement in Vietnam[15] are two of the better known examples, it should be noted that not all revolutions have experienced *direct* military intervention from *status quo* powers. Equally, Soviet interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia show that counter-revolution can derive not only from capitalist states.

A common, but less direct, form of international counter-revolution is the support of domestic and other proximate actors, through the supply of arms, training, logistics and finance. Here typical examples include the Reagan-era support for the mujahadeen in Afghanistan, the Contras in Nicaragua, and the support of Iraq in its war with Iran in the 1980s.[16] A third form of counter-revolutionary activity can be described as harassment. These efforts involve such things as persistent small-scale border incursions and other nuisance activity, as well as propaganda and other forms of broad-based aggravation. Examples of this include anti-Soviet propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s, border harassment of Iran in the 1980s, and the jamming of radio and other transmitting devices. Finally, counter-revolutionary activity can involve actions intended to squeeze the revolutionary power by deprivation. This refers to the use of international institutions, diplomatic channels and other means to deprive the revolutionary state of normal interaction

[11] Counter-revolution can also include pre-emptive action of an international character; due to space this article limits its focus to reactions to a successful revolutionary seizure of power.

[12] Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, p. 208; Charles Tilly, *The Vendée: Revolution and Counter-revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1964). For a useful distinction between conservatism, reaction and counter-revolution see Mayer, *Dynamics of Counter-revolution*, pp. 38–55.

[13] IR scholars have tended to be interested in counter-revolution only inasmuch as it is a form of intervention, discussions include Hedley Bull (ed.), *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) and John Vincent, *Non-intervention and International Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1974).

[14] See generally, George F. Kennan, *The Decision to Intervene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958).

[15] Michael Lind, *Vietnam: The Necessary War* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

[16] See James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy (*Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

with the international system. The most obvious forms of this are sanctions and other legal measures designed to weaken the state and its leadership, such as the continuing sanctions on Cuba. During the Cold War, the West's sanctions on trade with the USSR and CoCom, the security committee which managed East-West trade, are other examples.[17] Disruption also involves non-recognition of diplomatic credentials, such as the USA's much delayed recognition of the USSR,[18] and can also consist of denunciations and other efforts to deprive the revolutionary state of international means to reinforce its domestic position, in both material and political terms. Whether invasion by troops, trade sanctions or diplomatic sabotage, revolutionary states have consistently been met with counter-revolutionary responses from abroad.

Any revolution involves a tremendous disruption of state-society relations – a key causal contributor to any revolutionary situation is functional state weakness – which allows revolutionary challengers the opportunity to seize the state apparatus.[19] Once state power has been taken, the revolutionaries face their most daunting challenge, the consolidation of their position in extremely chaotic social conditions. It is during this phase that revolutionary states are at their most vulnerable to counter-revolutionary challenge from both domestic and international sources.

Successful revolutions are never produced by a unified group. Generally, those who seize power have been one faction of an anti-statist movement which undermined the old regime. The mullahs in Iran were part of a loose and volatile coalition of bazaaris, communists, students and liberals whose concerted action forced the Shah into exile. It was only after the Shah's departure in 1978 that the Islamists were able to mobilise their superior infrastructure and win the faction fight to claim total state control.[20] Such a pattern of events is not unique. Successful revolutions are produced as much by victory in faction fights as they are by mobilisation of mass movements. Essentially, domestic groups struggle amongst themselves for the prize of state power. But state power is not the aim, it is a means to an aim: the transformation of society. Revolutions should be understood, therefore, as a rapid and often violent contest, fought over how state and society should be reconstituted. From this perspective, it makes sense to see international counter-revolutionary movements as further elements of this factional struggle. Revolutions are not simply domestic-level events. The causes of social crisis and the attendant efforts to reconstruct the state and society are, at once, domestic and international. Counter-revolution is the international effort to participate in the fight to reorganise the social structures of a particular state and its society. Thus counter-revolution is part of the revolutionary process in the sense that it is one part of the broader efforts to transform society by seizing the political and moral power of the state.

By arguing that counter-revolution and revolution are essentially part of the same phenomenon – the struggle between competing views of social organisation which

[17] See Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment (*Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).
[18] See communication in *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939* (Washington, DC: United States Government Publishing Office, 1952).
[19] See Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.
[20] See Shaul Bakhash, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs* (London: IB Tauris, 1987); Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (Rutgers University Press, 1989); Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London: IB Tauris, 1995).

result in open conflict over state power – then one has a better understanding of the nature of counter-revolution, of counter-revolutionary motivation and its relationship to international order. This view also implies that counter-revolution should not be understood as only a reaction to revolution.[21] The presumption that counter-revolution is just this, a reaction, is one of the reasons the phenomenon lacks any systematic investigation. Instead, counter-revolution should be understood as part of a broader political process deriving from internationalised social conflict.

Panah notes that 'revolutionary movements reflect an attempt to overcome social contradictions at least partly rooted in the dynamics of this globally dominant socioeconomic system.'[22] For her, the spread of an uneven, expansionist and dislocatory socioeconomic system produces revolution. The crucial point she makes is that revolutions are caused by transformations in social relations which are *necessarily* international. It does not make any sense to argue that the circumstances which produced revolution in France, Russia, Iran and China were entirely domestic. The revolution in Iran had as much to do with rapid urbanisation as it did with fluctuations in global oil prices and the denunciation of the Shah's human rights abuses by its erstwhile ally, the USA. To understand social revolution, and world politics more generally, we must look not only at relations among states, but at social relations, such as class relations and economic linkages in their transnational context. It follows that counter-revolution reflects the desire of *status quo* states to come to terms with the social consequences of revolutionary movements. Understood this way, the actions of counter-revolutionaries cannot be explained away as simply power politics and self-interest dressed up in the rhetoric of ideology. If it is a response to broader social dislocation – the ruptures in social structure caused by international transformation – then there is more to counter-revolution than security maximisers acting rationally to defend their perceived interests.

Beyond the threat which *status quo* states perceive that revolutions pose to alliance systems and economic structures, revolutions pose a direct challenge to the norms of the international system. The most important aspect of revolutions – certainly one which distinguishes them from coups or rebellions – is the role played by their self-styled 'progressive' ideology.[23] With the exception of the 1989 'velvet revolutions',[24] no revolution of the modern period has accepted the normative basis of the international system; their ideological bases have been contestatory. They have taken issue not only with the existing economic, social or religious order, but with the world at large, with the structures which produced the injustices against which they were struggling. It would be naïve to pretend that revolutionaries were not motivated by self-interest and power, yet in stressing the latter and ignoring the former, one can lose sight of the role that ideology plays in determining policy and

[21] For example, Walt, *Revolution and War*, esp., pp. 33–7 and 42–5.

[22] Panah, 'Social Revolution', p. 278.

[23] Progressive in that its adherents see its ideas and social programme as providing a means to achieve what they believe to be a manifestly better way of organising social life.

[24] It is doubtful that these would satisfy the criteria for social revolution set out above. Habermas has usefully described them as 'revolutions of recuperation', a term which captures their revolutionary impact on world politics, as well as their less radical dimensions. See Jürgen Habermas, 'What Does Socialism Mean Today? The Revolutions of Recuperation and the Need for New Thinking' in Robin Blackburn (ed.), *After the Fall* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 25–46.

its impact on the wider world. In this sense, revolutions pose not only an immediate strategic and economic challenge, they challenge the norms and structures of the basis of modern politics: the system of sovereign states.

In sum, international counter-revolutionary action tends to involve four forms of force: intervention, support of domestic insurgents, harassment and deprivation. Counter-revolution should be seen as a fundamental part of the revolutionary process and not simply as a reaction to revolution. As such, the origins of counter-revolutions lie not just in the threats which *status quo* powers perceive that a revolution poses, but in the deeper structural conditions which produce revolution in the first place. Finally, the most important dimension of any revolution is its ideological foundations; all social revolutions have an ideological basis which its proponents claim is universal and therefore its maxims and experiences apply to all of humanity. It should come as no surprise that counter-revolution is equally ideological in its motivation and its character.

Counter-revolutionary motivation

Intervention and counter-revolution are costly and dangerous activities whose results have been, at best, mixed. The Allied powers failed to overturn the Bolshevik revolution, Iraq's war, despite poor decisions in both Baghdad and Tehran, helped reinforce the ayatollahs' regime, China was not undermined by counter-revolutionary efforts wrought either by Taipei or Washington, the Sandinistas were not defeated by the Contras, and the French Revolution was undone more by the ambitions of the elite than by the efforts of Austria-Hungary, the Prussians and the British. The historical record of counter-revolutions actually succeeding in their immediate aims to remove a revolutionary power from control of the state is poor. Given this, why do *status quo* powers feel the need to get involved with revolutionary states who rarely threaten their immediate interests?

There are a number of central motives behind insurrectionary politics. Revolutions not only transform domestic social structures, they also cause reconfigurations in the strategic balance which can undermine alliance systems and destabilise finely balanced power arrangements. The reversal of Iran from America's primary ally in the Persian Gulf to an adversary who denounced American policies and participated in anti-American terrorist activities is one example. Others include the Russian withdrawal from the First World War, Cuba's transformation, and the geopolitical concern in the Western alliance produced by Mao's victory in 1949. In these circumstances counter-revolution is an attempt to right a perceived strategic imbalance. Reagan's famous claim that the Communists were closer to Galveston, Texas than Galveston was to Washington, DC conveys, in slightly paranoid terms, this strategic dimension. For realists, and indeed for most liberal IR theorists, strategic calculations and considerations are the most pertinent in explanations of counter-revolution.[25]

[25] A typical example is Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 331–42.

Counter-revolution also occurs because of the requirements of great-power alliance systems. Counter-revolution derives from the challenge that revolutions pose to alliance systems and to the credibility of internationalised hegemonic systems. Great powers rely on systems of hegemony the maintenance of which allows them to reap benefits, but which also carry with them the duty to respond to challenges to the system. When revolution occurs on the doorstep of a weak state which feels threatened, it will turn to the hegemonic power and expect some form of action. Hegemonic powers are tied into a system in which the credibility of their position, domestically and internationally, requires some form of action. It is this weakness-in-strength which Windsor called the vulnerability of great powers.[26]

Mayer's contention that 'governments abroad cannot remain indifferent to the ecumenical character' of revolutions reflects the third motivation.[27] The very existence of a revolution, of a successful alternative and challenging form of social organisation, threatens other states. It is the fear that revolutions may provoke a demonstration-effect at home, as well as the fear that efforts to export revolution may have consequences on *status quo* powers that compels international counter-revolution. The treatment of American communists and the 'wobblies' in the 'red scare' years immediately following the Russian revolution reflected fears within America of the potential for domestic upheaval.[28] The ideas which lay behind these heavy-handed tactics were precisely those which fuelled the anti-Bolshevism at Versailles.[29] Equally, the imposition of the *républiques soeurs* by a revolutionary France, and the transformation of post-1945 Eastern Europe into a series of 'fraternal' states by the USSR demonstrates that concern about contagion and the spread of revolution, in some circumstances, is not unwarranted.

There are two examples of revolutionary states where a lack of international counter-revolution had dramatic consequences for the international system – Nazi Germany of 1933–45 and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan of 1996–2001.[30] Each embodied a radical ideology which had dire consequences for international politics. The Nazi efforts to reconstruct Europe on racial and economic grounds produced continent-wide war and the Holocaust. Again, it is questionable whether or not counter-revolution may have prevented this, yet Nazi Germany's policies provide stark evidence of the impact of ignoring clearly stated ideological articles of faith.[31] The Taliban case is less clear-cut, in that the actions which were brought to the world were not the product of state agents but of independent, but closely linked, terrorists who had been able to organise and carry out these attacks from their headquarters within Afghanistan. The ideological affinities between the rulers of Afghanistan and Al-Qa'eda were such that an absence of concerted and effective

[26] Like many of Windsor's insights this concept is one he sadly neglected to elaborate in published form.
[27] Mayer, *Dynamics of Counter-revolution*.
[28] See Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919–1920* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1955) and, more generally, Arthur S. Link, 'What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920s?', *American Historical Review*, 64:4 (1959), pp. 833–51.
[29] Arno Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peace-making: Containment and Counter-revolution at Versailles, 1918–1919* (New York: Knopf, 1967).
[30] On the revolutionary character of Nazism see Michael Mann, 'Communism, fascism and counter-revolution in world politics', *Review of International Studies*, 27:4 (2002), pp. 683–6, 684–5.
[31] I thank the referee who pointed out that Churchill was one of the few who took Hitler at his word and warned about the consequences of Nazi radicalism.

efforts to contain their stated desire to export revolution led directly to the terrorist attacks of September 2001. To focus only on the failure of counter-revolution to overthrow states means that one ignores a fundamental aspect of revolutionary states – they will try to export their revolution, either in full or in part, and that it is in the interests not only of *status quo* states but of the system as a whole to prevent this. Pipes notes that this sense of motivation has a further dimension: 'by challenging the legitimacy of all foreign governments, the Bolsheviks invited all foreign governments to challenge theirs.'[32] The very principles which revolutions embody legitimate and even incite challenges from *status quo* states.

Beyond instrumental sources of counter-revolution, Mayer has argued that counter-revolution in Europe in the early twentieth century was the over-reaction of the European ruling classes to the social tensions which, resulting from the transformation of social relations in the late nineteenth century, had led to revolution. Mayer argues that the only solution to this general crisis of modernity was a retreat to autocratic premodern forms of political and social organisation.[33] Halliday notes three causes of counter-revolution. First, revolutions, due to their activist foreign policies and their export of revolution threaten the security of other states. Second, he echoes Windsor and notes that the credibility of alliance systems requires interventionist action. Third, revolutions present a challenge to the workings of the global capitalist economy. This refers not only to the reaction to the nationalisation of investments in revolutionary states, but also to the way in which revolutions challenge, not always successfully, the structures of capitalist economies.[34]

Counter-revolutionary ideology

Central to all modern revolutionaries has been their zeal to change not only their own society but the world itself. The rhetoric of Khomeini, Lenin, Castro and Mao was often used as a rallying cry for domestic organisation, but equally it reflected deeply held beliefs about the world which they sought to change. Revolutions challenge the dominant powers of the system – global arrogance in the words of Khomeini, capitalist imperialism in Lenin's – but also the structures of the system, its norms and principles, which have served to ensure their opponents' hegemonic power. To note that revolutions challenge the norms of the system is hardly unique, yet a fact often overlooked is that counter-revolutionaries themselves equally challenge the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention which they ostensibly seek to protect. Indeed Debray claims that revolution revolutionises the counter-revolution.[35] While he was discussing the manner in which reactionary powers were energised by the challenge of revolution, his observation also captures the zeal which lies within the counter-revolutionary.

[32] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution (*London: Harvill Collins), p. 669.
[33] Mayer, *Dynamics of Counter-revolution*, and Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peace-making*.
[34] Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, pp. 227–9.
[35] Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution* (London: Monthly Review, 1967).

While counter-revolutionary powers claim a right of interference – a reversion of the traditional norm – interventionist powers have also felt the need to hide their involvement or at least couch it in rhetorical terms; tellingly the language of counter-revolution is itself articulated in the language of ideology: 'in an age of mass and ideological politics even reactionary, conservative and counter-revolutionary governments project a populist, reformist and emancipatory image of their purposes.'[36] Seeing such language as a cloak overlooks the fact that the nature of political language is not divorced from its political context. The practice of politics is bound up intimately in its language, a defence of counter-revolution using the language of reformism or populism is unlikely to be an action which is thought to be simply a rational defence of interests. Reagan's counter-revolutionary actions of the early 1980s are classic examples of just such a tendency. Reactionary politics were espoused in near-evangelical language, but, crucially, it was language that was *believed* not only by Reagan but by much of his cabinet, his military and his millions of voters. We do well to remember that revolutionaries mean what they say, equally we should be aware that counter-revolutionaries have a genuine commitment to their ideological position.

Such a recognition helps to take more seriously the actions and motivations of those who seek to overturn revolution and to understand the ideological nature of counter-revolution. Furthermore, it can be a useful starting point for considerations of the relationship between order and counter-revolution. Counter-revolution is an acute example of the interaction between domestic and international political spheres and thus has clear implications for broader questions of international order. The foregoing discussion gives some indication that orderly relations among states are not the product simply of state actions, but of social forces which transcend borders and that these forces are ideational as well as material. It indicates that an international order does not emerge from the disinterested actions of states but is the product of concerted actions by interested parties who act on principles as well as on interests more traditionally defined.

Order and counter-revolution

In showing that counter-revolution is a part of international revolutionary processes, and that it is produced by a range of motivations, this article claims that the impulse to counter a revolution can help shed light on international order. The aim of this section is to examine the relationship between international order and counter-revolution so as to help shed light on both their interaction and their separate characteristics. It considers this relationship from the point of view of Raymond Aron and Henry Kissinger.

The notion of order has been central to the study of the international and has been most closely associated with writers of the 'English School'. For Bull, and other writers who adopt this approach, orderly relations between states are brought about by the shared norms and values which underpin the political interactions

[36] Mayer, *Dynamics of Counter-revolution*, p. 10.

between sovereign states.[37] For these writers, the primary function of international order is the maintenance and perpetuation of the international system of sovereign states. As such, international order is associated with the stability that characterises the system and is the reason why, in most cases, states do not resort to physical violence every time that a disagreement arises.

Bull recognises that order represents a situation in which international relations follow a general pattern whereby the majority of state actions conform to the established 'rules of the game'. These patterns are, in the first instance, the product of state actions. The role played by domestic matters in the formation and functioning of order is not considered. As a consequence, revolutionary transformation is traditionally not considered to be significant as it will have little impact on the system of order, even if change is predicated on an explicit attack on the system's norms. Because the orthodox view of international order does not consider this aspect, Kissinger and Aron are used to frame this discussion because they have developed systemic-level theories of international relations which take seriously the consequences of domestic politics for international order and which directly examine the implications of challenges to the system's embedded norms.

Kissinger and Aron on order

Kissinger asserts that a stable international order is produced by the combination of 'equilibrium' and a doctrine of legitimacy. Equilibrium is Kissingerian shorthand for the balance of power – a situation in which violent conflict is prevented by the deterrent effect of forces aligned to temper the aspirations of powerful states and to prevent power from settling clashes. While the matching of forces is clearly crucial to the structure of international order, 'security presupposes a balance of power that makes it difficult for any state or group of states to impose its will on the remainder. . . . Considerations of power are not enough, however, since they turn every disagreement into a test of strength.'[38] Thus, for Kissinger, order requires both legitimacy and a balance of power. In *A World Restored*, Kissinger chides Castlereagh for being interested in only the first element, the balance of forces.[39]

The genius of the nineteenth century's Congress system, for Kissinger, was Metternich's recognition that force would not be enough to contain the revolutionary challenge which France, or any other power, may present. For Metternich, and Kissinger, order can only be created when force is buttressed by legitimacy and when the system is managed carefully so as to reinforce the two elements of order. In Kissinger's words: 'The stability of any international system depends on at least two factors: the degree to which its components feel secure and the extent to which they

[37] For example, James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and N.J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[38] Henry A. Kissinger, 'The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck', *Daedalus*, 973 (1968), p. 900.

[39] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1957), see especially chs. 3, 6 and 9.

agree on the "justice" or "fairness" of existing arrangements'.[40] This produces a minimalist notion of the sources of order: it requires a balance of power and a consensus on legitimate principles.

It is this second dimension which is of interest here, for it is on the source and implications of these principles that order appears to turn. Legitimacy, according to Kissinger, 'is an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy'.[41] Legitimacy thus reflects consensus among statesmen on the aims and aspirations which will allow for the measurement of the relative justice of competing claims and which will provide for adjustment if circumstances warrant. In short, principles bring about orderly and peaceful relations in an anarchic world of sovereign states given an equilibrium of forces. They tie statesmen into an ethic of duty that entails a responsibility to maintain peace and create mechanisms that defuse the conflicting aspirations of the various states by restraining the aims and aspirations of foreign policy. The mechanisms are constructed on the foundations of the consensus of aims and goals; the image he uses to convey this is one of diplomats and statesmen who 'speak the same language'.[42] The importance of the consensus is emphasised by the observation that 'in the absence of agreement as to what constitutes a "just" or "reasonable" claim, no basis for negotiation exists'.[43]

An international order, for Kissinger has a character which reflects both the balance of power in the system and a consensus on the goals and means of foreign policy. The best example of this is the Congress of Vienna which was based on three factors: a balance of power whereby the states in Central Europe were strong enough to resist pressure from East and West; an equilibrium of forces in Germany to ensure that the states were strong enough to resist challenge but not so strong as to present a challenge themselves; and a moral consensus allowing disputes to be resolved without force. The perennial challenge is how to bring about a situation in which obligation rather than power becomes the primary consideration in foreign policy decision-making. Resolving this challenge is the task of statesmen. Kissinger emphasises the universality of the Congress system and notes that Metternich rejected the claim that the Congress system was the 'Metternich System' precisely because that label would underplay the universality of its mechanisms: 'not as an individual but in the name of reason, not because of personal opposition, but for the sake of universality did Metternich fight his battles'.[44]

The challenge to a system of order is presented by revolutionaries who, in rejecting the principles of the system (the consensus of aims and means), destroy any possible means for peaceable solutions to conflict.[45] Kissinger characterises the

[40] Kissinger, 'The White Revolutionary', p. 899.
[41] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p.1.
[42] This image appears almost verbatim in Burke's 'Third Letter on a Regicide Peace' though it is unacknowledged in his text. Edmund Burke, 'Letters on the Proposal for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France, I-IV', in *Burke's Works and Correspondence*, volume V (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1852).
[43] Kissinger, 'The White Revolutionary', p. 900.
[44] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 196.
[45] Revolutionary powers are those which feel oppressed by the existing international order and the manner of its legitimacy. For Kissinger, the point is not only that a power may threaten the security of others, but that, due to the nature of its grievances, nothing can reassure it. Kissinger, *A World Restored*, ch. 1.

distinction between order and its challenger thus: 'A "legitimate" order limits the possible by the just; a revolutionary order confronts the problem of creating a structure which does not make change impossible; a revolutionary order faces the dilemma that change may become an end in itself and thus make the establishment of any structure impossible'.[46] In sum then, Kissinger argues that international order derives from both the balance of forces and the balance of moral consensus. The linkage to domestic politics is clear – if a state cannot accept the consensus of the system then it challenges the system directly. Order for Kissinger derives from the dynamic movement of power and principle among states and statesmen who must work to manage the constant challenges to stability. Order does not emerge as an aggregate of the self-interested actions of states, rather it is the product of the careful management of power and principles by statesmen.

Raymond Aron's command of international politics, history, sociology and philosophy is almost unparalleled in the postwar period and a comprehensive summary of his international thought is impossible given space constraints.[47] As such, the article will discuss his notion of order as set out in the most complete statement of his international theory, the 1962 publication *Peace and War*.[48]

For Aron, IR examines 'the relations between political units each of which claim the right to take justice into its own hand and to be the sole arbiter of the decision to fight or not to fight'.[49] In contrast to IR's traditional three 'levels of analysis',[50] Aron's theory has four 'levels of conceptualisation'. The first deals with the schematic arrangement of concepts and systems. The second considers the general causes of events, the third deals with the development of the international system or a specific outcome and the fourth examines pragmatic or ethical judgments.[51] The question of order, though he does not use the term directly, falls into the third level of conceptualisation, that part of the field which examines the nature and development of the system.[52]

To begin with, Aron argues that the structure of the modern international system is oligopolistic in the sense that 'the principal actors have determined the system

[46] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 172.

[47] Aron's contributions to the subject matter of IR can be found among the following: Raymond Aron, *Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), chs. 10, 11, 17, 23 and 24; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1983); Raymond Aron, *The Great Debate: Theories of Nuclear Strategy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981); Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981 [1954]); Raymond Aron, *The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World, 1945–73* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975 [1973]); Raymond Aron, *War and Industrial Society* (Comte Lecture/Oxford University Press, 1958).

[48] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964 [1962]).

[49] Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 8.

[50] J. David Singer, 'The Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations', in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba (eds.), *The International System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).

[51] Aron, *Peace and War*, pp. 9–12.

[52] Aron's definition: 'an international system [is] the ensemble constituted by political units that maintain regular relations with each other and that are all capable of being implicated in a generalised war.' Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 94. This is different from Bull's notion due to its breadth and the spectre of war providing violence with a more central place in international relations. Bull, *Anarchical Society*, p. 9. This difference is due to Bull seeking to distinguish between system and society whereas Aron appears satisfied with a notion of system which has some 'societal' dimensions.

more than they have been determined by it'.[53] In common with Kissinger, Aron holds that the nature of the system, and the orderly conduct of the relations between its constituent members, is not solely determined by the balance of power or the geopolitical attributes of the states; instead, he argues that the nature of the states and the aims of those in command also determine the system's character.[54] Differences in domestic structure and ambition can lead to differing forms of international system which Aron argues tend to come in two forms, homogeneous and heterogeneous: 'I call homogeneous systems those in which the states belong to the same type, obey the same conception of policy. I call heterogeneous, on the other hand, those systems in which the states are organised according to different principles and appeal to contradictory values.'[55]

Aron argues that in homogeneous systems state leaders are able to distinguish between an enemy state and a political adversary; in an heterogeneous system, such distinctions are impossible. For Aron, heterogeneous systems pose the gravest danger for international order.[56] He asserts that differences in the *processes* of domestic legitimacy lead to differing and conflicting state aims and goals, and hence to a clash of power. Homogeneous systems are not made of states with identical state and social structures, homogeneity derives instead from the similarities of (1) organisational type; (2) the legitimate principles of political action; and (3) the values which are appealed to in order to justify or determine action. Aron points out that, in the post-1945 world, while the system was clearly heterogeneous, the UN represented an attempt to construct the basis for a juridical homogeneity.[57] Yet, the disjuncture between a formally stated homogeneity and a substantive heterogeneity of the system was marked. Aron makes clear that the significance of the homogeneity/heterogeneity distinction lies at the substantive level. International order, for Aron, derives from the distribution of forces and the states's geopolitical attributes, as well as its basic domestic structures, principles and values. Domestic politics plays a central role in the system and plays a foundational role in the constitution of international order.

Both of these views have a constitutive notion of international order.[58] That is, each view, while clearly distinct, holds that international order is produced by domestically derived norms and the balance of power across and within states. Kissinger allots slightly less importance to domestic politics as such, he is more interested in the politics and political views of the statesmen. His view, however, equally reflects the recognition that statesmen do not exist in a vacuum and that domestic changes will affect the system. Thus, the relationship between domestic and international political spheres is not, for these writers, a one-way street. Indeed, the obvious consequence, especially for Aron, of this view is that interstate competition and cooperation further encourages and produces homogeneity. International order,

[53] Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 95.
[54] Ibid., 99.
[55] Ibid., p. 100.
[56] For discussion of this see Stanley Hoffman, 'The Problems of Intervention', in Bull (ed.), *Intervention in World Politics*, pp. 7–28.
[57] Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 104.
[58] On the 'constitutive tradition' see Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 94–123.

or its absence, derives from domestic political norms and the distribution of capabilities; domestic order is shaped in part by international norms and interstate relations, of both a conflictual and cooperative nature. Each sphere interacts and shapes the other.

In broader terms, Kissinger and Aron's views have continuing relevance for world politics. Their constitutive view of international politics has important insights into a range of aspects of IR, such as the dynamics of international power systems, the impact of the international system on domestic political organisation and the role of international institutions in moderating systemic difference. More significantly, a constitutive view forces us to recognise the fundamental importance of ideas as well as power, and domestic as well as international interactions, to the broader functioning of international order.

Once IR is viewed from a perspective in which we recognise that formally distinct political spheres are overlaid with networks of transnational movements, it can be reasonably asserted that the international is more than simply the sum of its sovereign parts. This claim has implications for counter-revolution. Thus far the article has made the case that domestic and international spheres interact and shape one another and that revolution is an acute example of this interaction. What does this constitutive view have to tell us about counter-revolution specifically? The next section of the article examines the relationship between counter-revolution and order from the constitutive view canvassed above.

Kissinger and Aron on counter-revolution

Kissinger and Aron have similar theories regarding the sources and maintenance of international order. Both agree, for example, that a balance of forces is required. For Kissinger, however, order derives from the legitimate principles which structure relations *between* states. This leads to an emphasis on the role of the diplomat and statesman as the managers of order and the mediators between domestic requirements and international constraint. Aron, in contrast, argues that order is derived from similar *domestic* political structures and norms which give rise to broader forms of legitimacy. International order derives from the domestic arrangements of the components of the system and their ability to form a workable foundation for conflict avoidance and regularised relations.

The Cold War helps to clarify how these differences play out. For Kissinger, the Cold War emerged because of the disjuncture between principles. Yet, as his own time in office demonstrated, with careful diplomatic management an order was able to be constructed. This was partial, and with the removal of diplomats who were willing and able to manage relations, the orderly nature of Cold War relations during the *détente* period subsided. For Aron, however, no amount of diplomatic manoeuvering could avoid the fundamentally antagonistic nature of the international system during this period. The Cold War was a heterogeneous system and conflict was only prevented due to the constraining effect of nuclear weapons. The system could only become properly homogeneous when one set of norms became globally accepted.

From the constitutive point of view, international order is created by the actions of states and the norms which they impose and project. It does not emerge in an

impersonal manner as an aggregate of the self-interested actions of states. The constitutive view does not claim, as the traditional notion of order does, that some form of disembodied 'society' of states exists, in which the domestic circumstances (excepting power capabilities) are not thought to matter at all. Instead, the notions of order canvassed here depict its emergence in a more activist fashion, that is, order is actively sought and created through deliberate actions. For Kissinger, order derives from the concerted efforts to build systems, to manage state aspirations and moderate any conflicts that may exist. The creation of ASEAN as a multilateral institution to build confidence among the states of Southeast Asia, as well as to keep the communist challenge in check, is an example of such efforts to manage the consequences of divergent political aspirations. For Aron, order results from specific circumstances – a homogeneity of domestic forms – which, through interstate and intersocietal interaction, impel further homogeneity. Thus, for him, ASEAN would be seen as an institution which emerged as a consequence of interstate and domestic pressures for homogeneity and, furthermore, its success in incorporating the socialist states of Indochina, Laos and Vietnam is further proof of the homogenising effect of interstate relations and their institutionalisation.

Given these views, and their shared emphasis on the importance of domestic political structure and ideology, an elaboration of how states should respond to radical normative and strategic challenge can help shed light on the dynamics of counter-revolution as well as the pressures which derive from the international system. Due to their emphasis on the domestic and normative bases of international order, both views see the stability and security of the system as threatened by revolutionary upheaval.

For Kissinger, revolutionary powers challenge the international system not because they seize investments or undermine strategic interests but because they threaten the system by undermining the *principles of legitimacy* upon which it rests.[59] Norms and principles play the key role. For Kissinger, the character of an international order depends upon levels of legitimacy and satisfaction regarding the principles of the system that exist among states.[60] This is best represented by his claim that in a revolutionary system – where a power is dissatisfied with the structure and basis of legitimate principles – diplomats cease to 'speak the same language' and thus their ability to maintain a stable order is removed. From this derives the threat to stability presented by revolutionary foreign policy that cannot be tempered by the 'language' of legitimacy. The revolutionary power threatens the system itself through its aspirations with which the order cannot cope.

The problem is that nothing in the armoury of the diplomat can reassure the power which feels oppressed by the international order and its manner of legitimacy. For Kissinger, the second problem which derives from the revolutionary power's rejection is that it has unlimited objectives; its aims cannot be contained by the norms of the diplomatic system and it cannot be satisfied by solutions provided by the *status quo*. How does the system cope when it has a revolutionary character? Kissinger's interest is in the mechanisms which prevent such circumstances from arising in the first place; however, he notes that 'against a permanently dissatisfied

[59] For Kissinger's notion of revolutionary power, see above n. 45.
[60] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 145.

power, appealing to the legitimating principles of the international order, force is the only recourse'.[61] Therefore, of the two dimensions of international order – force equilibrium and legitimate principles – force becomes the only means for dealing with the revolutionary challenge. The motivation for force is not the challenge to *power* which revolutions present, but the challenge to *principle*. Kissinger quotes Leopold von Gerlach, the military adjutant to the Prussian king during the Congress system: 'my political principle is and remains the war against revolution. Bonaparte is a revolutionary because his absolutism, just as that of the first Napoleon, is based on popular sovereignty and he understands this as well as his predecessor.'[62]

According to Kissinger, force is the only way of dealing with a challenge presented by a revolutionary power. Kissinger is not prescribing counter-revolution, rather when a power proclaims principles which are incommensurable with the international consensus then force is the only means for resolution. He implies that conflict will be inevitable given the nature of the revolutionary power. The implication of Kissinger's view is of course that of Gerlach – that force should not only be used to resolve conflicts when they emerge, but to remove the principles which provoked the clash in the first place.

In this sense, counter-revolution serves the interests of the system as a whole, and doubtless those whose interests it serves. Force used to overturn revolutionary powers can preserve the legitimacy and the mechanisms of the system and is, in that sense, justified. While Kissinger holds that order requires principle and power, he implies that a consensus on the principles for international relations are the more important element. In his view, a clash of values will lead to conflict, whereas a clash of power can be managed if a consensus of principles exists. The key is the means through which differences can be arbitrated. Order *requires* the two conditions noted, and counter-revolution is one means to ensure the reconstruction of an orderly system through the defeat of the revolutionary power, such as the defeat of the USSR in the Cold War, and the construction of principles amongst states which reflect a consensus on aims: 'The difference between a revolutionary order and a *healthy* one is not the possibility of change, but the mode of its accomplishment'.[63]

Although Aron did not write about counter-revolution directly, one can infer his position regarding challenges to systemic order and possible forceful reaction. At base, he notes that heterogeneous systems are more liable to conflict. For example, the wars after the French Revolution were a product of different *principles* which led to a clash of power.[64] Heterogeneous systems are more prone to conflicts in which power considerations are not the only concern. Rather, states and their elites are induced to fight not only for the calculated interests of the state, 'those in power fight for themselves and not only for the state'.[65] Conflict in a heterogeneous system is the product of the normative differences created by different, usually revolutionary, domestic principles, and counter-revolution can be seen to be the product of vested interests protecting their position. At first glance, Aron's approach appears not to shed further light on counter-revolution.

[61] Ibid., p. 146.
[62] Cited in Kissinger 'The White Revolutionary', p. 915.
[63] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 172.
[64] Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 102–4.
[65] Ibid., p. 101.

Aron's notion of system, however, gives his view more purchase on counter-revolutionary action. A literalist interpretation of Aron's work might see homogeneity as merely constituted by the sum of its parts. Yet, there is more to his approach than this. While the system is constituted by its individual parts, it requires essential similarities at both *domestic and international* levels for it to function effectively. The minimalist view is represented by the traditional Westphalian notion that states are legally equal entities which perform the same functional role of highest authority within a specific territory. Aron's conception recognises that an orderly international system derives from more than functionally similar units kept in check by a balance of power. For Aron order derives from power as well as policy norms; importantly, the norms of the system do not emerge at the metaphorical water's edge. Rather, these are constituted by the political forces which emerge within *as well as* across geopolitical borders and which produce a systemic dynamic in which interests and ideas are fundamental to its orderly functioning.

Heterogeneity is defined not only by different domestic conceptions of policy, but by the *contradictory* nature of the aims of policy and the principles and values which underpin state organisation and action. Difference alone is not the problem, but the incompatible values and ideas of different states. The contradictory basis of the values and principles will lead not only to discrepant political forms, but to conflict. In a heterogeneous system divergent powers are drawn to conflict over the means of state.[66] While, it might be too much to claim that Aron argues that heterogeneity *causes* counter-revolution, his constitutive notion of the international system and the role of domestic norms and principles in creating the system can help to explain the tendency for counter-revolution. Orderly relations rely on a common acceptance of legitimate aims and reasonable politics; when a power emerges which challenges this basis, then it is unsurprising that states will take action. His view implies that homogeneity will not tolerate radical difference which challenges the existing order over the longer run. The notion of an international system which is more than the sum of its parts, one that has a dynamic which may not be observable in any direct sense, recognises that counter-revolution has sources which are more than simply interest-based. This shows that the nature of the norms underlying the system and their tendency toward homogeneity create systemic pressures of a different kind from those described by Waltz or Bull.

Systemic influences

The counter-revolutionary impulse can be seen in simple instrumental terms. Wilson's attempts at Versailles to counter the Russian Revolution can be seen to derive from a belief that the Russian Revolution challenged American interests and international stability more generally. This derives from an understanding of the international system as the sum of its separate parts in which an action in one unit will result in reaction from those who perceive themselves to be threatened. Such a view is not unreasonable, yet, as the discussion has shown, it ignores the constitutive

[66] Ibid., pp. 101–4.

nature of domestic political transformation and the social unity of the international system and overlooks the fact that Wilson's opposition was as much about the revolutionary ideas which the Bolshevik's embodied.[67]

It is common to think that, in the first instance, there are states and then, following their interaction, there exists an international system. Such a view misses a considerable part of the picture. There can be no state without an international system. The system is a whole, the notion of it as a set of hermetically sealed entities which interact is a convenient fiction. In our tendency to see the system in this sense, to overlook its unified character, we replicate our disposition to overlook the necessarily international character of states and nations. Revolutions vividly demonstrate the unity of domestic and international. This has implications for international order – that it is the product of geopolitical distributions, ideational structures and domestic political organisation – which require elaboration. Some have thought that the counter-revolutionary impulse is an action taken to protect or regain material interests – investments or strategic military placements – others have thought it to be the result of a recognition that systemic principles are under threat from a revolutionary power. This orthodox interpretation of counter-revolution sees it as an instrumental attempt, with ideational and interest-based inspiration, to oppose the consequences of revolutionary transformation. As the preceding discussion has shown, there is more to counter-revolution than that.

There is a link between the counter-revolutionary impulse and the sources of systemic order. The emphasis on the multiple constituents of international order, particularly the domestic normative dimension, shows why domestic upheaval elicits rancorous international response. The relationship between domestic politics, interests and the idea of counter-revolution demonstrates that the forces which impel counter-revolution are those very same forces which produce international order. For example, the considerable delay in American recognition of the Soviet Union, in spite of growing informal and trade links and emerging shared security concerns, was driven by a desire to deprive it of moral authority, suspicion of its motives and the hope that the Bolshevik government would not last.[68] Non-recognition was pursued as much out of a belief that the fundamental principles of the international system are inviolable[69] – that another state does not have the right to spread revolution – as by hostility to the Soviet Union. America's concerns were as much with the consequences of such efforts to export revolution as with the implications of the Soviet view. Such beliefs underpin the modern international system and produce orderly and reasonably predictable relations among ostensibly discrete political units.

The system of sovereign states involves the formal delineation of political spheres along territorial lines. Relations among states are governed by practices which emanate from those political spheres. The system appears to require a homogeneity of domestic form which relates to the global spread of principles of legitimate action and the emergence of a global capitalist economy. The consequence of the

[67] Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peace-making*.

[68] See John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union and the United States* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1990), pp. 87–116 and Peter G. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 17–29.

[69] One must recognise that the emergence of an embryonic humanitarian interventionist norm shows the way norms can evolve if they have the support of the major powers.

structure of the system is that divergence from the international norms embodied in social revolution challenges the homogeneity of the system because of claims to represent alternative universal principles of social organisation. The organisation of order *via* a settled distribution of forces across the states, and established norms governing the mediation of interstate relations, is challenged in a fundamental fashion such that the ideas and interests which *produce* international order impel a forceful reaction to the revolution and its ideas. In that sense, order and counter-revolution are systemic attributes, ones which demonstrate not only that the international system has a dynamic which is greater than the sum of its constituent parts, but also that the international system is a social whole.

Conclusion

Revolutions and counter-revolutions are crucial developments in international politics. They have been central factors in the evolution of the international system, punctuating political development with the sudden rumblings of radical change of domestic structures as well as rapid reconfigurations of geopolitical maps. As the history of any revolution cannot be written without recognition given to its international dimensions, equally, no history of revolution can be complete without examination of the impact that international counter-revolution has had both for the revolutionary power's development and for the international system more generally. This claim holds as true for Russia in 1917 as it does for the Islamic revolution in Iran.

Counter-revolution has been shown to be more than just the product of paranoid hegemonic powers seeking to overwhelm those who dare to challenge their position. Counter-revolution has origins in the same processes of modernity, development and social dislocation that cause revolutions. In establishing a relationship between order and counter-revolution this article has shown that the processes which impel international order also impel counter-revolution. It must be emphasised again that order and *status quo* powers are not hostile to difference *as such*. It is the strength of the modern international system that it allows for difference among organisational systems and provides basic principles to sustain difference and moderate demands given the acceptance of certain basic norms. However, when even those most basic norms are challenged by a revolutionary power, that is one which seeks to remake the basis of what Aron calls homogeneity, then counter-revolution results. So when Iran seeks to put its claim that Islam has no frontiers into action, counter-revolution is an unsurprising response. Counter-revolution is the product of state actions, but these actions reflect the social forces which produce international order. In this sense, counter-revolution is a systemic response, but one taken by states and impelled by specific motivations.

International order is linked to the social processes which constitute not only international politics, but the broader social interactions of economy and society, at both the domestic and international level, that produce revolutions. It is clear that the traditional views of the international system and order are limited; furthermore, that views of counter-revolution as simply opposition to revolution are equally unsatisfactory.

One conclusion which derives from this claim is that, in spite of the language of Ronald Reagan or Woodrow Wilson, order is not ultimately threatened by revolution or counter-revolution. It is *reconstituted* by the interaction of material forces, confrontation of ideas and the clash of interests which produce counter-revolution. Generally, despite their intentions, counter-revolutions tend to fail to overthrow the revolutions which they seek to vanquish. Equally, while revolutions may tinker with the finer points of international norms,[70] they tend not to remake international order in the manner in which they intend. The interaction of revolution and system produces a reformulated order.

Counter-revolution is not some automaton-like systemic response lacking as much in agency as it does in spontaneity, nor is it simply the result of a rational calculation of strategic interests. Instead, this article has shown that counter-revolution derives from ideological hostility and strategic calculation as well as norm protection. International order, understood as the predictable pattern of relations among states, is the product not of some hidden hand, but the considered actions of states which produce this broader attribute. In this sense then, counter-revolution results from the same set of social forces which produce international order. Clearly, the social forces have different consequences in different circumstances; however, the insight remains: the aggregation of ideas and interests which lead states to act produces a social system which is greater than the sum of its parts. One element of this system is that when a state poses a radical challenge to the interests and principles which produce order a counter-revolutionary impulse will emerge.

The interaction of counter-revolution and international order demonstrates that we must look beyond the narrow confines of a domestic-international divide and seek to understand the way in which such artificial distinctions help to produce systems of rule and domination and in so doing shape social life. Just as revolutions are characterised by the contradictions of heroic aspiration and tyrannical repression, counter-revolution has its share of contradictory ambitions and depressing consequences and an understanding of both is fundamental if we are to make sense of the social conditions of modern international relations.

[70] Armstrong makes a stronger argument along these lines in his *Revolution and World Order*.