Beyond Anarchy?
Third World Instability and International Order
After the Cold War

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Introduction

Prospects of instability and conflict in the Third World are one of the major challenges to international security in the post-Cold War era. The challenge is hardly new or unexpected. In the Cold War era, Third World conflicts, intra-state, inter-state and regional, vastly outnumbered those occurring in the developed segment of the international system. But even as the end of the Cold War has been accompanied by the settlement of a number of long-standing regional conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, Southern Africa, Central America and Cambodia, new anxieties about Third World conflicts and their wider geopolitical ramifications have emerged.

Much of this anxiety owes to a widely-held view among policy-makers and scholars that the post-Cold War era may see the emergence and/or reemergence of conflicts that were long frozen by superpower rivalry. Thus, Jose Cintra argues that the Cold War had suppressed "many potential third-world conflicts"; with the decline in their involvement in existing Third World regional conflicts, "other conflicts will very probably arise from decompression and from a loosening of the controls and self-controls" exercised by the superpowers. Stanley Hoffmann similarly envisages a New World Disorder in the Third World, "a situation [of conflict and instability] far more chaotic than the world of the Cold War, when the superpowers, knowing that they could blow themselves up, restrained themselves and their allies." Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency warned of "regional flashpoints" in the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia, which could become serious threats to US security because the end of bipolarity "has removed the tampering mechanism that often kept these situations under control." In a more cautious vein, Robert Jervis argues that while the Cold War might have had a mixed impact on Third World conflicts, "In the net, however, it generally dampened conflict and we can therefore expect more rather than less of it in future".

Is such pessimistic outlook for Third World stability after the Cold War justified? Need the end of superpower rivalry be lamented by those wishing the Third World an era of greater peace and stability within a more orderly international system? This paper is an attempt to address these questions. It examines the potential and actual sources of conflict and order in the Third World in the post-Cold War period. The aim is not only to weigh and compare the available evidence on the sources of Third World disorder, but also to assess and analyse the future security outlook for the Third World and suggests frameworks for analysing important regional differences within the Third World security environment.

The discussion that follows is divided into five parts. The first examines the ways in which the end of the Cold War contributes to greater prospects for Third World instability. The second section ascertains whether these sources have been exaggerated. The third looks at the stabilising effects of the end of the Cold War. The next section identifies the major types of security systems likely to obtain in the Third World. The concluding section makes some theoretically relevant generalisations concerning our understanding of conflict and security in the Third World.

Sources of Third World Instability in the Post Cold War Era

In what ways could the end of the Cold War create greater instability and conflict in the Third World? At least five factors deserve notice. The first of these is rooted in the effect of superpower withdrawal in altering regional balances of power in the Third World. A common fear of Western strategists has been that superpower retrenchment might encourage locally-dominant actors (which may include regional powers such as India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Iran and Iraq) to step into the resulting geopolitical "vacuum". This fear is compounded by what George Bush called "a dangerous combination... [of] regimes armed with old and unappeasable animosities and modern
weapons of mass destruction”. Third World proliferation, as the pessimists see it, not only makes regional wars more likely, but also raises their destructive potential by a significant margin. (Table 4 provides an overview of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Third World)

A second and closely related concern regarding Third World instability is that superpower disengagement, including cuts in their military assistance programs, in the Third World, would force their former clients to seek greater military self-reliance, thereby fuelling new regional arms races. In the words of one analyst, the withdrawal of the superpowers from Third World regions “entails merely that the Third World will do more of its own fighting.” Reinforcing the possibility of greater militarism in the Third World is the availability of large quantities of surplus military hardware from the vast arsenals of the major powers at bargain prices. Indonesia’s recent acquisition of an entire East German fleet is a case in point. The same factor has helped Russia to establish itself as a major supplier to regional markets (such as in Southeast Asia) which had been previously closed to it for ideological reasons. Thus, the end of the Cold War has raised the possibility of a regional "arms race" in East Asia.

A third source of disorder in the Third World which may be linked to the end of the Cold War concerns the possibility of greater regime instability. The end of the Cold War has been a blow to many authoritarian regimes (such as those in Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Somalia, Ethiopia and North Korea), who had managed to remain in power thanks to massive amounts of superpower military and economic aid. The extent of their dependence is indicated by the fact that between the beginning of 1990 and mid-1992, as many as 11 African leaders fell from power. That governments in Ethiopia, Liberia, Chad and Somalia, all major recipients of superpower aid, were overthrown during this period cannot simply be a coincidence. This trend is in sharp contrast to the fact that between 1957 and 1990, Africa had seen only one successful insurgency (in Uganda in 1986). Regime instability caused by the loss of superpower aid is compounded by a new restrictions on aid imposed by the major Western donor nations as well as international financial institutions controlled by them as part of the "New World Order”. These restrictions have made economic assistance conditional on political reforms including the introduction of multiparty democracy. As an African scholar put it, "a new spectre is now haunting Africa: Western gospel to Africa, with its uncompromising moralism about the multiparty system.”

Thus, the end of superpower rivalry and patronage has been a major contributing factor to democratic transitions in the Third World, transitions which have raised the possibility of heightened political turmoil. In Latin America, the loss of Soviet support for leftist regimes as well as the end of American backing for right-wing authoritarian regimes, both linked to the Cold War geopolitics, was a major factor behind democratic transitions. In Southeast Asia, authoritarian regimes, such as the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member-states, can no longer fend off demands for political liberalisation by invoking external dangers (including communist subversion) created by prolonged regional conflicts in their neighbourhood fuelled by superpower intervention.

A fourth source of post-Cold War instability in the Third World identified by the pessimists relates to ethnic conflict. A recent survey of the world’s conflicts found that of the 23 wars being fought in 1994, all but five are “based on communal rivalries and ethnic challenges to states.” According to this study, ethnic conflict accounts for about three quarters of the world’s refugees (some 27 million people), while of the 13 peacekeeping operations recently undertaken by the UN, 8 involve situations of ethnopoliitical conflict. Such data has formed the basis of the view that ethnic conflicts are a major aspect of the so-called decompression effect (even if, as will be seen later, a closer look at the survey suggests less dramatic conclusions). The end of the Cold War has been linked to the outbreak of ethnic conflict, since in many parts of the Third World, it meant "the
removal of ideological models that had offered uniting symbols of nation-building in countries that would otherwise be torn apart by ethnic, cultural, religious, or linguistic differences.\textsuperscript{xxix}

Finally, the end of the Cold War has raised concerns about territorial conflicts in the Third World. In Europe and Central Asia, the collapse of the Soviet empire was accompanied by a proliferation of territorial claims, including an escalation of long-standing territorial disputes. This, some analysts fear, could have a "demonstration effect" in other parts of the Third World. As Barry Buzan argues, "If the territorial jigsaw can be extensively reshaped in the First and Second Worlds, it will become harder to resist the pressures to try to find more sensible and congenial territorial arrangements in the ex-Third World".\textsuperscript{x} The separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, the escalation of Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, recent border skirmishes between Ecuador and Peru, and flashpoints in the South China Sea over the Spratlys Islands dispute, can be taken as a confirmation of this possibility. Of particular concern here is the fate of Africa's "successful boundary-maintenance regime" which had been the "great, though unheralded, accomplishment of African foreign policy".\textsuperscript{xxi}

**Exaggerating the Risks**

Going by the above analysis, the security outlook for the Third World appears bleak indeed. But the danger can be overstated. Take for example, the phenomenon of ethnopolitical conflict, which is widely seen as a byproduct of the end of the Cold War. But data compiled by the Minorities at Risk Project suggests that "ethnopolitical conflicts were relatively common, and increased steadily, throughout the Cold War", with the greatest absolute and proportional increase in number of groups involved in ethnopolitical conflicts occurring between the 1960s and 1970s (from 36 groups to 55). This contrasts with a rate of increase of only 8 (from 62 to 70) from the 1980s to the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{xxii} Thus, as the Project's Director, Ted Robert Gurr, concludes, "the `explosion of' ethnopolitical conflicts since the end of the Cold War is, in fact, a continuation of a trend that began as early as the 1960s."\textsuperscript{xxiii} His Project's findings also suggest that "ongoing ethnopolitical conflicts that began after 1987 are not appreciably more intense than those that began earlier", although they might "have caused greater dislocation of populations.\textsuperscript{xxiv} These empirical trends correspond to the theoretical explanation of the root causes of ethnic conflict, which focusses on the process of state-formation and economic development leading to an increased awareness of ethnic and cultural differences within Third World societies.\textsuperscript{xxv} Moreover, these trends suggest that it was decolonisation (which reached a peak in the 1960s and 1970s), rather than any shift from bipolarity, which should be regarded as the chief catalyst of ethnopolitical conflict in the post-World War II international system. The Third World's ethnic problems not only predate the end of the Cold War, they were also not necessarily suppressed by superpower rivalry.

While it is commonplace to characterize many recent outbreaks of violence in the Third World as ethnic conflicts, the reality may be more complex. Rwanda is a case in point. Although the media views it as an apocalyptic symbol of ethnic bloodletting in the post-Cold War era, on closer and sober reflection, the origins of the conflict can be found in "an intra-class power struggle among Rwandan elites who have manipulated and politicised ethnicity and/or regionalism, in order to divide the masses of Rwandan population into personal or group power constituencies.", Moreover: "there is nothing naturally innate or even historical about" the conflict; "the centuries-old history of pre-colonial Rwanda does not document a single ethnic war between the Hutu and the Tutsi".\textsuperscript{xxvi}

As with ethnic conflict, fears that post-colonial boundaries in the Third World are being undermined by the end of the Cold War is, to say the least, premature. The separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia after three decades of struggle makes it the first African state to be created through secession since decolonisation. But in many respects, Eritrea is a special case.\textsuperscript{xxvii} As the
**Economist** put it, while Eritrean independence breaks Africa's secession taboo, its claim for independence is "unusually strong" due to special historical circumstances in the sense that it never formed part of Ethiopia during the colonial era. Even if it encourages other movements, it "need not spell disaster for the continent". xxviii Similarly, the likelihood of serious territorial conflicts elsewhere in the Third World could be overstated. Even at the height of the decolonisation process during the Cold War, territorial conflicts were not a significant feature of the Third World's security dilemma. As research by Kal Holsti suggests, "The traditional national security problematic of most states in Europe was defined as protecting specific pieces of real estate. This is not the premier security problem for most states in the Third World". xxix There is as yet no concrete proof that we are about to see a major outbreak or escalation of territorial conflicts in the Third World. On the contrary, SIPRI data shows that the total number of major conflicts over territorial issues in the world remain constant at 16 from 1989 to 1992. In the Third World, territorial conflicts have actually declined from 15 in 1989 to 12 in 1992, while for Europe they increased from 1 to 4. In Africa, where the vast majority of conflicts continue to be intra-state, rather than inter-state, the number of territorial conflicts have actually declined, from 3 in 1989 to 1. xxx

Similarly, it is an exaggeration to suggest that the end of the Cold War may be responsible for Africa's current political turmoil. Regime instability in Africa owes to a more fundamental process long predating the end of the Cold War: structural adjustment reforms carried out by African states "in the face of massive internal opposition from popular forces, the increasing delegitimization of the state and intensification of intra- and inter-class contradictions and conflicts." As a report issued by the Africa's main regional organisation, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), put it, "in some African countries, the political consequences of...adjustment measures have been severe and have met with popular resistance in the form of riots on account of, for instance, the rising cost of food. Indeed, the social consequences of these programmes are threatening the very foundation and stability of the African social and cultural structures." xxxi Furthermore, the link between democratisation and conflict is a tenuous one. Contrary to the view of the pessimists, the process of democratisation does not necessarily generate greater instability. Throughout the Third World, including Africa itself, many cases of democratisation have been remarkably peaceful. Multi-party democratic elections led to the replacement of existing regimes in Zambia, Madagascar and Cape Verde. Internationally-monitored elections saw the peaceful return of the governments of Seychelles, Guinea Bissau and Kenya. In the Horn of Africa, the independent state of Eritrea embraced democracy and led to the ending of the revolutionary war in Ethiopia, and the latter itself has seen "a remarkable effort to negotiate the framework of a democratic federation." These developments provide further confirmation that the appeal of violent methods of political change in the Third World may be diminishing. As Richard Falk points out: "The great struggles in the South during the 1980s, ranging from the overthrow of the Marcos regimes [sic] to the heroic challenges directed at oppressive rule in China and Burma, and on behalf of expanded democracy in South Korea, relied on non-violent mass mobilization, explicitly renouncing armed struggle." Even the "intifada", Falk adds, conformed to this trend; resting "upon an inner logic of confronting the military violence of the occupiers with an essential vulnerability of unarmed civilians." xxxii

Moreover, while the downfall of repressive regimes leading to democratic transitions may contribute to increased Third World instability in the short-term, democratisation should also create more favourable conditions of stability and order in the long-term. xxxiii As Brad Roberts contends, democratisation will "constrain" Third World anarchy by "compelling a search for common interests with erstwhile competitors." xxxiv Democratisation addresses many causes of internal instability in the Third World. This is not just the view of Western Liberals. A recent report by a panel sponsored by the OAU notes, "despite their apparently diverse causes, complex nature and manifold forms, internal conflicts in Africa were basically the result of denial of basic democratic rights and
freedoms, broadly conceived; and that they tended to be triggered-off by acts of injustice, real or imagined, precisely in situations where recourse to democratic redress seemed hopeless. At a time when "the romance seems to have gone out of Third World revolutions", democratisation provides an alternative, and peaceful approach to desired political change. Whether democracies tend to live in peace with each other may be a debatable proposition in the West. But in the Third World, the co-relation (spill-over effect) between internal strife and regional instability has always been strong, largely due to the tendency of weak states ruled by insecure regimes to "succumb to the temptation to consolidate their domestic position at the expense of their neighbours by cultivating external frictions or conflicts." Thus, greater internal stability and regime legitimacy in Third World states enhances the prospects for regional security and lessen the scope for unwelcome external meddling in these countries.

Finally, fears that superpower retrenchment will lead to greater Third World militarisation are proving to be somewhat unfounded. Recent data shows that the military build-up in the Third World has substantially declined with the end of the Cold War. (for an overview of trends in Third World defence expenditures and weapons acquisitions, see Tables 2 and 3) The reasons for this trend may be found in the fact that "The end of the East-West divide has...heralded the demise of 'patron support', "militarization by invitation", and soft financing terms. Only the richest countries are now able to buy weapons on a large scale." In Africa, there has been a marked reduction in the volume of arms transfers. As Thomas and Mazrui argue, this owes primarily to the end of superpower competition and several of its related effects such as recent successes in settling African civil wars (which were escalated by the Cold War) and the rise of pro-democracy movements (other factors include the end of anti-colonial armed struggles, economic crisis and concerns expressed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank regarding high levels of military spending in countries undergoing structural adjustment). In the rich nations of East Asia, defence expenditures and arms imports have risen since the end of the Cold War. But this need not be viewed as an arms race signalling greater regional instability but rather a by-product of post-Cold War bargain-hunting and economic affluence.

International stability in the post-Cold War is, of course, threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Third World. But this danger cannot be attributed to the end of the Cold War. If anything, the Cold War itself had aggravated the problem, especially in cases where the US and the Soviet Union overlooked and tolerated proliferation efforts by their clients and allies in the Third World. For example, massive US military and economic aid to Pakistan in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was meant to discourage the latter's nuclear program by providing it with a conventional alternative. But its net effect was to ease the pressure on Pakistan's nuclear program which reached a weapon capability during this very period. A number of Soviet allies acquired chemical and nuclear material, ostensibly with Moscow's knowledge and backing. On the other hand, the end of the Cold War has led to greater recognition of the danger posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international cooperation on counter-proliferation efforts has intensified, culminating in the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Furthermore, while concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been central to fears of greater Third World anarchy, this view ignores some of its likely stabilising consequences. Brad Roberts points out that: "States acquiring massively destructive military capabilities will be forced by the power inherent in those weapons to learn to possess them wisely...this requires of leaders in the developing world that they act like the rational actors assumed in all deterrence models." Given the demonstrated effect of nuclear weapons in inducing caution in the European theatre (as well as the central strategic balance in general) during the Cold War,
there is no reason to believe, short of blind ethnocentrism, that the Third World leaders will behave like "madmen" once in possession of such weapons.

Apart from the element of exaggeration, it should be noted that the end of the Cold War may not be the major factor behind threats to Third World stability. Many of the serious regional conflicts today emerged well before the end of the Cold War. These include many of the current or potential inter-state conflict situations, including India-Pakistan, Arab-Israeli, and Korean conflicts. It is tempting to explain the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, billed to be the first Third World conflict of the post-Cold War era, as an act of opportunism in the face of declining superpower involvement in the region, but its roots can only be explained in terms of the nature and position of the Saddam Hussein regime within the Iraqi polity. The Iraqi aggression was at least partly an attempt by the regime to ensure its survival in the face of a growing economic burden imposed by the Iran-Iraq War and the consequent political challenges to its legitimacy.

Another important source of instability in the Third World is also not directly linked or attributable to the end of bipolarity or the Cold War. This is the closely inter-related problems of overpopulation, resource scarcity and environmental degradation, viewed by many as the chief source of what Kaplan has called the "coming anarchy". Homer-Dixon, in a particularly sophisticated analysis of such conflicts, identifies three categories: "simple scarcity conflicts" (conflict over natural resources such as river, water, fish, and agriculturally-productive land), and "relative deprivation conflicts" (the impact of environmental degradation in limiting growth and thereby causing popular discontent and conflict), and "group-identity conflicts" (the problems of social assimilation of the migrant population) in the host countries. These forms of conflict, Homer-Dixon's analysis suggests, are likely to be more acute in the Third World than in the developed states of the North. But even if such dire predictions are to prove accurate, the fact remains that the causes of such conflicts have little to do with changing polarity in the system structure.

Instead, it can be safely argued that the fundamental causative factors behind many Third World conflicts predate the end of the Cold War and remain unchanged in its wake. As argued by Ayoob, Buzan, Azar and Moon, David and others, the causes of Third World conflict during the Cold War were rooted in essentially domestic and regional factors, including a combination of weak post-colonial state structures and political threats to the legitimacy of the regimes that preside over these structures. Moreover, it is these local factors which often lead to the escalation of intra-state violence and strife into inter-state and regional conflict. During the Cold War, these factors not only explained the higher incidence of intra-state conflict in the Third World, but also enjoyed a great deal of autonomy from external factors, including the bipolar system structure and the attendant superpower rivalry. There is little reason to believe that the Third World's security problematic would be substantially different in the post-Cold War era.

Thus, it can be safely argued that in the post-Cold War era, essentially local factors related to weak national integration, economic underdevelopment and competition for political legitimacy and control, rather than the changing structure of the international system from bipolarity to multipolarity, would remain the major sources of Third World instability. The polarity-stability debate in international relations theory, which is rooted in a narrower and more conventional notion of security, has simply ignored such conflicts (including the resource and environmental conflicts identified by Homer-Dixon). To quote Halliday: "since the causes of third world upheaval [were] to a considerable extent independent of Soviet-US rivalry they will continue irrespective of relations between Washington and Moscow". The best that can be said for the alleged "decompression" effect is that with the end of Cold War: Many of the regional problems and or conflicts that were essentially local expressions of the rivalry are now proving soluble. But there are many other conflicts rooted in other sources, among
them historical, political, colonial, ethnic, religious, or socio-economic legacies, that continue to produce international tensions. Cutting across these local issues are the major disparities of wealth and opportunity that separate the industrialized nations and the developing world. These have existed for decades. The failure to deal effectively with this gap is a source of additional tension, which itself frustrates long-term efforts to provide wider prosperity. The end of the Cold War has been irrelevant for many such conflicts.\textsuperscript{xvii}

Two conclusions follow from the above discussion. First, the sources of Third World instability that are usually associated with the decompression effect are in reality part of a larger and long-term historical process that cannot be appreciated if viewed within the confines of the Cold War geopolitical space or time-frame. Second, the seriousness of those causes which may be somehow linked to the end of the Cold War could be exaggerated.

Sources of Stability

The end of bipolarity may have several positive effects on the security outlook for the Third World. First, the end of the US-Soviet strategic rivalry means an end to the general tendency of the Northern Great Powers to view Third World conflicts as permissible. Second, Great Powers have become far less interventionist. In a bipolar world, as Kenneth Waltz argued, "with two powers capable of acting on a world scale, anything that happen[ed] anywhere [was] potentially of concern to both of them.\textsuperscript{xlviii} In the emerging multipolar world not all Great Powers will wield a similar capacity, and the only power capable of global power projection, the US, is likely to be quite selective in choosing its areas of engagement. One safe generalisation from the recent academic debate over the relative importance of the Third World vis-a-vis Europe is that apart from Europe, the Gulf, the Arab-Israeli zone, and the Korean Peninsula would surely attract the bulk of US strategic attention and resources in the post-Cold War era.\textsuperscript{xlix} Of course, individual Great Powers may have special interests and concerns in other parts of the Third World, a major example being France’ special ties with Africa and interests in South Pacific, China’s interests in Southeast Asia and Russia’s historic interests in its "near-abroad" and the Middle East. But these powers are no longer capable of acting on a global scale (While China’s capacity for global intervention may grow, its quest for ideological expansion has ended, even in its regional neighbourhood). While selective global engagement by the Great Powers creates some potential risk that bloody conflicts in marginal areas of the Third World might go unnoticed by the international community (as happened in Liberia in 1990-92 and initially in Somalia in 1991 and Rwanda in 1994), it will also prevent the internationalisation of local wars and localisation of systemic tensions resulting from Great Power intervention.

To be sure, Great Power intervention in the Third World is not likely to disappear entirely. Despite the trend towards military cutbacks, no major Western Power has forsaken military intervention as a policy option for dealing with Third World conflicts. On the contrary, some of the force structures previously deployed in Europe are being earmarked for Third World contingency missions.\textsuperscript{i} In addition, there are moves towards greater cooperation and coordination of military assets for deployment in Third World contingencies within the framework of major Western alliances such as NATO and the Western European Union.\textsuperscript{ii} But Great Power intervention in the Third World is likely to become a highly selective affair. The political and military constraints on such intervention are growing.

The dampening of the Great Power interventionist impulse is partly explained by the rising costs of such interventions. Without a global Soviet threat to provide its justification, the US and other Western are increasingly constrained by the weight of public opinion against foreign military action. Furthermore, although the end of bipolarity removed what Hedley Bull called the "balance
among the interveners which has worked to the advantage of the intervened against"; the growing military capabilities of Third World states ensures that the costs of regional intervention by Great Powers are much higher today than in the early days of decolonisation. As Joseph Nye argues, the "forces that many Third World states will be able to deploy in the 1990s will make regional superpower intervention more costly than was the case in the 1950s."

As with Great Power intervention, local intervention by Third World regional powers is also becoming more difficult. As noted earlier, the declining involvement of Great Powers in the Third World theoretically creates a greater scope for hegemonism by regional actors. But this prospect is offset by the diminished opportunity for potential Third World hegemons to secure external backing (especially from the Northern Powers) for their own power and security interests and ambitions. During the Cold War, regional powers derived a measure of autonomy from the superpower standoff while securing material assistance from them to further their regional ambitions. The end of the Cold War marks the end to the need for the superpowers to cultivate "regional policemen" (such as Iran under the Nixon Doctrine), or regional proxies (such as Vietnam and Cuba for the Soviet Union) as part of their competitive search for influence. For their part, the regional powers, as Chubin argues, can no longer "count on foreign patrons to support them reflexively, supply them with arms, or salvage for them an honourable peace". Without massive superpower backing, even the most powerful among Third World states may find it more difficult to sustain military adventures, and may be deterred from seeking to fulfil their external ambitions through military means. The Iraqi experience during the Gulf War is illustrative of the predicament of regional powers deprived of an opportunity to exploit the superpower rivalry.

Arguably, these developments are conducive to greater stability and order in the Third World. They are also consistent with a recent survey of trends in international conflict which deny the existence of a decompression effect for the international system as a whole. As a recent SIPRI survey noted: "The data on major armed conflicts do not support the expectation that the end of the Cold War would result in increased global disorder but rather show a very gradual decrease in the annual total number of conflict locations since 1989."

Finally, it should be noted that a great deal of instability in the Third World took place at the height of the decolonization process and were directly associated with it. These include anti-colonial wars (wars of national liberation), ethnic and nationalist conflicts resulting from the imposition of artificial national boundaries by the departing colonial powers, and threats to regime stability resulting from the implantation of alien political systems in relatively inhospitable local political and social settings. As the decolonization process fades into distant memory, many Third World states have been able to achieve greater socio-political cohesion and regime stability. They now have greater experience in state-making, managing political transitions and reducing ethnic tensions through peaceful means. Thus, there is some basis to think that the widespread instability of the Third World was a historically-specific phenomenon and that passage of time and more favourable domestic and external conditions will allow at least some of these states to experience greater stability and order.

**Regional Security Systems in the Post-Cold War Era**

To some extent, the debate whether the end of the Cold War makes the Third World more or less stable misses an important point: that it does not have a single or uniform effect on Third World instability. In some parts of the Third World, such as in sub-Saharan Africa, the end of the Cold War has led to greater domestic disorder, while in Southeast Asia it has led to increased domestic tranquility and regional order (with the end of communist insurgencies and settlement of the Cambodia conflict) and in the Middle East, to greater inter-state cooperation (especially after the
Israeli-Palestinian accords). In Africa, the end of the Cold War has contributed to a sharp decline in arms imports, while in East Asia, it has created fears of an all out arms race. Furthermore, the impact of the end of the Cold War varies according to the type of conflict. The rise of domestic conflicts in Africa contrasts sharply with the settlement of its long-standing regional conflicts (especially in Southern Africa). In Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Korean Peninsula, the end of the Cold War has led to greater inter-state conflict. Regional hegemonism is a marked trend in East Asia with China’s emergence, but elsewhere, it is the regional powers, India, Nigeria, Vietnam, Iraq and Brazil which have felt the squeeze by being denied privileged access to arms and aid from their superpower patrons. Thus, to talk of an uniform and Third World-wide “decompression” effect sparked by the end of bipolarity is misleading and not supported by evidence. In general, the end of the Cold War is having a mixed and region-specific impact on Third world stability.

In viewing the post-Cold War international order in terms of two very broad categories - a stable core and an unstable periphery - Goldgeiger and McFaul acknowledge no variations in regional security relations within the periphery. Yet, a more accurate description of the periphery points to a range of possibilities. At least three types of regional security systems deserve notice.

Pluralistic Security Communities:

Karl Deutsch defined a security community as a group of states which have attained "a sense of community, accompanied by formal or informal institutions or practices, sufficiently strong and widespread to assure peaceful change among members of a group with 'reasonable'certainty over a 'long' period of time." In a security community, "War among the prospective partners comes to be considered as illegitimate", and "serious preparations for it no longer command popular support". Security communities may be amalgamated where its constituent units - states - lose their sovereignty or pluralistic, in which states remain formally sovereign, but develop a common "we feeling". Security communities are characterised by a high degree of mutual responsiveness. In such communities states will exhibit a preference for common security doctrines over balance of power approaches. Arms races either disappear or are muted to the point of irrelevance. Inter-state relations are governed by well-defined norms. Institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution are both available and accepted.

Until now, all cases of pluralistic security communities identified by international relations theorists have been in the developed world. But in the Third World, at least two regions have developed attributes which closely parallel those of a security community. In Southeast Asia, the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have not fought a war since the grouping's formation in 1967. ASEAN members have developed an elaborate set of norms, institutions and practices for pacific settlement of disputes. The feeling of "community" is also particularly strong in ASEAN, as revealed in frequent references to the "ASEAN spirit" or "ASEAN way" of inter-state behaviour. While ASEAN members do not share a common commitment to liberal-democracy (but a common opposition to communism and acceptance of the "soft authoritarianism" was an early catalyst of ASEAN solidarity), growing economic interdependence has served to cement the desire for war-avoidance. ASEAN's record in ensuring regional peace has been so successful that it has attracted considerable support from the world's major powers in developing a larger regional security system for the entire Asia Pacific region based on the ASEAN model.

The picture is somewhat less rosy in Latin America, but here too the only serious case of inter-state conflict since the Falklands War between Britain and Argentina was the brief war between Peru and Ecuador. Moreover, unlike ASEAN, the emergence of a Latin American security community is strengthened by a shared commitment to democracy and economic interdependence among the vast majority of states. Latin America is today the most democratic continent outside of
Europe, and it has seen the emergence of two new trade groupings - the Mercosur group including Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, created in 1991, and the Group of Three including Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia, established in 1994.\textsuperscript{lxiv} Moreover, the success of the Central American initiated Contadora and Esquipulas processes in ending the bloody civil and inter-state conflicts involving Nicaragua and El Salvador, challenges the view that Third World regional groupings are incapable of effective conflict resolution. The efforts by the Latin American regional grouping, OAS, to strengthen its peacekeeping, conflict resolution and human rights mechanisms are hopeful steps in the further consolidation of the emerging democratic security community in Latin America.

\textit{Internationalized Rivalries:}

Internationalized rivalries display characteristics that are exactly the opposite of pluralistic security communities. Here, regional security relations are highly unstable. The probability of inter-state war remains very strong. States seek security through balancing behaviour, rather than through common and cooperative security mechanism. Such strategies heighten the security dilemma, producing destabilising arms races, and, in many cases, a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Since most Third World states are not self-reliant in military power, those facing serious external threats are driven to seek security by forging alliances with outside Great Powers. In such a situation, regional mechanisms for conflict management are either non-existent or tend to be extremely weak and ineffective.

There are several examples of such rivalries in the Third World today, with the three most important being the Middle East, South Asia and Northeast Asia. All these regions share at least four common features: (1) a high intensity conflict situation, derived from historical, social-political, religious and ideological factors, (2) an arms race, featuring both conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction; (3) weak regional mechanisms for conflict resolution, and (4) a high degree of dependence on external security guarantees. Although regional in scope, these conflicts attract the world's attention because of the high probability of armed conflict, the likely use of weapons of mass destruction, and the external military alliances of the regional actors. Despite the geopolitical retrenchment of the major powers from the Third World in the post-Cold War era, these areas remain within their sphere of "vital interest". Security alliances involving the regional actors and external great powers ensure that any outbreak of military conflict will invite great power involvement and intervention.

\textit{Localized Anarchies:}

Somewhere in between pluralistic security communities and internationalised rivalries are regions marked by a great deal of internal instability and chaos. These regions are largely inhabited by "weak" states, with very low levels of socio-political cohesion. The writ of the central government does not extend to all parts of what it claims to be its national territory. Governments lack legitimacy and the contest for political power is not regulated through durable and commonly accepted institutional mechanisms. The capacity of the states to address socio-economic grievances is extremely limited. The nation-state is in a state of steady decline, overwhelmed by a crisis of governability. Conflicts tend to derive not so much from inter-state animosity or external intervention, but from such essentially local factors such as poverty, overpopulation, refugee migrations, crime, resource scarcity and environmental degradation. Moreover, these conflicts do not attract a great deal of external geopolitical (as opposed to humanitarian) attention and involvement, as they usually fall outside the sphere of "vital interest" of the world's great powers. Great powers are likely to be quite selective in choosing their areas of engagement. In these marginal areas of the Third World, bloody conflicts are likely to go unnoticed by the international

Africa represents microcosm of localised anarchies in the post-Cold War era. Robert D. Kaplan has called West Africa as a symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger." While his predictions about the "coming anarchy" are supposed to apply to other parts of the world, it is certainly more true of Africa (and to a lesser extent, of Southern Asia) than Latin America or Eastern Asia. Localised anarchy has been a hallmark of the recent history of much of the African continent. Between 1990 and mid-1992, as many as 11 African leaders, including the governments in Ethiopia, Liberia, Chad and Somalia, were overthrown. Beyond regime insecurity, localised anarchies in Africa approximate what Homer-Dixon identifies as "simple scarcity conflicts" (conflict over natural resources such as river, water, fish, and agriculturally-productive land), "relative deprivation conflicts" (the impact of environmental degradation in limiting growth and thereby causing popular discontent and conflict), and "group-identity conflicts" (the problems of social assimilation of the migrant population) in the host countries.

The categories outlined above are not exhaustive, nor are they clearly demarcable. It is entirely possible that some regions will combine the attributes of more than one of the suggested categories. Moreover, these categories are not necessarily permanent. Regional situations could change over a period of time in response to new local and international developments. But they capture the major types of regional security systems most likely to obtain in the Third World in the emerging post Cold War order. In addition, they challenge the simplistic division of the post-Cold War order into the two broad arenas of the core and the periphery.

**Conclusion**

With the end of the Cold War, many analysts have predicted greater conflict and instability in the Third World. This is attributed to the so-called "decompression effect" - the view that rivalry between the two superpowers had suppressed many Third World conflicts and these would reappear in the wake of their geopolitical retrenchment. But the foregoing discussion suggests that in analysing the security outlook of the Third World in the post-Cold War period, the danger of conflict in the post-Cold War era can be exaggerated, and while the prospects for greater stability understated. Moreover, the end of the superpower rivalry is itself not a cause of new Third World conflicts. The sources of Third World conflicts continue to be located within local and regional contexts, rather than in systemic changes from bipolarity to multipolarity. These findings challenges a popular realist position that multipolar systems may be more stable than bipolar ones.

The findings also address another major question about the future of international order. In his recent work, *Retreat From Doomsday*, John Mueller has argued that war among the industrialized nations is becoming "obsolescent". The end of the Cold War, according to Mueller, will accelerate this trend. But he is less certain about the fate of war in the Third World (although he sees some positive signs here as well. Francis Fukuyama clearly excuses the Third World from the era of tranquility that he expects to result from "The End of History". In this paper, I have sought to demonstrate that the Third World, or at least many parts of it, can expect to see a decline of conflict and violence as a result of the end of the Cold War. To be sure, peace will not become universal, but conflict will be rarer and more localised. The overarching geopolitical rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union magnified local conflicts in the remotest part of the Third World. The end of the Cold War will spare many parts of the Third World from this unhappy predicament.
NOTES

i. One study by Evan Luard estimates that between 1945 and 1986, there were some 127 "significant wars". Out of these, only 2 took occurred in Europe, while Latin America accounted for 26, Africa 31, the Middle East, 24, and Asia 44. According to this estimate, the Third World was the scene of more than 98% of all international conflicts. Evan Luard, War in International Society, Appendix 5.

ii. This scenario follows the neo-Realist (Waltzian) argument that multipolar international systems tend to be more prone to conflict and disorder than bipolar systems. This perspective was applied to Europe by John Mearsheimer. Mearsheimer argued that "a Europe without the superpowers...would probably be substantially more prone to violence than the past 45 years," despite the constraining impact of economic interdependence, political and functional institutions such as the CSCE and EC, and the pluralist domestic structure of European nations (debunking the Liberal hypothesis that democracies do not fight each other). John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War", International Security, vol. 15, no.1 (Summer 1990),pp. 5-55. Responses to Mearsheimer can be found in three subsequent issues of International Security. Although no forceful and predictive commentary about Third World security has yet been made, Mearshemier's thesis appears to have found an echo in a number of recent scholarly writings on the subject.


iv. Stanley Hoffmann, "Watch Out for a New World Disorder", International Herald Tribune, 26 February 1991, p.6


vi. Robert Jervis, "The Future of World Politics: Will it Resemble the Past?", manuscript, September 1991, p. 28

vii. Before concluding the assessment of whether a decompression is actually taking place, an important observation must be made about the physical extent of Third World or South. Traditionally, the term Third World included countries of Latin America, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, South Pacific excluding Australia and New Zealand and Northeast Asia excluding Japan. But the collapse of the Soviet bloc and emergence of new states in Europe and Central Asia, it is important to ask whether these countries should be considered Third World. There is good reason to view these states as part of the Third World, since their security predicament closely resembles that of the original Third World. The insecurity of the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union is likely to centre on problems of internal stability, low levels of socio-political cohesion and regime legitimation.

If such an expanded definition of the Third World is accepted, then the decompression effect may seem to have lot of validity. The outbreak of serious ethnic strife, secessionism and territorial conflicts in the Balkans and Central Asia attest to this. But if one looks at the situation in the old Third World, the picture is very much mixed. Indeed, the following discussion will focus more specifically on the old Third World. The decompression effect in the New Third World is more pronounced, since it was this area which escaped the violence that was inflicted upon the old Third World. A more appropriate test of decompression is whether the old Third World is experiencing greater instability after the Cold War.

For an argument concerning the definition of the Third World and the need to include the latter states in it, see: Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking and State Failure: Explaining the Roots of Third World Instability", paper prepared for the Seminar on Conflict and Development: Causes, Effects and Remedies", The Hague: The Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 22-24 March 1994, pp.2-3


ix. The definition of what constitutes a Third World regional power has not been precise, despite the
growing literature on the subject. A rough picture of the attributes regional power would include: (1) a relative lead in most indicators of political military and economic power among all actors within the region; (2) a supportive as well as coercive power projection capability within the region; (3) a capacity, whether exercised or not, to deny outside powers direct or indirect control over regional security arrangements. Ayooob argues that the aspirations by Third World regional powers to play a "managerial" role in the post-Cold War must be subject to approval by the US, the sole remaining superpower. But the converse could be true as well; outside power may not be able to impose regional security arrangements without the approval of regional powers. Mohammed Ayooob, "India as a Regional Hegemon: External Capabilities and Internal Constraints", in "Regional Powers", special issue of International Journal vol.xlvi, no.3 (Summer 1991), p. 420.


xiv. Keith Somerville, "Africa After the Cold War: Frozen Out or Frozen in Time?", Paper Prepared for the Workshop on Developing States and the End of the Cold War, Oxford University, 30 September - 1 October 1994, p.6


xxii. Gurr, "Peoples Against States", op.cit., p.4


xxiv. ibid., pp.3-4

xxv. For analysis of sources of ethnic conflict, see: David Brown, "Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on State


xxvii. "Next Test for Eritrea", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 April 1993, p.8


xxix. Holsti significantly adds that "there have been remarkably few militarized boundary disputes between states in the Third World. And where they have arisen, (e.g. India and China, Libya and Chad) values other than territory drove the conflicts...Control of territory (excluding certain strategic areas such as the Bekka Valley)...is declining in importance as a major object of competitive claims and military actions...Protection of territory is less the main task of national security policy than is protection of the state apparatus from various domestic challenges." K.J. Holsti, "International Theory and War in the Third World", in Brian L. Job, ed., *The InSecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Riener Publishers, 1992), pp.55-57. As Buzan himself concedes, no direct and clear link can be established between the Cold War and adherence to norms regarding territorial status quo, such as those adopted by the Organization of African Unity relating to the inviolability of colonial boundaries. In this respect, the situation in Europe is rather different. In Europe, the Cold War did play a part in freezing the territorial status quo once they were formally or tacitly agreed upon by the superpowers prior to the unravelling of their wartime alliance. But in the Third World, the only credible attempt to devise norms regarding territorial status quo - the OAU - was an indigenous attempt, rather than superpower-influenced. Finally, the major sources of territorial disputes today are not necessarily the legacies of colonial rule, but the relatively recent Law of the Sea which has contributed to a host of maritime boundary disputes. These disputes were not caused by end of superpower rivalry, but by disagreements regarding the Law of the Sea. Thus, fears that end of bipolarity could lead to the unravelling of territorial consensus could be overstated.


xxixiii. I am grateful to Sean M. Lynn Jones for raising and discussing this point


xxvii. For an interesting debate on the link between war and democracy in the context of the post-Cold War era, see the response published in three subsequent issues of International Security to John Mearsheimer’s article on "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War", *International Security*, vol. 15, no.1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5-55

xxviii. Buzan, "People, States and Fear", p.32. See also, Mohammed Ayoob, *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World; Ayoob, "Regional Security and the Third World"


Strategic Papers no.8 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994); Desmond J. Ball, "Arms and Affluence: Military Acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific Region", International Security, vol.18, no.3 (Winter 1993/94), pp.78-112
xlv. This point is made forcefully by Mohammed Ayoob who argued that "...most of the salient regional security issues in the Third World have a life of their own independent of superpower rivalry, although...the latter...more often than not, exacerbates regional problems". This is as true of inter-state as of intra-state disputes and conflicts." Mohammed Ayoob, "Regional Security and the Third World", in Ayoob, ed., Regional Security in the Third World (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.15
xlvii. Fred Halliday, Cold War, Third World, op.cit., p.162

ii. Hedley Bull identified four major constraints on Western intervention in the Third World: (1) "a remarkable growth in Third World countries of the will and capacity to resist intervention"; (2) "a weakening in the Western world of the will to intervene, by comparison with earlier periods, or at least of the will to do so forcibly, directly and openly"; (3) the growing Soviet capacity to project power, which "facilitated Third World resistance to Western intervention"; and (4) "the emergence of a global equilibrium of power unfavourable to intervention" in the sense that "there has emerged a balance among the interveners which has worked to the advantage of the intervened against". Hedley Bull, "Intervention in the Third World", in Hedley Bull, ed. Intervention in World Politics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp.135-156.


li. As one observer notes, in the Middle East, "regional conflicts have been reduced than before while cooperation is increasing including former intruders into the Arab states system. This may legitimise the recent calls for the establishment of a Middle East Common Market which includes as members non-Arab countries such as Iran, Israel and Turkey. In this case, a shift from traditional stereotyped conflicts into new possibilities of cooperation is taking place." Abdul-Monem Al-Mashat, "The Regional Dimension of the Causes of Conflict: the Middle East", Paper presented at the Seminar on Conflict and Development, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague, The Netherlands, 22-24 March 1994, p.5.


lxiii. ibid., p.276.

lxiv. "NAFTA is Not Alone", The Economist, 18th July 1994, p.47.

