

THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

ADAM WATSON

with a new introduction by Barry Buzan and Richard Little

THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

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In this reissue, a new introduction by Barry Buzan and Richard Little assesses Watson’s career as a diplomat and examines how his work as a practitioner shaped his subsequent thinking about the nature of international society. It then contextualises Watson’s original work, situates it alongside current work in the area and identifies the originality of Watson’s key arguments.

This timely reissue serves as a major contribution to international theory, to our perception of how relations between states operate, and to our understanding of Watson’s place within the canon. It will be of great interest to students of political science, international relations, world history and the history of globalization, and historical sociology.

Adam Watson (1914–2007) was a diplomat and historian, and formerly Professor of International Relations at the University of Virginia. His publications include *The Limits of Independence* (1997) and *Diplomacy: the Dialogue between States* (1982).

Barry Buzan is a Professor in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Richard Little is Professor of International Politics at Bristol University.

By the same author:

The War of the Goldsmith's Daughter, Chatto & Windus, 1964

Emergent Africa (as Scipio), Chatto & Windus, 1964; revised edition, Simon & Schuster, 1967

The Nature and Problems of the Third World, The Claremont Colleges, 1968

Toleration in Religion and Politics, CRIA, 1980

The Origins of History, edited with introduction, Methuen, 1981

Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States, Methuen, 1983; Routledge, 2004

The Expansion of International Society, edited with H.Bull, Oxford University Press, 1984

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A comparative historical analysis

Adam Watson

Reissue with a new introduction by
Barry Buzan and Richard Little

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To the members of the British Committee
on the Theory of International Politics
and particularly in memory
of its three other chairmen
Herbert Butterfield
Martin Wight
Medley Bull

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2009 REISSUE

*Barry Buzan and Richard Little*¹

Adam Watson's *The Evolution of International Society* was first published in 1992, although his idea of writing a book that examined the historical evolution of international societies occurred much earlier and indeed the origins of the book can be traced back to the mid 1960s. The rationale for Watson's project was the recognition that it is not possible to understand the contemporary global international society without having some sense of how international societies developed and operated in the past. Watson came to recognise the importance of this insight partly as the result of reflecting on his own experience as a diplomat and partly as a consequence of his participation in the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics. The British Committee came into existence at the very end of the 1950s and it brought together an exclusive and self-selected group of academics and practitioners who had the aim of using their meetings as a vehicle for developing a deeper and more profound understanding of international relations. Underpinning and driving forward their deliberations was the general acknowledgement of a need to draw upon and reconcile history and theory. Although the meetings of the Committee effectively came to an end by the 1980s the ideas generated and circulated within the British Committee have had a lasting influence on the study of international relations not only in Britain but across the globe. This influence rests in part on the Committee's close association with a handful of very significant books and influential academics, and in part on some of their seminal ideas that underpin what, for better or worse, has come to be known as the English school of international relations.²

Although *The Evolution of International Society* was written some years after the demise of the British Committee, we want to argue in this introduction that not only does this book need to be seen as an absolutely key text in the evolving study of international relations but also to suggest that in many ways it epitomises the work and approach of the British Committee. To some extent, therefore, we wish to challenge the views of Tim Dunne and Brunello Vigezzi, who have so far provided the most in-depth studies of the Committee's work. From Dunne's perspective it is *The Expansion of International Society*, edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, that represents 'the culmination' of the British Committee's activities while for Vigezzi, this 1984 volume also provides the Committee's 'most organic and coherent achievement'.³ Our aim is not to downgrade the significance of the earlier book but to indicate that by elevating it in this way, Dunne and Vigezzi fail to signal the importance of Watson's later work, as well as ignoring its integral links with the long-standing debates and concerns of the British Committee.

Watson was not only a member of the British Committee, but also one of its four chairmen and he very explicitly acknowledges his debt to the Committee by dedicating *The Evolution of International Society* to all its members and, more specifically, to the other three chairmen: Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight and Hedley Bull. Following the success of *Diplomatic Investigations*, an edited book that reflected the work carried out in the opening meetings of the Committee, the intention was to produce a second collective volume that would draw on the attempts by the Committee 'to discover how far anything

analogous to the modern European states-system has existed in other parts of the world and other periods of history'.⁴ In 1965, Hedley Bull drafted a book outline of this project that he presented to the Committee and which was then accepted.⁵ The draft was circulated again two years later, and at the start of the 1970s there was still some hope that such a volume would be forthcoming. But by the middle of 1971 Martin Wight, who had taken over from Butterfield as the chairman of the Committee, had agreed to 'bury the noble but grandiose scheme'.⁶

It was at this juncture that Watson first thought of taking on the project himself. Such ambition came as no surprise to Butterfield who had brought Watson into the British Committee in part because he was one of the most brilliant history students that he had taught, but more especially because of his practical experience. When Watson joined the British Committee, at the start of 1960, he was already a distinguished member of the Foreign Office, having played a crucial role in Anglo-American relations in the Cold War era that is only now beginning to be recognised. But by the time he joined the British Committee he was deeply embroiled in the decolonisation of Africa. This experience inevitably affected his conception of international relations. As Butterfield noted in a letter to J.D.B. Miller, the professor of International Relations at the Australian National University in Canberra, 'his practical preoccupations as Ambassador in recent years with the newest forms of the agglomeration between states—enable him to envisage the problem of the very existence of such a thing as a States-Systems [sic] from a wider and more radical point of view'.⁷

At the time that Watson decided to take over the project of surveying states-systems from a world historical perspective various members of the Committee, including Watson himself, were producing papers that discussed specific historical states-systems that had formed in different parts of the world. But Watson was already clear that his book would not be constrained by the views of other Committee members. As he noted in a paper that he brought to the Committee about his project, although it had always been understood that his book 'would grow out of the Committee's deliberations' it was also accepted that it would develop Watson's own ideas and so he was certainly not going to be 'a rapporteur' or 'limited' in any way by the Committee's discussions.⁸ Vigezzi highlights this 'discrepancy between Watson's path and the overall history of the British Committee' at this juncture and this assessment no doubt accounts for the importance that he then attaches to *The Expansion of International Society*, which in the end constituted the second and, as it happens, final volume to emerge from the collective endeavours of the British Committee.⁹ Although Vigezzi makes reference to *The Evolution of International Society* he does not subject it to the rigorous analysis that he reserves for *The Expansion of International Society*. And yet it seems to us that Watson's book is also very much informed by his contact with the British Committee and as a consequence it is worthwhile examining this book through the same intellectual lens that Vigezzi focuses on *The Expansion of International Society*.

The first section of this Introduction provides a biographical sketch of Watson's remarkable career as a diplomat and an academic. We do this, in the first place, because it is useful to know the man behind the work, but, second, because we argue that his experience as a diplomat also impacted on the way that he approached the study of international relations. The second section then draws initially on Vigezzi in order to

highlight the essential features of the British Committee's approach to international relations, thereby establishing a lens through which we can see whether *The Evolution of International Society* departs from or develops further the general orientation of the British Committee.

ADAM WATSON: FROM PRACTITIONER TO THEORIST

One of the most distinctive features of the British Committee was the desire to draw together the skills and insights provided by both theorists and practitioners. The intention was not, however, to use the practitioners as a repository of information that could then be plundered by academics in their endeavour to promote a more theoretical understanding of international relations. By the same token, there was no desire to ensure that the Committee developed a mode of theory that had policy implications. Instead it was presupposed from the start that regular meetings between academics and practitioners could potentially generate a synergy that would be missing if these meetings were confined to academics. To a significant extent, the assumption prevailing within the Committee was that theory is a product of practice, and so it made sense to bring sympathetic practitioners on board. Watson was certainly one such practitioner. As he noted in a book written when he was in his eighties, his whole working life had been concerned with 'the practice and theory of the relations between states'.¹⁰ Although Watson was not the only practitioner on the Committee, he proved to be the most influential and committed. Moreover, as his biographical details reveal, although there was a long period of transition, Watson underwent a transformation and having operated for almost forty years as a practitioner, he went on to have a second equally successful career as a fully fledged academic when his primary concern was understanding the practice of international relations from a theoretical perspective.

John Hugh Watson (1914–2007) was born in Leicester on the eve of the Great War, but he spent his early years in Buenos Aires where his father ran a trading partnership.¹¹ After studying at Rugby and Cambridge, he joined the Diplomatic Service in 1937, and in 1939 he was posted to the British Legation in Bucharest. But when Romania joined the axis powers in 1940, the British government severed its diplomatic relations with the country and Watson was the last person to leave the British embassy in Bucharest 'locking the door and making off with the key' as he put it later.¹² The Foreign Office then moved him to Cairo where he liaised with the Free French who were fighting in the Western desert campaign. By 1942, the military situation there had deteriorated to the point where Watson was given the responsibility of surrendering Egypt to the Germans in the event of a British defeat at El Alamein—a responsibility that fortunately he did not have to fulfil—and he continued, skilfully, to help maintain Britain's fractious relations with the Free French.

Towards the end of the war, in 1944, Watson was moved to Moscow where he established what was to become a lifelong friendship with George Kennan.¹³ But he also established very close links with the American ambassador, Walter Bedell Smith, who went on in 1950 to become the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and John

Paton Davies, the first secretary in the US embassy, whose subsequent career was blighted by Senator Joseph McCarthy's infamous allegations about communist sympathisers in the State Department.¹⁴ During his time in Russia, Watson met Stalin and Molotov and served on occasions as Churchill's Russian interpreter. After a four-year term, however, he was called back to the Foreign Office in London in 1948 to join Sir Ralph Murray who had become, in January 1948, the first head of the Information Research Department (IRD). This new and innocuously titled agency quickly became, according to Saunders, the fastest growing section of the Foreign Office at that time and it was charged with the aim of countering propaganda coming out of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary at that time, wanted to go much further and he insisted that it was essential to 'put forward a rival ideology to Communism'.¹⁶ It is, however, only since the start of the new millennium that this aspect of the Cold War has come under close and sustained scrutiny and, in the process, the importance of Watson's role in Cold War history has started to become much more apparent. Britain was, in fact, the first country to formulate a coordinated global response to communist propaganda.¹⁷ The British government argued that it was essential to oppose communism by adopting an active and offensive strategy against it. This was not straightforward, as Watson later acknowledged. Having established a positive image of Stalin during the course of the Second World War, 'Now the question was, "How do we get rid of the Good Old Uncle Joe myth built up during the war?"'¹⁸

There has been much criticism levelled at the Information Research Department because of the secrecy surrounding its activities, the virulence of its anti-communism and its intrusion into domestic politics.¹⁹ But as Wilford has shown, the Department worked very closely with the Labour government and the Labour Party in the early years and he comments, for example, on the close cooperation and friendship between Adam Watson and Denis Healey, who at that time was the Labour Party's International Secretary at Transport House.²⁰ By the same token, Defty argues that Healey was the IRD's main conduit into the Labour Party and he was expected to 'distribute IRD material to his contacts on the left across Europe'.²¹ At the start, therefore, the British aim was to influence elite opinion, particularly on the left, and to encourage them to disseminate an anti-communist line. Watson was asked to join the IRD in part because he was, as he put it later, 'friendly with many of the leading figures of the "literary left"'.²²

By the middle of 1949 Watson had become Ralph Murray's assistant and he was rapidly to become a central player. For example, in October, when the US State Department suggested that it would be useful to have an exchange of views about anti-communist propaganda, it was agreed that Watson should travel to Washington to represent the British position. According to Wilford, however, the Foreign Office 'had a rather poor opinion of the work produced by their American counterparts' and he goes on to suggest that, from its perspective, greater experience and 'it was often implied, superior intellect gave the British a natural advantage in the field'.²³ This was not a view shared by Watson. As he was to observe a little later 'We offer the Americans advice pretty freely. Often it is good advice; and even if not they accept it with some eagerness as a useful outside view. We are far more cocksure about their advice to us.'²⁴ When the visit to Washington took place in January 1950, Watson eschewed hotels and stayed with

the American friends he had made during his tour of duty in Moscow.²⁵ The visit was a success and it was soon agreed that the British and Americans should exchange Information Liaison Officers to help to harmonise British and American policy in the area of propaganda or, as the Americans began to label it, psychological warfare.²⁶

In August 1950, Watson was established as the first British International Liaison Officer in Washington, a post that he was to hold for the next six years. Within a year his position was to become even more critical because his American counterpart in London failed to make anything of this position and he was not replaced, with the result that Watson became, as he informed the Foreign Office, 'a broker: exploring the advantages which cooperation in various fields might bring'.²⁷ During this period Watson consolidated extraordinarily close personal relations with a wide range of key American officials. When Eisenhower became President, Watson's links with the Republican officials responsible for psychological warfare were just as close as when his predecessor, President Truman, was in office. As a consequence, Watson ensured that cooperation with the Americans in the area of propaganda and psychological warfare was as close as in the area of intelligence. Although it is generally accepted that it was cooperation in intelligence that lay at the heart of the 'special relationship' between Britain and the United States, as the archives have been opened it has become increasingly apparent that in the early stages of the Cold War, cooperation in the area of psychological warfare was equally important. Defty suggests that Watson seems to 'embody the Special Relationship' and was the 'linchpin of British and US cooperation in the field of anti-communist propaganda'. Indeed, Wilford goes further and insists that Watson's importance 'as a linchpin of Cold War Anglo-American relations has been underestimated by diplomatic historians'.²⁸

What this assessment misses, however, is that Watson was in Washington at the time that the United States was decisively realigning its relations with Europe in general and Britain in particular. It was adopting a position of leader or hegemon. The failure of the United States to maintain an Information Liaison Officer in London was one of innumerable signals that relations with its allies were not quite reciprocal. As Watson was to put it fifty years later, it is necessary to think after the Second World War in terms of 'a series of concentric circles, with the United States wearing the imperial mantle at the centre'.²⁹ He insists that this image is only an aspect of a more complex reality, but it is unlikely that the seeds for this idea were not sown as he observed the British, having identified the need for a propaganda response to the Soviet Union, then being required to fall into line behind policies that were favoured by the United States. Certainly the idea of hegemony was to become absolutely central to his later thinking about international relations.

Watson returned to Britain in 1956 from the United States to become the head of the Foreign Office's African Department and for the next seven years he was intimately involved with the task of responding to the challenges to European authority in Africa and the resulting complex process of decolonisation across the continent. But so far as we have been able to discover, his role in Africa has not yet been investigated systematically by diplomatic historians. Only the bare details of his postings can be given. In 1959 he became the Consul General in Paris and was responsible for directing British relations with the French colonies in Africa, and then over the next three years he became the

British ambassador in Mali, the Senegal, Mauritania and Togo.³⁰ From his base in Senegal, he acted as a roving ambassador and his responsibilities included meetings with the transitional leaders in the newly independent African countries to explain what assistance they could expect from the West. But as well as covering the former French colonies, he also visited British and Portuguese colonial areas in order to develop a comparative perspective.³¹ Watson's contact with Africa had a profound effect on him, and on the basis of his experiences he wrote a book, during a one-year sabbatical in Cambridge, which assessed the future prospects of Africa, although the focus was on tropical Africa and specifically West Africa. Officials in the Commonwealth Relations Office, however, took exception to some of the content and so Watson was required to publish the book under a pseudonym. *Emergent Africa* came out under the name of Scipio.³²

What this book provides is an extremely empathetic account of Africa and African decolonisation that draws heavily on his intimate involvement with this continent. Although he insisted that colonisation had precipitated rapid economic growth, he acknowledged that it was at the expense of producing 'greenhouse' economies that had been increasingly designed to fulfil the needs of the metropolitan countries.³³ But, by the same token, he went on to argue that although the African economy had been seriously distorted by the West, African leaders themselves acknowledged that 'unjust and humiliating as colonial rule might be, it was not the root cause of African backwardness'.³⁴ Africa suffered 'from a serious scarcity of almost every economic resource' and Watson was convinced that the shortages could not be overcome in the near future and without considerable external assistance.³⁵ But he also stressed the brevity of the colonial era in tropical Africa and suggested that the 'real and profound changes' had occurred only over the previous forty years.³⁶ However, it is unlikely that it was Watson's views of colonisation that bothered the Commonwealth Relations Office. They are more likely to have been concerned by his frank admission that there was also a possibility that 'the rulers of the new African states and their followers, mean to stay on top and that some of them, and especially their wives, mean to have a good time'.³⁷ Watson goes on to suggest that an even bigger danger was the 'perpetuation of party oligarchy'.³⁸ Despite these deep-seated problems and dangers, Watson expressed optimism about Africa's future. Moreover, he sympathised with the views of African leaders, such as Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, who argued that if Africa's own cultural values were fostered instead of distorted, then *négritude* 'could make a distinctive contribution to world civilization'.³⁹

Three years after *Emergent Africa* came out, Watson published under his own name a series of lectures given at the Claremont Colleges in California where he acknowledged that the fundamental reason underpinning decolonisation was the eventual recognition in Europe that there was 'something morally wrong' about maintaining colonial possessions overseas.⁴⁰ He was acutely aware of the passionate desire for independence across Africa at the time of decolonisation and although he insists that the period of active colonisation by the Europeans was extraordinarily brief, less than fifty years, the very brevity of this period inevitably opens up the question of how to characterise the nature of the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world both before and after the era of

colonisation. In particular, as he reflected later in life on the nature of the post-colonial relationship, he found it necessary to ask whether it represented imperialism or hegemony.⁴¹ It is unsurprising, therefore, that the complex and divergent nature of political relations within any international society became one of his major preoccupations. Indeed, he entitled his final book *Hegemony and History*.

This leitmotiv was to resurface in Watson's next assignment. In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis he was sent in 1963 to Cuba where he was the British ambassador for the next three years. He reflected on the nature of the relationship that Cuba had with the outside world and, in particular, the consequences of the shift in the island's links with the United States to the Soviet Union, citing the slave proverb 'To change masters is not to be free.'⁴² From Watson's perspective, therefore, characterising relations among states in the modern world in terms of sovereign equality failed to capture the complexity and divergent nature of relations within the contemporary international society.

From 1966 to 1968, Watson's final years in the diplomatic service were spent as the London-based under-secretary of state for NATO affairs. He then took early retirement from the Foreign Office but went on to spend five years as diplomatic adviser to the newly formed British Leyland Motor Corporation. This proved to be a frustrating experience, and he was caught, for example, in a dispute with Israel in the early 1970s over discussions within the company to sell Land Rovers to Arab countries.

During his final years as a practitioner, Watson returned to the task of influencing East-West relations as well as relations between Europe and the United States. In October 1974, he became the Director General of the International Association for Cultural Freedom (IACF), an organisation that drew together intellectuals from Europe and the United States. This NGO began life in 1950 as the Congress of Cultural Freedom (CCF), which had, according to Berghahn, the aim of winning two cultural wars: 'one against the Soviet bloc as part of a larger world-historical struggle against communism and the other against the deeply rooted negative views of America as a civilization and a society amongst Western Europe's intellectuals and educated bourgeoisie'.⁴³ But because the Congress was for a period secretly funded by the CIA it is inevitably linked to American psychological warfare. When knowledge of the CIA funding became public in 1966 there was widespread outrage.⁴⁴ As a result, the following year, the headquarters were moved from Washington to Paris and the CCF became the IACF in order to distance the association from the preceding controversy.⁴⁵

By the time that Watson agreed to act as Director General, however, lack of funding was the crucial issue. The Ford Foundation, which had been the principal source of funding over the years, indicated that they were no longer willing to maintain the IACF, with the result that Watson had to take responsibility in 1977 for winding the Association down. Before this point, the Congress and then the Association had been a multimillion-dollar enterprise. It had representatives operating in most of Western Europe and the United States as well as a number of African, Asian and Latin American countries. It supported over a dozen intellectual and scholarly journals and it organised large international conferences on important contemporary themes. But by the 1970s, times had changed. In 1950, the CCF had aimed to establish a consensus that could accommodate opponents of communism on the right and the left. But by the 1970s that consensus had shattered with the rise of the New Left and the widespread criticisms of

US foreign policy. The Ford Foundation, moreover, was now more interested in providing funds for Third World countries and it wished to end the link with an organisation that had never succeeded in shedding its association with the tainted CCF. Berghahn argues, moreover, that the willingness to continue funding the IACF after the CCF scandal had little to do with East-West relations and was primarily to do with consolidating the image of the United States as a country whose cultural achievements were at least the equal of those in Europe.⁴⁶

With the imminent demise of the IACF, one of Watson's major tasks was to secure funding for the journals and the affiliates of the Association, some of which the Ford Foundation had indicated a willingness to support. Undoubtedly the most important of these affiliates was La Fondation pour une Entraide Intellectuelle Européenne (European Foundation for Intellectual Cooperation), which was established in 1966 to expose nonconformist intellectuals in Eastern Europe to Western culture, and to give visibility to intellectual dissent in the Soviet bloc. Guilhot argues that the Foundation established 'a far-reaching social web, stretching deep into Eastern Europe. Through this network, many ideas about East-West relations, detente, and cultural trends took shape.'⁴⁷ In practical terms, the Foundation aimed to promote cultural dialogue by getting books and other materials to intellectuals behind the Iron Curtain, as well as to help their work find a Western audience.

At the start, the Foundation worked extremely closely with the IACF, but by the 1970s it became increasingly eager to maintain its autonomy and, despite its financial dependence on the IACF, it distanced itself from the Association. The ideological orientation of the two organisations increasingly diverged. So, for example, the Foundation worked on the assumption that, in cultural terms, there was no East-West divide and they were, therefore, very critical of détente because it aimed to perpetuate the divide. By the same token, the Foundation increasingly engaged with the new social movements that were emerging in Eastern Europe. When Watson took charge of the IACF, however, he recognised that the Foundation was in close touch with these important intellectual movements and the archives show, according to Guilhot, that Watson consistently defended the Foundation and agreed to become its chairman. With the demise of the IACF in 1977, the Foundation became a completely independent entity. Watson argued that its survival meant that 'the continuity of [the] IACF tradition is assured'.⁴⁸

Although Watson was on the brink of moving into academia, he maintained his links with the Foundation. For a while, funding for the Foundation proved to be a major problem, but in September 1981, George Soros, not yet known as a global philanthropist, became interested in its work. Watson was informed the following month by Annette Laborey, who had taken over from him, that it would not be a problem for Soros to provide 70,000 dollars on an annual basis and he also helped to secure funding from the Ford Foundation. This allowed the Foundation to continue its work, although it also became increasingly enmeshed with the Open Society Institute that was being funded by Soros. The Institute had the aim of building a global alliance for an open society and was therefore intending to implement the strategy established by the Foundation on a worldwide basis. When the Berlin Wall fell, the rationale for the Foundation came to an end and by 1991 it had merged into the Open Society Institute. When Soros met Watson in Budapest at the end of 1989, he acknowledged the importance of the Foundation's

links with Eastern Europe and, indeed, Guilhot argues that it is doubtful if the Central European University, established by Soros, would have enjoyed the legitimacy it immediately acquired 'had it not been built upon the established reputation of the Fondation pour une Entraide Intellectuelle Européenne'.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, winding down the IACF must have been an unrewarding task for Watson and it is perhaps unsurprising that it was only at the end of his life that he came to reflect on the importance of NGOs, particularly in the context of hegemony, which is how he characterised the post-Cold War world.⁵⁰

By this time, however, Watson was firmly established as an academic in the United States. In 1978 he accepted the position of Visiting Professor at the University of Virginia and from 1980 to 1995 he was a professor of international studies at the Center for Advanced Studies in Charlottesville, Virginia, and he maintained close contact with the university, thereafter, until his death. To some extent, this appointment was a mark of respect for his long and distinguished career as an international diplomat. But for twenty years before this appointment, as already discussed, Watson had had one foot firmly planted in the academic arena through his ties to the British Committee. Moreover, in addition to his books on decolonisation, that reflected his own practical experience, Watson had also written a study of the complex political relations in India between Hindu and Muslim states in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the medieval era in world history drew to a close.⁵¹ In some ways, this book appears to be a conventional diplomatic history that pays close attention to the character and skills of political leaders, but embedded in the text there are also fascinating observations about the adaptation of Islam to a Hindu world with particular attention paid to the role of gender in the process, along with comparisons to what was happening at this time between France and Britain. He compares, for example, the emergence of both Urdu and English as significant languages at this historical juncture. This book reveals, therefore, that Watson's interest in the history of states-systems was very long-standing and that *The Evolution of International Society* was the product of a sustained inquiry, and demonstrates in particular an established interest in the idea of hegemony, which was to become such a central feature in the later book.

Other projects intervened, however, before Watson got round to writing what was effectively his homage to the British Committee. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the forty years that he had dedicated to the world of diplomacy, he wanted first to write a book that reflected on the nature, history and significance of diplomacy. *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States* is certainly not a primer on how to conduct diplomacy but rather an attempt to extract the essence of diplomacy through an exploration of the practices 'in many states systems over the centuries and the theoretical assumptions that have underlain these practices'.⁵² The book is heavily influenced by the orientation favoured by the British Committee. Having completed his book on diplomacy, Watson went on to cooperate very closely with Hedley Bull to bring about the publication of *The Expansion of International Society*. As noted earlier, this edited book is often seen to represent the culmination of the British Committee's work and working methods. But it does not, in fact, attempt to look at international society from a world historical perspective. In essence, the focus is on the European states-system and its worldwide expansion. Indeed, Bull and Watson work from an essentially Eurocentric perspective because they argue that the basic features of the contemporary international political structure have been

inherited from Europe. They insist that because ‘it was in fact Europe and not America, Asia, or Africa that first dominated and, in so doing, unified the world, it is not our perspective but the historical record itself that can be called Eurocentric’.⁵³ This position needs to be challenged, although the assessment is certainly not controversial among mainstream IR theorists.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, *The Expansion of International Society* is still an important statement, representing an extremely ambitious attempt to use the idea of international society as a framework for comprehending the formation of the modern world. On the other hand, it makes no attempt to see how the emergence of the contemporary international society can be located in the context of how previous international societies developed and operated. Watson, now in his seventies, returned to this theme, which had initially been opened up by the British Committee in the 1960s. As we will show in the next section, when we examine *The Evolution of International Society* in more detail, in writing this book, Watson advanced the ideas of the British Committee in a significant fashion. In particular, he drew attention to hegemony and this idea was then to preoccupy Watson’s thinking to the end of his life. It formed the central theme of his last two books. Watson wrote *The Limits of Independence: Relations Between States in the Modern World* when he was in his eighties. In this book, he explicitly puts the contemporary international society into a broader historical context, as well as drawing on his own experience as a practitioner, and this leads him to ask the question: ‘Have we cherished and idealised independence and sovereign statehood not wisely but too well?’⁵⁵ His thinking about hegemony over the previous decade led him to question the view of the world that was taken for granted during the time he was in the Foreign Office as well as the pluralist picture of international politics painted by Hedley Bull in *The Anarchical Society*.⁵⁶ Now he was convinced that the representation of international politics in terms of the interactions among a set of independent states constituted no more than a theoretical possibility. In the real world, he argued, it was essential to accept that the dominant powers invariably exercise ‘some degree of hegemonial authority’.⁵⁷

In *Hegemony and History*, a collection of essays, new and old, that was published shortly before he died, Watson re-emphasised that he had been thinking about hegemony for the past fifty years. And in this final book, he relates this topic to the theme that lay at the heart of the British Committee’s remit—the importance of employing history to develop theory, while still remaining faithful to the idea of history.⁵⁸ What is so fascinating about this final book is the extent to which it resonates with the contemporary concerns of some of the key international theorists in the field. No doubt this is, in part, a tribute to his first mentor, Herbert Butterfield, who, according to Watson, stressed the importance of not prejudging anything, and always maintaining ‘elasticity of mind’.⁵⁹ It is very clear that Watson succeeded in imparting the importance of this posture to new generations of students. Julie Bunck and Michael Fowler, two of his former students from the University of Virginia, observed:

For many years at his house in Charlottesville Adam would bring together small circles of Virginia graduate students and faculty. Complemented by the cheese and wine, Adam would engage, stimulate, and, every once in a while, referee, with a touch that was light and caring and insights that were profound and

original. His was that rare intellect that was prepared, to the last, not only to take a fresh look at important issues, but to join with others to try to create new and better approaches and explanations.⁶⁰

ADAM WATSON'S *THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY*

In *The Evolution of International Society (EIS)* Watson works from the assumption that to understand the contemporary international society it is essential to develop and then to build on an analysis of previous international societies. Our present international society, he argues, is 'puzzling if looked at in isolation' and yet it certainly cannot be understood if we 'merely trace our present arrangements back in time'.⁶¹ From Watson's perspective, therefore, it is essential to identify other examples of international societies that have formed in the past and explore their similarities and differences. In adopting a methodology that embraces both historical and comparative analysis, Watson is clearly moving beyond the position that he and Bull adopted in *The Expansion of International Society* where they argue in the Introduction that 'our subject can be understood only in historical perspective, and that without an awareness of the past that generated it, the universal international society of the present can have no meaning'.⁶² The earlier book lacked the comparative dimension that Watson clearly saw as vital for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary international society.

Before we examine the implications of developing a comparative approach, it is important to look more closely at what the British Committee meant by history. Although both of these books are without doubt preoccupied with the nature and consequences of history, this still leaves unresolved the question of whether or not they share a common conception of history and, even if they do, how this conception is then constituted. This is an issue that has never been adequately addressed in the general field of international relations and yet Vigezzi makes it clear that the nature of history and the relationship between history and theory were absolutely central issues for the British Committee. From his perspective, the history of international society that emerges in *The Expansion of International Society* has its origin in 'the crisis in historicism which the scholars of the Committee had to face up to on many occasions'.⁶³ Although there is no straightforward or concise definition available for what is meant by historicism, Iggers argues that the term became well known in the twentieth century through the identification of this 'crisis of historicism', which he associates with a 'deep uncertainty regarding the value of Western historical traditions and the possibility of objective historical knowledge'.⁶⁴

By highlighting the 'crisis of historicism' Vigezzi performs a valuable service because it is only possible to come to terms with the crisis through an acquaintance with historiography, in other words, the analysis of how the past has been studied in different cultures and at different points in time. Because Butterfield had a very deep-seated interest in historiography, it is unsurprising that the British Committee should have been constantly concerned about how the past can be studied alongside its role in our

understanding of the present.⁶⁵ Yet International Relations as a field of study has never confronted this literature and, indeed, it appears largely unaware of the attempts in historiography and the philosophy of history to address the question of how to study the past.⁶⁶ Although it is not possible to examine here why the idea of objective historical knowledge began to be challenged at the start of the twentieth century, there is no doubt that members of the British Committee, and particularly Butterfield, while well aware of the challenge, were also committed to the idea that it is possible to develop an objective understanding of history.

The crisis in historicism is often associated with a reaction to the attempt by the nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke to place the study of history on a scientific footing by relying on documentary sources to show what 'actually happened' in the past. Butterfield, in fact, made a close study of Ranke's methodological writings and was profoundly impressed by them.⁶⁷ But he also recognised that diplomatic documents fail 'to bring historians to the heart of the problem' of writing history because evidence has to be fitted into 'a framework' that is constructed by the historian.⁶⁸ Butterfield recognised that it is essential to move beyond one of the basic assumptions that Iggers claims Ranke shared with earlier historians who 'presupposed that human actions mirror the intentions of the actors and that it is the task of the historian to construct a coherent historical story' on the basis of these intentions.⁶⁹ Iggers argues that this assumption continued to dominate the study of political and diplomatic history until well after 1945, although he also recognises that in the aftermath of the Second World War, the 'systematic social sciences began to play an increasingly important role in the work of historians'.⁷⁰ This was certainly true for the historians on the British Committee who acknowledged that associating history with the study of historical documents in order to glean the intentions of historical actors and on that basis to construct a narrative account of events was not a route that they wished to follow. As Watson noted, a focus on 'the narrative and on the policies and motives of individual states and personalities' makes it impossible to provide a comprehensive picture of how international relations have operated in the past.⁷¹ From his perspective, therefore, the work of historical sociologists is often just as important as the work of diplomatic and international historians in order to develop an understanding of the states-systems that have formed across world history.

It is unsurprising, therefore, to find that throughout its existence the British Committee wrestled with the question of what its 'framework' for studying international relations should look like. Ironically, the members made progress by turning to the work of Heeren, a central member of the school of history at the University of Göttingen and, in particular, his history of the European states-system.⁷² Watson observes that Butterfield introduced the Committee to Heeren's work and that both he and Bull were 'much impressed' by Heeren's theoretical framework.⁷³ Heeren defines a states-system as 'the union of several contiguous states, resembling each other in their manners, religion and degree of social improvement, and cemented together by a reciprocity of interests'.⁷⁴ He goes on to stress the 'mutual independence of its members, however disproportionate they may be in regard to physical power' and as a consequence he can then contrast a states-system with a system that we would now call hegemonic or unipolar, 'where an

acknowledged preponderance of one of the members exists'.⁷⁵ Although this distinction was to become absolutely central for Watson, it was not initially picked up by members of the British Committee. Instead, as Vigezzi has shown, from the 1960s onwards, the Committee engaged in 'insistent and even tormented discussions' about the distinction between an international system and an international society.⁷⁶

Bull, in particular, argued that it is useful to draw a distinction between a system and a society and he clearly articulated the distinction in *The Anarchical Society*. He argues, in the first place, that it is possible to identify an international system whenever 'states are in regular contact with one another and where in addition there is interaction between them, sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculation of the other'.⁷⁷ By contrast, an international society exists when states are, on the one hand, 'conscious of certain common interests and common values' and, on the other, 'conceive of themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions'.⁷⁸ Bull primarily uses the distinction for heuristic purposes, focusing on the idea of an international system to reveal what international relations would look like in the absence of an international society. But in *The Expansion of the International Society* Bull and Watson employ the distinction much more systematically. As Vigezzi argues, the terms become 'investigative tools and heuristic categories (or even models)' providing the basis for a 'well-defined and solid' framework that forms 'an integral part of the historical reconstruction'.⁷⁹ In essence, Bull and Watson argue that the European international society expanded into and overlaid a pre-existing world international system.

The members of the British Committee responded to the 'crisis of historicism' by turning back to the school of history developed at the University of Göttingen which was interested in 'general history' or what would now be called world history, and Butterfield argues that they endeavoured to establish 'a unified canvas' that embraced China, Tibet and Japan. This is far removed from the idea of narratives based on the motives of individuals. Butterfield goes on to argue that the work of this school was premised on three principal ideas. The first was that since the end of the fifteenth century, the principal feature of world history was the 'unprecedented predominance of Europe in world-affairs'. The second was the need to take account of the formation of the modern state and the rise of the Great Powers in Europe, and the third was that the modern European states 'formed something like a society and a unified system'.⁸⁰ What the British Committee added to this world-view was the need for a comparative perspective. Butterfield, in particular, stressed that it was essential to look beyond Europe and identify and examine in detail earlier states-systems. But, as already noted, the Committee never succeeded in fully accomplishing or at any rate completing this goal. Instead, Bull and Watson oversaw the much less ambitious project of investigating how the European states-system extended across the globe.

It was left to Watson to take forward the larger and more ambitious project of identifying and comparing states-systems across the span of world history. To carry out this project, however, Watson had to advance and refine in very significant ways the theoretical framework that the British Committee had been working with. Moreover the complexity and sophistication of the theoretical framework that Watson eventually formulated has not generally been acknowledged.⁸¹ Although he drew extensively on

ideas already developed within the British Committee, he found that in order to accommodate a comparative perspective that embraced case studies which extended back five thousand years, it was essential to make substantial modifications to the established framework. So, for example, although he acknowledged that the distinction Bull makes between international systems and international societies is 'seminal' when thinking about international relations, he had to elaborate the distinction and embed it within a broader framework in order to make use of it for his comparative study.⁸²

What is particularly distinctive and impressive about Watson's approach in *The Evolution of International Society* is that he operates both as a historian and as a social scientist. As a historian, he stresses that when we examine the past it is essential to acknowledge that there is always something distinctive about the nature of the relations that take place among a set of states in any particular era. It follows that it is necessary to highlight the international relations at a particular juncture in terms of 'their own individuality and on their own merits' and to recognise that states-systems in the past 'were differently organized, with different priorities'.⁸³ In other words, it is important not to distort the nature of the international relations that distinguish a particular states-system in order to fit a pre-established model or theoretical framework and to accept that there is an intrinsic merit in understanding the past for its own sake. By operating on this basis, it then becomes possible to look at eras sequentially in order to see to what extent the international practices of one era are inherited from previous eras.

But in operating as a social scientist, Watson also endeavours to formulate a theoretical framework that accommodates the different kinds of states-systems that have emerged across time. To do this, he makes two very distinctive moves that add an important layer of complexity to the theoretical framework that he and Bull used in *The Expansion of International Society*. In the first place, Watson acknowledges the argument made by Wight that a preoccupation with states has inhibited the development of international relations theory.⁸⁴ His first move, therefore, is to widen the frame of reference for thinking about international relations by including empires. He then imposes this widened frame of reference onto the familiar distinction that the British Committee drew between an international system and an international society. From our perspective, these two moves represent a very major advance in the theoretical orientation of the British Committee and, because there has been a general failure to recognise either the nature or the significance of this advance, there is a need to spell out both of these moves in a little more detail.

Watson's first move is to deconstruct the binary distinction that Waltz establishes between anarchic and hierarchic systems.⁸⁵ He does this from two directions. His starting position is that it is not possible to investigate world history without having a reasonably robust model for comprehending empires. Across time, empires have been a very significant feature of world politics. Although the conventional view of empires neatly fits within Waltz's hierarchic system, from Watson's perspective, this assessment considerably oversimplifies how most empires in world history have been structured. He argues that it is more appropriate to model empires in terms a series of concentric circles, with the power of the empire weakening as the circles extend outwards. According to this model, although there is an imperial core that can be characterised in terms of hierarchy, it has to be acknowledged that most long-lasting empires have survived because they have been willing to tolerate different degrees of independence with the various political

communities that fall within the ambit of the empire. Watson identifies as *dominions* political communities whose external and to some extent domestic policies are regulated by the imperial authority. When the imperial authority is weaker and only extends to a recognition of political overlordship of one state over others, he talks of *suzerainty*. When one or more powers are able in some sense to ‘lay down the law’ about the operation of a system of independent states he labels this *hegemony*.⁸⁶ (See Figure 1.)

This model is obviously an ideal type and, in practice, power relations with the imperial core do not diminish in this neat and tidy fashion. Moreover, this view of empire is not particularly original or very controversial. However, Watson does extend the

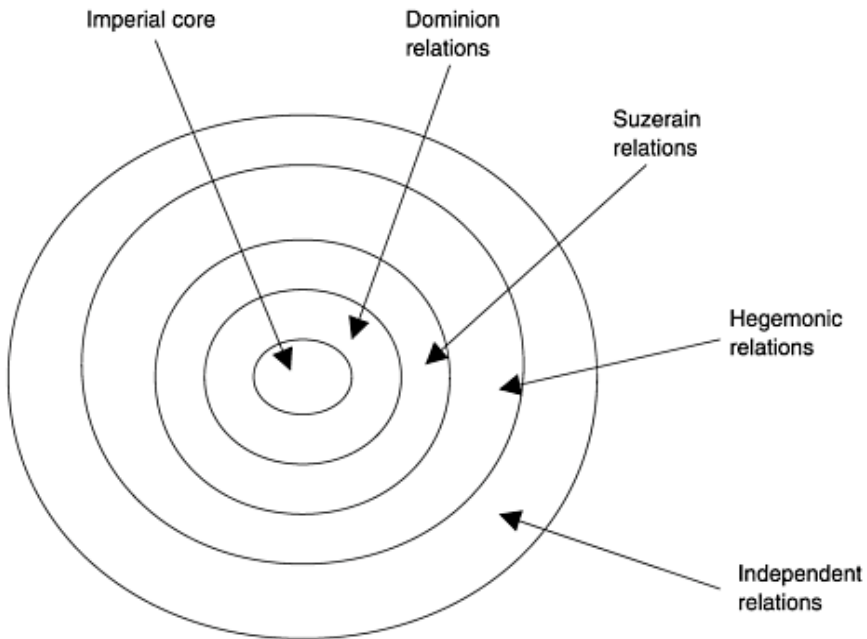


Figure 1 Watson's model of an imperial system.

argument in a very intriguing way that is unique in the field of International Relations. What Watson argues is that it is possible to think of states-systems operating on a spectrum that extends from empire at one extreme, through to an anarchy of completely independent states at the other extreme. Again, Watson is thinking in ideal-type terms and so in this context the empire directly administers all of the political communities in the system. However, Watson acknowledges that this is a theoretical rather than a practical possibility. By the same token, at the other end of the spectrum, where Watson identifies a system made up of completely independent states, it is also acknowledged that such a system represents a theoretical rather than a practical possibility. But the most interesting aspect of this initial move emerges when Watson comes to open up the spectrum to look at the intermediate positions.⁸⁷ In practice, however, he only focuses on the middle position of hegemony,

which as argued above he came to think of as perhaps the most important and enduring feature of international order. The key point that he makes is that in an international system there can be more than one hegemon. So, for example, when he comes to look at the Greek city states he identifies both Athens and Sparta as hegemonic powers.

Having established the idea of a spectrum of states-systems that are distinguished in terms of the degrees of authority that some political communities exercise over others, Watson then goes on to make a very bold hypotheses, which he argues holds up under empirical investigation. He frames the hypothesis in terms of a pendulum metaphor, with hegemony being located at the bottom of the swing, which is also the resting point for the pendulum. What the hypothesis indicates is that there is a natural tendency in international relations for states-systems to reflect hegemonic relations. (See Figure 2.)⁸⁸

The hypothesis does not presuppose that the metaphorical swing has any literal implications, and so there is no assumption that if an empire disintegrates it will give way to a hegemonic system; it is just as likely to give way to an anarchy. But what the hypothesis is suggesting is that across world history, hegemonic-type systems will tend to be the norm.

Watson's second and in some ways more daring move is to endeavour to link the pendulum model to the distinction articulated by the British Committee between an international system and an international society. To make this move, he effectively articulates the distinction in terms that are very similar to those adopted by Jackson, who accepts that the two terms point up a useful distinction, but argues that it is better captured by distinguishing between instrumental and non-instrumental behaviour.⁸⁹ Instrumental behaviour is based on strategic conceptions of self-interest that necessarily take the actions of other actors into consideration. Failure to take account of others will all too easily give rise to self-defeating strategies. By contrast, non-instrumental behaviour

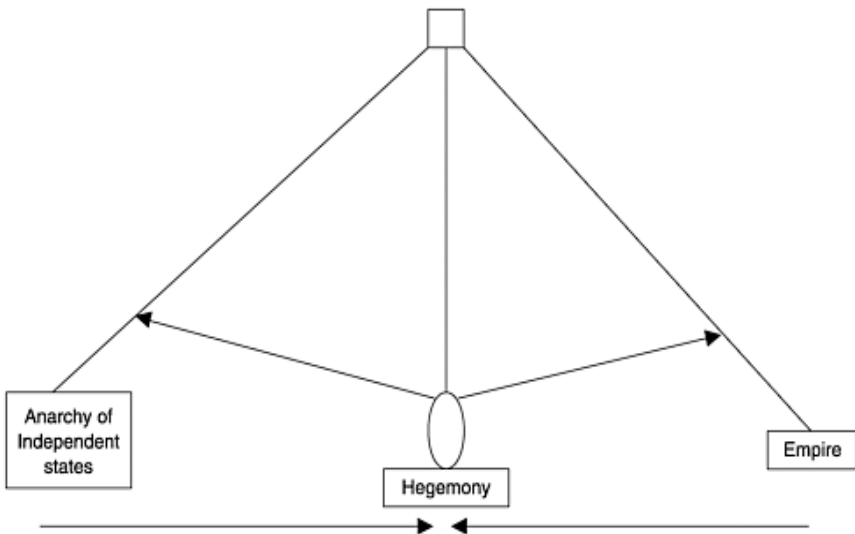


Figure 2 A simplified version of Watson's metaphorical pendulum.

is based on legal and moral obligations that necessarily embrace the legitimate interests of others who will be affected by this behaviour. Jackson accepts that both forms of behaviour need to be accommodated in any analysis of international society. This formulation of the distinction also corresponds very closely to the distinction drawn by March and Olsen between the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness.⁹⁰

It follows that Watson's view of the international system has some similarities to the one possessed by Waltz. From Watson's perspective, states-systems are made up of political communities that are held together by an 'impersonal net of strategic and economic pressures'.⁹¹ But whereas Waltz assumes that states are driven primarily by a desire to maintain their independence, Watson argues that political communities experience a constant tension between the desire, on the one hand, for order, which he argues can be most effectively achieved under the umbrella of empire, and, on the other hand, for independence, which can be most effectively achieved under the umbrella of anarchy.⁹² It is this systemic tension, according to Watson, that provides the motor for the pendulum. There is a constant tendency at the empire end of the spectrum for the imperial authority to take actions that drive political communities towards the anarchic end of the spectrum. By the same token, the chronic insecurity and competition experienced under conditions of anarchy drive states towards the empire end of the spectrum.

Expressed only in these terms, it becomes difficult to identify the source of stability within any international system. To account for stability, Watson brings the idea of international society into the picture. But his argument is surprisingly complex. He argues that his evidence, drawn from the survey of states-systems in world history, supports the conclusion that whenever political communities have been held together by a 'web of economic and strategic interests and pressures, they evolved some set of rules and conventions to regulate their intercourse'.⁹³ But this is not necessarily sufficient, from Watson's perspective, to generate an international society. When rules are established on the basis of expedience and convenience, then instrumental logic still prevails. Only when rules and institutions are 'consciously based on shared assumptions and theories' does the move from a system to a society take place.⁹⁴ These 'assumptions and theories' are often associated with the existence of a common culture according to Watson, indeed this was the general view of the British Committee, although Watson is also clear that international societies can form in the absence of a common culture. But the key point that Watson makes is that the nature of 'shared assumptions and theories' determines where along his spectrum the members of an international society will feel comfortable and he associates this comfort zone with the idea of legitimacy. For some international societies this zone will be closer to the anarchy end of the spectrum, whereas for others the zone will lie closer to the empire end of the spectrum. The notion of legitimacy, therefore, introduces an element of friction that has the effect of inhibiting systemic forces.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework presented by Watson in *The Evolution of International Society* is, by any reckoning, extraordinarily ambitious. It challenges Waltzian neorealism on

three core grounds: first, by opening the discussion to include empires as well as states as principal units of international systems; second, by replacing Waltz's anarchy/hierarchy dyad with a spectrum from anarchy to hierarchy, plus the pendulum theory to explain the operation of the spectrum; and third, by bringing in a flexible social structure via international society to replace Waltz's materialist assumptions, and his rigid and narrow social conception about the dominance of survival motives. This latter move focuses on *raison de système* ('the belief that it pays to make the system work'), and is not dissimilar to what Wendt tried to do later with his social theory, though Watson's work rests on a much broader historical foundation.⁹⁵

Watson's framework does not just offer a major alternative to neorealism, but also challenges the general linkage between anarchy and international society in much of English school writing. In effect, Watson extends the idea of international society away from the assumption of anarchy and into the spectrum of his pendulum theory. By moving international society into the hegemony part of the spectrum, and possibly beyond, Watson exposes the tension in post-1945 international society arising from the fact that the principle of legitimacy lies with sovereign equality and nationalism, but much of the practice is hegemonic.⁹⁶ This problem of how to legitimize *de facto* hegemony in the face of the strong post-colonial normative commitment to sovereign equality still echoes on. Clark notes the contemporary problem of US dominance in the absence of 'a satisfactory principle of hegemony—rooted in a plausibly wide consensus—in which that actuality would be enshrined'.⁹⁷ With these major advances over the 1984 *Expansion of International Society*, Watson's 1992 book, and indeed his whole body of work in the 1990s until his death, certainly deserve to be seen as the culmination of the work of the British Committee. It not only embraces all the key elements discussed by the Committee but also takes them a long way forward. Watson is able to do this in part because he operates with the British Committee's method of working as both historian and social scientist, and in part because he works on both a deductive and an inductive basis. He is constantly moving backwards and forwards between his theoretical framework and his case-study material.

We think this seminal book deserves much closer investigation and wider circulation than it has so far been given, and so we are happy both to welcome, and to contribute to, its relaunch. Historians will no doubt remain irked by Watson's lack of interest in academic machinery, and his very light referencing, which perhaps leads some readers to underestimate the range and depth of knowledge that the case studies display. We are suggesting that despite its apparent framing as a history, this book should be seen first and foremost as a major contribution to IR theory. For those who had the pleasure of knowing Adam Watson, extraordinary charm and modesty were among his most striking characteristics. Underneath those features lay a powerful mind, an insatiable curiosity and a strong sense of purpose. Yet perhaps his modesty goes some way towards explaining why he has not yet been given the attention, either as a diplomat or as a scholar, that the weight and significance of his work seem to warrant.

NOTES

- 1 We would like to acknowledge the assistance that Adam and Andy Watson gave us when we first began work on this chapter. Our initial intention was to interview Adam in 2007 during his annual visit to Britain but soon after he arrived in the country he was taken into hospital and it quickly became apparent that he was not going to recover. Nevertheless, he was determined to honour his commitment and he asked us to provide him with a list of questions and Andy then acted as interlocutor. Over the years in which we have known them we have both developed an enormous respect and affection for Andy as well as Adam and very much hope that we have done justice to Adam's life and work in this Introduction
- 2 For a discussion of the relationship between the British Committee and the English school, see Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- 3 See Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, p. xiv and Brunello Vigezzi, *The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics (1954–1985): The Rediscovery of History* trans. from Italian by Ian Harvey, Milan: Edizioni Unicopoli Srl, 2005, p. 86.
- 4 Herbert Butterfield, 'The Historic "States-Systems"', a paper presented to the British Committee meeting held in January 1965. Cited in Vigezzi, *The British Committee* p. 70. The first collective volume was Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, eds, *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1966.
- 5 The draft is reproduced in Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, p.408.
- 6 Cited in Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, p. 72.
- 7 The letter is dated 1.6.1971 and is cited in Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, p. 73. There is a problem of terminology here. The British Committee at this time were, as we will see, very influenced by the work of A.H.L.Heeren (1760–1842), a historian from the University of Göttingen who wrote *Handbuch der Geschichte des Europäischen Staatensystems* during the Napoleonic Wars. It was translated into English as *History of the Political System of Europe and Its Colonies*, although in the body of the text *Staatensystems* is translated as states-systems. Heeren argued that prior to the nineteenth century Europe was constituted by two states-systems. As we discuss later, however, for members of the Committee the idea of a states-system embraced the ideas of both international system and international society.
- 8 Adam Watson, 'Adam Watson's Book on System of States', p. 1. Paper presented at the British Committee meeting held in September 1972. Cited in Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, p. 242.
- 9 Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, p. 242.
- 10 Adam Watson, *The Limits of Independence: Relations Between States in the Modern World*, London: Routledge, 1997 p. xi.
- 11 Watson acquired the name 'Adam' when he entered the Foreign Office, reputedly because there were so many 'Johns' in the diplomatic service.
- 12 As reported by Julie Bunck and Michael Fowler in their obituary of Watson in *PS*:

- Political Science and Politics* 41(1), 2008, 230–1. During his period in Bucharest Watson established a close friendship with the novelist Olivia Manning and her husband, Reggie Smith, who taught for the British Council. One of the characters in *The Fortunes of War*, the series of novels written by Manning that describes the British expatriate community in Bucharest and elsewhere during the Second World War, is based on Watson. Reggie Smith later became a BBC radio producer and produced four plays written by Watson.
- 13 At this time, Kennan was deputy head of the US mission in Moscow. While in this position, he sent what has come to be known as the ‘long telegram’ (it ran to 5,300 words) which provided the basic rationale for the containment strategy on which US policy was based for the next forty years.
- 14 Davies was a China expert who had clashed with General Patrick Hurley, the US ambassador to China during the Second World War, for forecasting that the Chinese communists were going to defeat the nationalists and that it was important, as a consequence, for the Americans to open up a conversation with Mao Tse Tung. From 1948 to 1954 his loyalty was repeatedly brought into question and although none of the allegations were substantiated, he was eventually dismissed by John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower’s Secretary of State. Only after a protracted battle was Davies exonerated in 1969.
- 15 Frances Stoner Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, London: Granta Books, 1999, p. 58.
- 16 Cited in Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper*, p. 58.
- 17 See Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945–53: The Information Research Department*, London: Routledge, 2004.
- 18 Cited in Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pp. 58–9.
- 19 Hugh Wilford, ‘The Information Research Department: Britain’s Secret Cold War Weapon Revealed’ *Review of International Studies* 24, 1998, 353–69. Wilford provides a balanced assessment of the Department and this whole era in *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War: Calling the Tune?*, London: Frank Cass, 2003. The Department was eventually closed in 1977 by David Owen when he was Foreign Secretary.
- 20 Wilford, ‘The Information Research Department’, p. 362. Denis Healey went on to rise to the top of the Labour Party and although he never became leader he was Secretary of State for Defence for six years in the 1960s and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1974 to 1979.
- 21 Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*, p. 248.
- 22 Cited in Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*, p. 87. Perhaps the most controversial consequence of this link occurred as the result of Watson’s decision to ask George Orwell for a list of communist sympathisers. This list has occasioned huge controversy. For a balanced account of the incident, see Timothy Carton Ash ‘Remembering George Orwell’, *New York Review of Books*, 50(14), 25 September 2003, <http://home.planet.nl/~boe00905/OrwellNYreview250903.html>, accessed 11 November 2008.
- 23 Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War*, p. 71.
- 24 Cited in Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*, p. 214
- 25 Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*, p. 156
- 26 For a brief history and assessment of what is now discussed in terms of soft power

- and public diplomacy, see Joseph S. Nye Jr, 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, 2008, 94–109.
- 27 Cited in Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*, p. 157.
- 28 Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War*, p. 72. Watson's links with the United States were strengthened in 1950 when he married an American, Katherine Anne Campbell, better known as Andy. He first met her shortly after his return from Moscow when she was working as a US Treasury official in London. She widened his American contacts, introducing him, for example, to Abe Fortas, a close confidant of Lyndon B. Johnson. After Johnson became President, he appointed Fortas as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. Through this link, Watson also established contact with Johnson.
- 29 Adam Watson, *Hegemony and History*, London: Routledge, 2007, p. 93. The quotation is taken from a lecture he gave at the University of Copenhagen in 2001.
- 30 <http://ukinsenegal.fco.gov.uk/en/our-office-in-senegal/our-ambassador/previous-ambassadors>.
- 31 See Watson, *Limits of Independence*, p. xv.
- 32 Scipio (J.H. Watson), *Emergent Africa*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1965.
- 33 Scipio, *Emergent Africa*, p. 44.
- 34 Scipio, *Emergent Africa* p. 67.
- 35 Scipio, *Emergent Africa* p. 79.
- 36 Scipio, *Emergent Africa* p. 28.
- 37 Scipio, *Emergent Africa* p. 114.
- 38 Scipio, *Emergent Africa* p. 117. He reinforces this view by referring to the work of the Yugoslavian Marxist Milovan Djilas who argued that in Eastern Europe the Communist Party had established privileges that were enjoyed by a small group of party members, which he identified as 'the New Class'.
- 39 Scipio, *Emergent Africa*, p. 38.
- 40 Adam Watson, *The Nature and Problems of the Third World*, Claremont, CA: The Claremont Collages, 1968, p. 8.
- 41 Watson, *Limits of Independence*, p. xv.
- 42 Watson, *Limits of Independence*, p. xv. Watson was sent to Cuba because he was one of the few officials who was fluent in both Spanish and Russian.
- 43 Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. xii.
- 44 See Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, pp. 220ff. for a discussion of the scandal. For a vigorous defence of the CCF, see Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*, New York: The Free Press, 1989.
- 45 Rather than seeing the intellectuals as CIA stooges, manipulated by the American government, however, Giles Scott-Smith draws on Gramsci to suggest that the existence of shared values made it easy for American and Western intellectuals to establish links with the CIA and with other military, economic and political elites to form a hegemonic coalition of Atlanticists against the Soviet Union. See Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and Post-War American Hegemony*, London: Routledge, 2002.
- 46 Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, p. 288.
- 47 See Nicolas Guilhot, 'A Network of Influential Friendships: The Fondation Pour

- Une Entraide Intellectuelle Européenne and East-West Cultural Dialogue, 1957–1991’, *Minerva* 44(4), 2006, 379–409, p. 380. *Minerva* was one of the journals initially sponsored by the CCF.
- 48 Cited in Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, p. 350.
- 49 Guillhot, ‘A Network of Influential Friendships’, p. 407.
- 50 For Watson’s views on NGOs, see Chapter 10 in *Hegemony and History*.
- 51 Adam Watson, *The War of the Goldsmith’s Daughter*; London: Chatto and Windus, 1964. Note, however, that more recent historiography is treating this era as the start of early modern history. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories: Notes Toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia’, *Modern Asian Studies* 31(3), 1997, 735–62.
- 52 Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States*, London: Methuen, 1984 p. vii.
- 53 Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, p. 2.
- 54 See Barry Buzan and Richard Little, ‘The Historical Expansion of International Society’, in *ISA Compendium*, 2009, and Barry Buzan and Richard Little, ‘World History and the Development of Non-Western IR Theory’ in Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (eds), *Non-Western International Relations Theory, On and Beyond Asia*, London: Routledge, 2009. See also Amitav Acharya, ‘The Expansion of International Society Revisited’, Draft paper, December 2008.
- 55 Watson, *Limits of Independence*, p. xii.
- 56 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd edn, London: Macmillan, 2002. Bull associated pluralism with a world of sovereign states.
- 57 Watson, *Limits of Independence*, p. xiii.
- 58 Watson, *Hegemony and History*, p. 103.
- 59 Watson, ‘Introduction’, in Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of History*, ed. and Introduction by Adam Watson, London: Eyre Methuen, 1981, p. 8. It is interesting to note that Watson also believed that during the fourteenth century when the Muslims extended their influence across India, Hindu leaders absorbed much from the Muslims, including ‘the Moslem elasticity of mind’, *War of the Goldsmith’s Daughter*, p. 62.
- 60 Bunck and Fowler in Watson obituary.
- 61 *EIS*, p. 1.
- 62 Bull and Watson, *Expansion of International Society*, p. 9.
- 63 Vigezzi, *The British Committee*, pp. 88–9.
- 64 Georg G. Iggers ‘Historicism’ in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 2, Electronic Text Centre, University of Virginia, 2003, p. 457. <http://etext.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv2-52>, downloaded 6 December 2008
- 65 See Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955 and *Origins of History*, which was published posthumously and was edited by Adam Watson who also displays an interest in historiography in *War of the Goldsmith’s Daughter*.
- 66 See, however, Charles Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics*, London: Martin Robertson, 1973, which does explore the nature of historical explanation.