

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE
SPIRIT OF JIHADISM - TRANSNATIONAL
RELIGIOUS INSURGENCIES AND THE
TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL
ORDERS

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Abstract: In the absence of comparisons with prior episodes of transformative change in the history of the state system, contemporary debates on the long-term significance of the 9/11 terror attacks and the ensuing war on terror are in danger of polarizing around opposing caricatures of epochal change and obstinate durability. The tendency to organize transnationally, mobilize along religious lines, and employ terroristic violence for the purposes of achieving far-reaching religious and political transformation of target societies is not unique to Al Qaeda, but can be seen also in the activities of the militant confessional networks that flourished in Reformation Europe. By comparing the global struggle against jihadist terrorism with early modern European rulers' struggles against transnational confessional militants, I demonstrate that existing accounts of jihadist terrorism's transformative potential have been seriously mis-specified and require substantial revision.

The 9/11 attacks and the ensuing war on terror have raised important questions regarding the long-term future of the Westphalian state system. On the one hand, the global jihadist insurgency can be seen as merely one expression of a larger breakdown in the state's monopoly on violence, a breakdown that in turn heralds the weakening of the state-based international order in its present form.¹ Conversely, the state system's historic success in subduing violent non-state actors also invites a much more cautious reading of the current situation, with the jihadist challenge expected to catalyse international responses that will preserve the state system without fundamentally altering its essential features.² In this article, I seek to chart a *via media* between these transformationalist and sceptical positions on international systems change in the post-9/11 era. My argument proceeds in five sections. Section one frames my inquiry by sketching in greater detail opposing ideal-typical transformationalist and sceptical interpretations of post-9/11 systems change. I maintain that in the absence of comparisons between the contemporary situation and historical episodes of international systems change, debates concerning the state system's future risk becoming polarized around competing caricatures of epochal change and obstinate durability. In order to resolve this impasse, a comparative analysis of systems change is required, a task that I begin

here by comparing the activities and significance of religiously motivated transnational insurgency networks in Reformation Europe and in the contemporary Middle East.³ Section two focuses on the militant confessional networks active during the French Wars of Religion. These networks played a decisive role in prolonging, intensifying, and internationalizing France's religious civil wars. Nevertheless, I argue that confessional networks' true significance was largely structural and indirect, with the protracted chaos that they fuelled inspiring both the emergence of the ideology of Absolutism and the genesis of a Westphalian state system predicated on principles of sovereignty and non-intervention.

Section three considers the nature and significance of the contemporary global jihadist insurgency. Here, I explore both the ideological dimension of the Salafi-jihadist threat to world order, as well as examining the mobilizational opportunities Al Qaeda and its offshoots have exploited in mounting an armed challenge to the state system. A preliminary comparison between yesterday's confessional militants and today's jihadists suggests that the jihadists' direct transformative potential will be limited. This observation is developed more systematically in section four. I argue that Calvinism's strong ideological appeal, the mobilizational opportunities afforded by the distinctive structure of Europe's composite monarchies, and the extreme institutional frailty of Christendom as an international order find few contemporary analogues, and that consequently jihadist aspirations to establish a global Caliphate will likely remain a totalitarian fantasy. This observation notwithstanding, I nevertheless conclude in section five by tentatively speculating that jihadist terrorism might still exercise a significant indirect influence on the state system's future evolution. In an environment in which Northern states are increasingly compromised in their capacity to protect their citizenry from transnational threats deriving in part from post-colonial state failure, governments may be tempted to make good on the Hobbesian protection bargain with their citizens by projecting force internationally to suppress transnational security threats. Such developments would not presage the sovereign state's eclipse as the primary security

provider in the international system. However, they may entail the corrosion of norms of sovereign equality and non-intervention that have mediated North/South relations throughout the post-colonial period.

I. THE SHOCK OF THE NEW? CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE ‘AGE OF TERROR’

Taken together, four macro-processes currently manifest in world politics - and which have been foregrounded by the ongoing ‘war on terror’ - may be invoked to support transformationalist claims regarding the future of the Westphalian state system. The first of these is the dissonance between the formal universalization of state sovereignty and the anaemic institutional capacity of many post-colonial ‘quasi-states’. In the post-war era, the ethical imperative of granting national self-determination to colonized peoples triggered the rapid dissolution of Europe’s maritime empires, resulting in the nation-state’s universalization as the world’s dominant form of political community.⁴ Although few have mourned the death of European imperialism, the precipitate globalization of the nation-state yielded a large number of ‘quasi-states’ that have proven incapable of providing their citizens with fundamental political goods such as basic physical security or effective economic management.⁵ Domestically, the poor governance record of these quasi-states has left many incumbent regimes bereft of popular legitimacy, providing a permissive environment for the development of anti-systemic ideologies such as Salafi-jihadism.⁶ Internationally, meanwhile, the low institutional capacity of many quasi-states has gravely compromised collective efforts to manage transnational threats ranging from terrorism and WMD proliferation, through to the management of international financial crises and the containment of global pandemics.⁷

To the state system’s inherent fragility as a result of the prevalence of weak and failing post-colonial states must be added the altered balance of power between state and non-

state actors that has been induced by globalisation. The jihadists' ability to wage a prolonged campaign against the world's only superpower is a testament to the expanded political opportunity structures afforded to transnational non-state actors by globalisation. As Fiona Adamson has noted, the increased mobility of goods, people, capital and ideas attendant to globalisation has provided non-state actors with both transnational constituencies to mobilize and transnational resource pools to draw upon.⁸ Accelerated global economic integration has facilitated the diffusion of mobilization capacities and destructive capabilities to a plethora of non-state actors. This has left insurgent groups less dependent upon the sympathy or support of local populations, as they draw instead on a globally dispersed supportive infrastructure of personnel, money, and *materiel* to sustain their struggles against beleaguered and institutionally fragile post-colonial states.⁹

Post-colonial state weakness and the empowerment of transnational non-state actors consequent to globalisation provides the structural context for the third transformationalist trend, specifically the global growth of private international violence and asymmetric warfare.¹⁰ The 9/11 attacks and subsequent mass casualty attacks in Western capitals can be said to represent only the most conspicuous recent examples of 'bond-relationship targeting', whereby a militarily weaker actor employs mass casualty attacks in the hopes of breaking the political will of target populations and thereby destroying the social bonds uniting its adversaries.¹¹ In a unipolar era in which America's conventional military might is unassailable, Al Qaeda has employed asymmetric tactics in the hope of severing the bond between the 'far enemy' (the United States) and the 'near enemy' (authoritarian and 'apostate' Middle Eastern regimes), thereby leaving the latter without US support and thus exposed to the prospect of revolution.¹² Seen through a transformationalist lens, attacks such as 9/11 and the Madrid and London bombings can be construed as a manifestation of a radically changing security environment, in which states must increasingly contend with networked non-state adversaries employing asymmetric tactics to realise anti-systemic goals.

The final supposedly transformationalist tendency that is foregrounded by the ‘war on terror’ is the global growth of religious fundamentalism. The discrediting of secular ideologies such as nationalism and socialism in many weak post-colonial polities has nurtured the rise of politically engaged religious fundamentalism. This phenomenon is observable particularly (but by no means exclusively) within Muslim-majority states.¹³ Although most Islamists have reconciled themselves to the existence of the nation-state, a minority have embraced an anti-systemic ideology that challenges the nation-state at two levels. Where the nation-state is sustained by notions of popular sovereignty, Salafi-jihadists conversely stress that sovereignty lies with God alone, thereby necessitating popular submission to God’s laws as revealed to the Prophet and codified in *sharia* law.¹⁴ Similarly, where the nation-state rests on the division of the world into mutually exclusive national jurisdictions, jihadists emphasize the artificiality of the nation-state, decrying it as a Western imposition designed to fragment the global community of believers (the *ummah*).¹⁵ In transformationalist lights, Salafi-jihadism can be read as symptomatic of a post-colonial ‘revolt against the West’ fuelled by the perceived failures of the nation-state in the developing world, and underpinned by a principled repudiation of the division between the sacred and the secular that has informed European international society from the Peace of Westphalia.¹⁶

The foregoing comments suggest that it is certainly possible to see the jihadist challenge to world order as being symptomatic of deeper structural changes threatening the state system in its present form. Nevertheless, it is equally possible to construct a persuasive counter-narrative emphasizing the state system’s long-term durability in the face of such challenges. While the weakness of many post-colonial polities cannot be denied, the ‘war on terror’ has starkly illuminated the negative global security externalities flowing from peripheral state weakness. Although failing states’ *control* over organized violence remains far from assured, the state’s *authority* as the rightful monopolist of organized violence within its borders has been vocally re-affirmed by the international community in the course of the

war on terrorism.¹⁷ Strong states such as America have sought to strengthen client polities through intelligence sharing and the provision of enhanced financial and military assistance, while the war has also seen an intensified commitment to Third World state-building as a prophylaxis against transnational security threats.¹⁸ Prior historical examples of states' collaborative suppression of private international violence, whereby international norms against non-state violence were invoked to extend states' powers of surveillance and control over their respective societies, further attest to the state system's regenerative capacities in the face of non-state challengers.¹⁹

Sceptics may also question the transformative significance of globalisation and its empowerment of non-state actors at the expense of sovereign states. Globalisation may have enhanced the mobilizational and destructive capabilities of non-state actors. But insurgents' use of transnational support networks is not new, with organizations such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) drawing upon extensive trans-Atlantic diaspora networks to sustain their struggle against Great Britain as far back as the nineteenth century.²⁰ Admittedly, the global flows upon which contemporary insurgents depend are far more intensive than those that sustained their historical forebears during the *belle époque*. Additionally, the destructive capabilities available to earlier insurgents pale into insignificance compared to those afforded to Al Qaeda and its affiliates. But if the violence interaction capacity of the state system has definitively increased, it has done so off the back of global flows that are enabled by the liberalizing measures of sovereign states, and that are consequently at least partially reversible.²¹ Moreover, even in instances where states lack the will or the capacity to constrict the flows upon which transnational actors depend, the raw fact remains that even weak states stand as more formidable loci of administrative and coercive power than even the most sophisticated violent non-state actors.

The transformative significance of the growth of asymmetric warfare can also be questioned. That anti-systemic forces are compelled to resort to asymmetric terror tactics, as

opposed to conventional warfare or even mass-based guerrilla insurgencies, is reflective of the limited material power and popular support they enjoy *vis-à-vis* national governments. While Al Qaeda was capable of inflicting major psychological shock and egregious human losses on the United States on 9/11, it has subsequently been unable to translate this tactical triumph into the strategic victory of compelling a complete US withdrawal from the Middle East, much less precipitating the collapse of America's allies in the region. This failure is a testament to the weaknesses inherent in networked forms of adversary – while their networked organizational structure confers major defensive advantages, groups such as Al Qaeda are generally incapable of launching a sustained 'pulsing' series of attacks of the severity and frequency necessary to compel target states to compromise vital interests.²² In light of such observations, the growth of asymmetric warfare arguably at best complicates the contemporary security environment rather than fundamentally transforming it.²³

Finally, the marginality of transnational jihadists within the Islamic world substantially qualifies the import of Salafi-jihadist terrorism as a normative challenge to Westphalian international society.²⁴ The significance of the Salafi-jihadist challenge is immediately undercut once one acknowledges the extent to which Muslims have internalized national subjectivities, even while becoming more self-conscious about their identity as members of the global *ummah*.²⁵ Setting aside this crucial disconnect between jihadist ideology and popular sentiments within the Islamic world, the attacks of 9/11 further had the unintended side-effect of estranging Al Qaeda from national jihadist organizations, who opposed bin Laden's escalation of hostilities with America and resort to mass casualty terrorism on both principled and pragmatic grounds.²⁶ Without diminishing its incompatibility with Westphalian international society, jihadism when viewed through a sceptical lens would appear to present no more of a threat to the state system in the long term than the ideology that informed nineteenth century anarchist terrorism, and would certainly not be expected to exert any enduring effects on Westphalian international society.

The point of the preceding analysis is not to pass judgement in favour of either transformationalist or sceptical positions on systems change. Instead, I have simply sought to illustrate the empirical complexity and indeterminacy of the current situation, and the futility of making definitive assessments either way in the absence of a comparison with prior transformative episodes in the history of the state system. In what follows, I seek to demonstrate the value of a comparative historical approach to systems change by contrasting international society's current struggle against jihadist terrorism with European rulers' contests against transnational networks of confessional militants over the course of the Reformation.

II. CONFESSIONAL NETWORKS, RELIGIOUS CONFLICT, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN STATE SYSTEM

From 1562 to 1598, France – along with Habsburg Spain one of sixteenth century Europe's two superpowers – was wracked by no less than eight different wars of religion between Catholics and their Calvinist Huguenot rivals. While never constituting more than ten percent of the French population, the Huguenot rebels were capable of waging a prolonged campaign of armed resistance against the crown for almost four decades, eventually compelling the king to grant the Huguenots limited toleration through the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenots' resilience in the face of pogroms, royal oppression and Spain's intermittent attempts to aid the suppression of heresy in France are a testament to the transnational character of the resistance movement, recognition of which invites parallels with the contemporary jihadist insurgency.

The Huguenot insurgency's transnational character is evident through a consideration of its ideology, leadership, organization, and sources of material support. Ideologically, foremost emphasis must be placed on the influence of Jean Calvin, the French Protestant

pastor who formulated the Huguenots' theology from exile in Geneva. While radical in its theological implications, Calvinism was initially politically quiescent, reiterating the Pauline injunction that the established authorities are divinely ordained and thus owed unconditional obedience by Christian subjects.²⁷ Nevertheless, Calvin's rejection of traditional Church practices as idolatrous, his denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation (and with it, of the Church's claims to exercise a monopoly on the means of salvation) and his insistence on the doctrine of predestination each explicitly challenged the normative foundations of Catholic France.²⁸ Had Calvin's influence been limited to Geneva, his ideas would have constituted a heretical but remote threat to the French monarchy. However, Calvin's life-long vocation was the evangelization of his French homeland, and in this project he was aided by the existence of precociously well-developed printing industries in Geneva and Berne. With the aid of Swiss printing presses, Calvin and his successors were able to direct a constant stream of Calvinist theology and propaganda into France, and eventually also into the Spanish Netherlands, England, Scotland, and the Empire.²⁹ At the outset of France's religious wars, Geneva thus served as Calvinism's intellectual epicentre, an incubator of religious heresy – and later, of theories of resistance that explicitly sanctified as a divine imperative armed revolt against the French crown – that remained obstinately beyond the grasp of the Valois dynasty.

In addition to providing the ideas that fuelled the Huguenot insurgency, Calvin's Geneva also supplied much of the ecclesiastical and intellectual leadership for the rebellion. In France as elsewhere, the military leadership of insurgency networks derived from the higher nobility.³⁰ As part of a conscious strategy of proselytisation, the Genevan Academy had targeted the higher nobility for conversion, in the understanding that through the operation of the extensive clientage networks maintained by the nobility, conversion of one noble would normally bring with it his entire network of dependents.³¹ So successful was this strategy that at its high tide, an estimated forty percent of the higher nobility had converted to the Huguenot cause.³² While aristocratic conversions provided Calvinism with a potential

military base, Geneva trained and dispatched the missionaries who supplied the ecclesiastical (and later, diplomatic) leadership for the Protestant cause in France.³³ The remarkable consistency of Huguenot theology and rites of worship across France's Calvinist communities was directly attributable to the centrally administered, standardized, methodical training of missionaries undertaken at the Genevan academy, a consistency that continued even after sister academies were later established on French soil.³⁴

The Huguenots thus synthesized the strengths and social power resources of two core leadership groups, specifically the military power of the higher nobility and the intellectual and ideological power of an internationally trained cadre of Calvinist missionaries. This dualism expressed itself also in the organizational form of Calvinist networks. The elaborate patron-client networks and kinship ties linking the Huguenot higher nobility provided a powerful latent source of social capital and court influence that could be activated at the prospect of official attacks on Huguenot communities. Overlaying these informal networks was a hierarchical and richly articulated structure of church government that provided a national coordinating structure for Huguenot worship in times of peace, as well as a powerful mobilizational infrastructure in times of war. From 1559 onwards, again under Geneva's guidance, France's scattered Huguenot communities were organized under a governance structure comprised of a national synod, provincial synods, regional colloquys of pastors, and local churches with accompanying consistories.³⁵ As the prospect of civil war beckoned in 1560-61, these local consistories, penetrating the lowest reaches of social organization, were employed as recruitment vehicles for Calvinist militants organizing for the defence of their faith.³⁶ The availability of this infrastructure enabled Prince Condé, the Huguenot leader for France's first three religious wars, to field a far larger force in 1562 than the crown could possibly have anticipated, thereby preserving the Huguenot cause and ensuring a decades-long prolongation of France's religious wars.³⁷

By 1562, a profoundly heretical movement had thus become deeply entrenched in the country, drawing missionaries and ideas from neighbouring Geneva to establish a nation-wide ecclesiastical infrastructure capable of coordinating and sustaining a prolonged religious insurgency against the crown. Huguenot confessional networks combined the strength and resilience of affective bonds derived from aristocratic kinship and patron-client ties with the command and control capabilities of a rationally organized church bureaucracy to establish a highly effective form of insurgent organization. To these inherent strengths of the Huguenot networks was added the sponsorship and occasionally even the direct military assistance of confessional allies beyond France. From the 1570s onwards, Huguenot rebels enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with Dutch Calvinist rebels revolting against Philip II in the neighbouring Spanish Netherlands, while both Huguenots and Dutch rebels also enjoyed intermittent assistance from Elizabethan England and the Palatinate.³⁸ Such state-sponsored assistance as was provided to the Huguenots was neither as comprehensive as devout Calvinists would have wished, nor was it provided purely in the spirit of confessional solidarity, with reasons of state playing at least as significant a role in Elizabeth's assistance to the Huguenots as enthusiasm for the Protestant cause.³⁹ These qualifications notwithstanding, international assistance in the form of soldiers, subsidies, sanctuary for exiles, and occasionally even direct military support was far from insignificant, and served to further fortify Huguenot resolve in the face of royal power.

The foregoing comments highlight the inherently transnational character of sectarian conflict in early modern Europe, as well as illuminating the centrality of a transnationally organized supportive infrastructure for the survival of the Huguenot cause in sixteenth century France. It must be noted that the transnational characteristics of the Huguenot resistance movement were far from unique to it, finding their orthodox answer in the militant Catholic League organized around the house of Guise, spiritually inspired by Rome, and dependent upon Spain and Savoy for material support.⁴⁰ Beyond France, internationally connected

insurgency networks also played vital roles in both the Dutch Revolt and the Thirty Years' war.⁴¹ Nevertheless, and in spite of their military and political effectiveness, early modern insurgency networks did not endure as distinct organizational forms, being typically dismantled by their aristocratic leaders when the political goals of their sponsors had been realised, or alternatively when the conflicting political aspirations of their aristocratic and bourgeois elements forced the networks' premature dissolution.⁴² In the absence of a direct organizational legacy, the significance of confessional insurgency networks was therefore indirect, and can be observed in its effects on the course of the Wars of Religion, as well as on the polity forms and systemic organizing principles that emerged in the seventeenth century as the remedy for Europe's cataclysmic religious conflicts.

In the specific instance of the French Wars of Religion, transnational confessional insurgent networks played a crucial role in prolonging, intensifying, and internationalizing the conflict. The survival of Huguenot resistance, even following the extermination of their higher echelon leadership in the Saint Bartholomew's day massacre, testifies to the insurgency's regenerative capacities, which derived at least partially from the Huguenots' ability to draw upon international networks of sympathy and support to sustain their struggle over a prolonged period. In addition to prolonging the war, confessional networks also aggregated the social grievances of their constituents and re-framed them around questions of religious identity. In mobilizing popular support on the basis of religion, confessional networks were able to forge coalitions of unprecedented breadth that transcended the established class and occupational divisions characteristic of a rigidly stratified social order.⁴³ However, the consequence of re-framing diverse social and factional grievances as essentially religious disputes was to radically intensify the conflict, leaving minimal room for compromise from either party. The routine ferocity of religious riots and acts of desecration perpetrated by Catholic and Huguenot mobs cannot be explained by reference to a bare strategic logic, but is explicable only through a recognition of the cultural frameworks –

sponsored and circulated by confessional networks – that mandated religious violence as imperative for the task of purging the body social of spiritual pollutants.⁴⁴ Finally, the transnational character of confessional networks internationalized the French civil wars, drawing foreign parties – both rulers and non-state co-religionists – inexorably into the fray. Their historical rivalry notwithstanding, both the French Valois rulers and the Spanish Habsburgs could find common cause in suppressing heresy in an environment in which routine collaboration and armed support linked Huguenot and Dutch rebels in common cause against Catholic monarchies. Conversely, the extensive links between the Huguenots and transnational networks of Calvinist missionaries and merchants provided a crucial influence vector in galvanizing neighbouring Protestant states to support the Huguenot cause following the Saint Bartholomew’s day massacre.

The transnational character of religious insurgency in Reformation Europe thus had decisive effects for the course of the French Wars of Religion, enabling an armed minority to ensnare one of Europe’s contemporary superpowers in a decades-long struggle, as well as enabling that same minority to extract significant (if ultimately revocable) concessions from the crown following a peace of mutual exhaustion. Much more significant than these immediate effects, however, were the long term structural effects of the Reformation and the ensuing Wars of Religion on the evolution of polity forms in early modern Europe. For while it proved profoundly subversive of the authority claims of transnational bodies such as Church and Empire, Protestantism in its varied incarnations also provided Christendom’s kings and princes with vital cultural resources with which to undertake projects of early modern state-building. Both the Lutheran identification of the law with the will of the ruler and the Calvinist creation of the disciplined ecclesial community rested on theologies positing a sharp conceptual differentiation between the ‘invisible’ community of the faithful and the visible community of the polity. Paradoxically, however, the effect of both confessions was to catalyse an institutional de-differentiation of ecclesial and secular authority structures, a

development that manifested itself also (albeit with some modifications) in polities where the post-Tridentine Church continued to hold sway.⁴⁵ The resulting processes of confessionalization – entailing the centralization of political power, the codification and rationalization of religious belief systems, enhanced cultural standardization, and the intensified disciplining of individuals and communities – dramatically strengthened the power of temporal rulers by involving them far more directly in their subjects’ spiritual indoctrination and moral education than had previously been the case.⁴⁶ Simultaneously, however, the very existence of confessional minorities, led by indigenous aristocratic warlords and capable of accessing transnational networks of sympathetic co-religionists, ensured that projects of forced confessional homogenization were typically met with violent resistance. It was precisely out of such confrontations that the ordering ideology of Absolutism was spawned.

In its original formulation, Lutheranism had counselled popular political passivity on the basis of the Pauline injunction that the powers that be are ordained of God.⁴⁷ Jean Calvin and his followers re-affirmed the divinely ordained character of the civil power, but opened up new possibilities for rebellion by broadening the definition of divinely ordained powers to include the lower magistrates, dispersing responsibility for enforcing God’s commands between rulers and the upper echelons of the ruled.⁴⁸ To this innovation, Calvinists added the incendiary idea that all godly individuals were covenanted with God to uphold His laws, a duty that extended to resisting or even removing idolatrous or tyrannical rulers that failed to govern in a God-pleasing manner.⁴⁹ In sixteenth century France, the Huguenots’ status as a confessional minority precluded them from justifying resistance to royal authority in these terms, thereby compelling them to camouflage this argument with a more ecumenical constitutionalist gloss.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it was precisely in response to Huguenot theories of resistance that Jean Bodin developed the intellectual framework for royal Absolutism. In identifying legislative authority as the essential mark of sovereign power, and in further

advancing the notion that the sovereign received his powers directly from God (rather than via delegation from the Church), Bodin built upon ideas previously advanced by both Protestant thinkers and Roman legalists.⁵¹ But in insisting on sovereignty's unitary and indivisible character, Bodin expressly repudiated Calvinist *qua* constitutionalist arguments that dispersed sovereignty between the ruler and the lower magistrates, and that thereby provided the latter with a license for rebellion.

The ideology of Absolutism thus emerged as a direct riposte to the theories of resistance formulated during the Wars of Religion, and specifically sought to repudiate the rationales for rebellion advanced by the Huguenot rebels in their struggle for recognition from the French monarchy. Absolutism answered the popular yearning for order engendered by the chaos of confessional warfare by insisting on the monarch's indispensable function as the central ordering mechanism holding a multitude of wills together within a divinely ordained and organically conceived social order.⁵² Although later theorists such as Hobbes would come to reject religious justifications for absolute rule in favour of conceptions of the state as a contractually articulated human artifice, both Hobbesian and earlier Bodinian Absolutist ideologies lent their support to rulers' growing monopolization of the use of organized violence from the mid seventeenth century onwards.⁵³ The exchange of popular obedience in return for protection from foreign invasion and civil strife became crucial to the legitimation of political authority in early modern Europe, and found its institutional expression in the establishment of permanent standing armies and powers of taxation throughout post-Westphalian Europe.⁵⁴ The Wars of Religion also begat a dramatic increase in patterns of cultural standardization across Europe – while the goal of confessional uniformity proved elusive for many states, a long-term effect of Europe's religious wars was the *de jure* or *de facto* nationalization of religious authority, involving rulers much more directly in the moral supervision and enculturation of their subjects than had hitherto been the case.⁵⁵

In both the processes of confessionalization that it precipitated and the Absolutist counter-reaction that it inspired, the Reformation thus helped to lay the institutional and normative foundations of the modern state. Protestant claims concerning both the singular legislative authority of temporal rulers and the divinely appointed character of the civil power were initially deployed to discredit and delegitimize the Church's claims to exercise jurisdictional powers throughout Christendom.⁵⁶ But by implication these ideas also dramatically extended the authoritative scope of the civil power, while also buttressing temporal rulers with a modicum of religious legitimacy that was unqualified by the intercessionary authority of the Church. The resulting institutional de-differentiation of spiritual and temporal power unquestionably exercised profoundly destabilizing effects in the multi-confessional composite monarchies that predominated in early modern Europe. This observation obtained particularly in polities such as Valois France, where Calvinist notions concerning the authority of the lower magistrates and the duty of covenanted peoples to resist idolatrous rulers had found wide purchase. However, in the polity that would come to serve as the exemplar for aspiring state-builders in the seventeenth century, Huguenot resistance theories also generated a qualitatively new conception of sovereignty and political obligation in the construct of Absolutism. In assigning sovereignty exclusively to the monarch, in delegitimizing rights of rebellion (whether justified on religious or constitutional grounds), and in subordinating all other goals – including the enforcement of religious conformity – to the objective of preserving the civil order, Bodin's construct of Absolutism provided the ideological trellis around which state power could subsequently cohere in the decades following the Peace of Westphalia.

Finally, at the international level, the European Wars of Religion accelerated the development of principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, articulated in embryonic form at Westphalia and subsequently systematically developed as part of a corpus of naturalist international law binding international society together. The Westphalian settlement provided

a collective shield behind which rulers could engage in state-building projects without fear of interference by their neighbours. Transnational insurgency networks – as mechanisms of conflict escalation and contagion – had operated in an environment in which elaborate ties of genealogy linked Europe’s ruling houses, and in which modern distinctions between the domestic and the international did not exist.⁵⁷ What made the Westphalian settlement possible was rulers’ collective recognition of the intractability of sectarian conflict within such an environment, and its inherently destabilizing potential for established rulers⁵⁸ By articulating organizing principles of sovereignty and non-intervention alongside binding principles of religious toleration (at least for the polities of the Holy Roman Empire), Europe’s rulers institutionalized barriers to the transnational spread of religious conflict. Admittedly, the Peace of Westphalia failed to expunge proprietary dynasticism as a feature the early modern European state system, and the full articulation of sovereign-territorial inside/outside distinctions would evolve only incrementally during the state-building wars of territorial consolidation that punctuated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This observation notwithstanding, the Westphalian settlement nevertheless began the process of cordoning off of Europe’s rulers within mutually exclusive jurisdictions, thus enabling the subsequent enclosure of social power within a sovereign-territorial framework that was progressively accomplished by rulers during the Age of Absolutism.

Before turning to the contemporary jihadist challenge to the global state system, let me clarify that the foregoing comments are not intended to provide a self-sufficient account of the origins of the modern state system. Both the Reformation and the emergence of Absolutism entailed fundamental transformations in the nature of dominant authority claims within early modern Europe, with temporal rulers asserting their autonomy from the decaying structures of Church and Empire, and their jurisdictional supremacy *vis-à-vis* their own subjects. These transformations in authority claims were vitally important in structuring the order that emerged from Christendom’s ashes, and were by their very nature ideational in character.

However, these ideas acquired an enduring purchase only via their mediation through distinctly configured networks of social power, which structured the possibilities for transnational military mobilization in particular ways. The Reformation crystallized in a particular structural context, in which Europe's composite monarchies were laterally enmeshed in criss-crossing bundles of aristocratic genealogical ties, and in which aristocrats retained the ability to independently tap into their own vertically integrated networks of patronage when given cause to contest monarchical power. It was this pattern of lateral enmeshment and vertical segmentation that accounted for both the fragility of Europe's composite monarchies, as well as helping to explain the protracted and irrepressibly contagious character of conflicts such as the French Wars of Religion. Material processes, such as the advent of commercial capitalism and the onset of an early modern 'military revolution', provided rebels and rulers alike with additional resources with which to prosecute their struggles against one another, and also provided the raw materials out of which the 'hard-shell rimmed' modern state would eventually be hewn.⁵⁹ But it was the pervasive chaos of Europe's Wars of Religion that catalysed the genesis of identifiably modern conceptions of Absolutist sovereignty. And this chaos was in turn engendered through the explosive intersection of processes of confessionalization with processes of transnational military mobilization, processes which were themselves mediated via the insurgency networks of the confessional age.

III. THE TRANSNATIONAL SALAFI-JIHADIST CHALLENGE TO THE MODERN STATE SYSTEM

Just as the modern state system was forged out of the crucible of Europe's Wars of Religion, so too are its ordering principles now being tested by transnational religious insurgents fighting under the banner of the global jihadist movement. Salafi-jihadism

originates from a broader movement calling for the regeneration of Islamic societies through a return to the form of Islam supposedly practiced by the companions (*salaf*) of the Prophet.⁶⁰ Salafism embraces a literalist interpretation of the Koran, and calls for the purging of innovations in religious practice introduced into Islam over subsequent generations.⁶¹ Salafis are particularly critical of innovations introduced into Islamic societies from the West. Two innovations that are vociferously opposed are the distinction between the secular and the sacred – which contradicts Salafis’ emphasis on the ‘Unity of God’ – and the division of the Muslim world into separate nation-states, nationalism being regarded as a form of idolatry that artificially divides the Islamic community.⁶² Salafis compare the contemporary period with the *jahiliyya*, the time of ignorance in the Arab world before the coming of Islam, and call for the establishment of *sharia* law and the dissolution of nation-states in favour of an Islamic Caliphate as remedies to the spiritual and moral malaise they see gripping the Islamic world.⁶³

A violent offshoot of Salafism, Salafi-jihadism endorses Salafist theology and further claims that it is the permanent and individual duty of all Muslims to engage in perpetual holy war against Islam’s enemies.⁶⁴ Salafi-jihadists distinguish between the ‘near enemy’, comprised of apostate rulers in the Muslim world, and the ‘far enemy’, consisting of non-Muslim powers that provide apostate rulers with the military and financial wherewithal necessary to sustain themselves in power.⁶⁵ In the absence of a Caliph to unite the Islamic world and command its armies, Salafi-jihadists argue that it is incumbent upon all Muslims to wage ceaseless struggle against Islam’s enemies, asserting (contrary to Islamic orthodoxy) that this obligation constitutes the sixth pillar of Islam, as binding on all Muslims as the five recognized pillars of profession of faith, prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and pilgrimage.⁶⁶

Ideologically, the contradiction between Salafi-jihadism and the present world order is clearly evident. The separation between the sacred and the secular; the principle of popular sovereignty as realized in the institutional form of the nation-state; even the monopolization

of legitimate violence by sovereign states – each of these principles are explicitly repudiated by the jihadists.⁶⁷ Similarly, jihadist actions – in the form of mass casualty terrorism – directly compromise the Hobbesian social contract of protection in exchange for obedience that has legitimized the modern state since the Peace of Westphalia. The organizational vehicle through which the jihadist challenge has been directed is a diffuse global coalition of militant networks, of which Al Qaeda forms merely a part. Nevertheless, given its prominence among transnational jihadists, the analysis below concentrates on Al Qaeda as a contemporary example of a religious transnational insurgency network.

Al Qaeda's origins can be traced to Abdullah Azzam's establishment of the Services Bureau, an information clearing-house on the status and whereabouts of Arab volunteers waging jihad against the Red Army following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.⁶⁸ On the eve of the Soviets' defeat in Afghanistan, Azzam and bin Laden established Al Qaeda (Arabic: the base) to serve as a database of jihadists who could potentially be mobilized to wage jihad against Islam's enemies in future conflicts.⁶⁹ Al Qaeda's subsequent evolution has been chronicled elsewhere and will not be recapitulated here, save to observe that Al Qaeda has from the beginning consisted of a network of networks, with jihadists from Morocco to Malaysia being bonded in their common commitment to jihadist ideology and also in their shared experiences waging jihad in Afghanistan.⁷⁰ With the 1998 merger between Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad and bin Laden's organization, Al Qaeda assumed its pre-9/11 form as a coalition of allied jihadist networks, with a core leadership group coordinating and directing cells in the commissioning of major attacks such as the 1998 African embassy bombings, the attack on the *USS Cole*, and of course September 11. Following 9/11 and under the impact of intensified international counter-terrorism efforts, Al Qaeda has morphed from a hub-and-spokes network to a much more loosely organized chain network, in which connections between individual cells have become more attenuated, and in which the central leadership's capacity to organize and coordinate large-scale attacks has been significantly –

perhaps fatally – degraded.⁷¹ Conversely, this setback has been partially offset by Al Qaeda’s enhanced post 9/11 capacity to inspire dispersed autonomous jihadist cells to perpetrate atrocities such as the Madrid and London bombings.

Writing on the dynamics of emergent power agglomerations, Michael Mann observes: ‘When an independent source of power it emerges, it is promiscuous in relation to ‘factors’, gathering them from all crannies of social life, giving them only a distinctive organizational configuration.’⁷² This observation relates particularly well to Al Qaeda, which has drawn from global flows of people, capital, ideas and materiel to forge a unique form of globalised insurgency, more analogous to a transnational social movement than to a guerrilla organization. Where Calvinist networks in Reformation Europe exploited the propagandistic and mobilizational opportunities provided by the printing press, Al Qaeda and its affiliates have masterfully exploited the information technology revolution to propagate the message of jihad and glorify the deeds of jihadist martyrs.⁷³ Unlike its Reformation counterparts, Al Qaeda has not been able to rely on the direct military or economic assistance of state actors. Al Qaeda has nevertheless been able to tap into various global financial flows, ranging from funds diverted from Islamic charities to profits garnered from the sale of African conflict diamonds, to finance the global jihad.⁷⁴ Finally, the accelerated global diffusion of dual-use technologies and the post-Cold War glut in the small arms market have significantly increased the pool of military resources and disruptive capabilities available to non-state actors, providing ample materiel with which to arm a jihadist community already battle-hardened from experience in the anti-Soviet jihad and now, presumably also, from experience in the anti-Coalition Iraqi jihad.

Today’s transnational jihadists enjoy a geographical reach and destructive capabilities that far surpass that possessed by Europe’s confessional militants. Nevertheless, the jihadists are unlikely to have equivalent transformative effects as did their early modern counterparts. Recall that the Huguenots were able to synthesize the strengths of aristocratic patronage and

kinship networks with a nation-wide bureaucratic church hierarchy to create an insurgent apparatus of exceptional resilience and strength. The ties linking Huguenots to a transnational supportive infrastructure were critical in sustaining their struggle and internationalizing the conflict, but these linkages empowered a movement that was already deeply embedded in France's social fabric. Conversely, Al Qaeda does not possess a bureaucratically governed and hierarchically organized religious infrastructure upon which to piggy-back when mobilizing its military power, and, even if it did, such an infrastructure would likely be rapidly detected and dismembered by the international community. It is true that Al Qaeda and affiliated jihadist organizations have derived strength from pre-existing social and kinship networks – witness for example the importance of the Ngruki network of *pesantren* alumni in forming the core personnel of *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), as well as the self-conscious strategy of network preservation through the inter-marriage of jihadist families pursued by both Al Qaeda and JI.⁷⁵ But such linkages pale in comparison with the size and sophistication of the patronage and kinship networks of the Huguenot nobility, networks that yoked fanatical religious commitment together with the affective ties of kinship to produce a deeply rooted structure of resistance to central authority.

Whereas Huguenot networks were deeply embedded in French society in addition to being plugged into a dispersed transnational supportive infrastructure, Al Qaeda's social penetration of host societies is generally shallow, with the possible exceptions of southern Afghanistan and the adjoining tribal border provinces of Pakistan.⁷⁶ The network has at its core a 'jihad jet set' of nomadic leaders radicalized by their experience of the Afghan jihad, while its foot-soldiers have been disproportionately drawn from socially marginalized first or second generation immigrants living in Western Europe and North America.⁷⁷ In this respect, the network's form is analogous to that of rhizomic plants such as creeping ivy, which spread rapidly but are only shallowly embedded in the top-soil through thousands of tiny shoots. Like a rhizomic plant, Al Qaeda possesses a powerful regenerative capacity, with its chain-

like network structure ensuring that the elimination of a large number of independent cells will not lead to the network's collapse. However, partially off-setting this advantage is the network's shallow penetration of host societies, a structural defect that has severely limited the effectiveness of Al Qaeda's outreach activities to local militants in host societies.

One of the greatest strengths of the transnationally connected but socially embedded Huguenot networks resided in their capacity to mobilize a popular base in defence of their faith. The networks accomplished this task by aggregating the diverse social and factional grievances of a wide range of actors and re-framing these grievances as being essentially and irreducibly religious in character.⁷⁸ In an effort to broaden its popular base, Al Qaeda has also tried to insinuate itself into local conflicts involving Muslims, with a view towards re-framing these struggles as part of a global jihad against Islam's enemies.⁷⁹ However, from Bosnia to Iraq, Muslim nationalists have accepted Al Qaeda's offers of men and materiel without embracing their cause of global jihad.⁸⁰ Al Qaeda's failure to win more than a minority of converts in war-torn societies can be credited to its socially disembedded character, along with its uncompromising intolerance of any interpretations of Islam that differ from its own. Across a range of theatres, jihadists have alienated themselves from host societies by denouncing indigenous folk religious practices as un-Islamic.⁸¹ The hostilities in Iraq in Anbar province between Al Qaeda foreign fighters and indigenous Iraqi insurgents constitute merely the most acute example of Al Qaeda's political ineptitude, with its unwillingness to tolerate religious dissent estranging it from actors with whom it shares the goal of expelling Coalition forces from Iraq. Paradoxically, the same features of Salafi-jihadism that make it attractive to de-territorialized and deracinated migrants and exiles (e.g. its dogmatic repudiation of all religious innovations that have accumulated since the Prophet's time) make it unappealing to most Muslims, thereby limiting its potential to broaden its appeal and thus pose a genuine threat to incumbent rulers.⁸²

The limited threat posed by Al Qaeda to the state system is further illustrated through a comparison of the relationship between religious insurgency and state failure in the early modern and contemporary contexts. In Valois France, the weakening of centralized political power was very much the *consequence* of religious radicalism and the withdrawal of support for the monarchy by Huguenot converts among the higher nobility. In France as throughout Reformation Europe, comprehensive bureaucracies had yet to be established, forcing rulers to rely on the higher nobility to govern in territories beyond the crown's direct grasp.⁸³ This patrimonial form of government ensured a dramatic involution of state power upon the outbreak of religious war in all areas where Huguenot conversion amongst the nobility was high. Across the 'Huguenot crescent' in southern and western France, the crown's influence evaporated on the initiation of religious hostilities as noble office-holders simply redirected the machinery of local and provincial government in support of the rebellion.⁸⁴ Conversely, jihadism has not by itself been the *cause* of post-colonial state failure. Rather, jihadists have simply exploited already pre-existing power vacuums in weak and failing states for their own purposes – their activities have thus been a symptom of deeper structural problems within the state system rather than being their underlying cause.

Finally, jihadism's revolutionary potential is constrained by the deeply internalized and comprehensively institutionalized character of the state system itself. Put bluntly, jihadist aspirations to overthrow the state system are fanciful. The material strength of even the brittle and unpopular authoritarian regimes of the Middle East far exceeds that of the jihadists. This is evidenced in the fact that the jihad against apostate rulers went global precisely because groups like Egyptian Islamic Jihad were unable to overthrow these rulers through resort to conventional strategies of revolutionary mobilization, guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism.⁸⁵ The military defeat of Islamists in Algeria and Egypt in the late 1990s may have convinced jihadist ideologues of the virtues of re-directing their energies towards the 'far enemy', but it simultaneously demonstrated jihadists' powerlessness *vis-à-vis* their state adversaries.⁸⁶

Perhaps even more important than this imbalance of material capabilities, however, are the systemic normative obstacles to the spread of jihadism. Whereas early modern confessional networks augmented their military capabilities by tapping an unregulated international market for mercenaries, this option has been foreclosed for contemporary insurgents following the nineteenth century growth of republican government and the ensuing delegitimation and elimination of mercenarism.⁸⁷ More broadly, principles of popular sovereignty and republican government that are anathema to Salafi-jihadism have become institutionalized globally through the UN system, and at a unit level through the generalization of the nation-state as the world's dominant form of political community. Rather than displacing the nation as an object of popular loyalty, the growth of transnational Islamic solidarity has occurred in tandem with the consolidation of national subjectivities in many parts of the Muslim world, further diminishing the prospects of a global Caliphate rising phoenix-like from the ashes of the Middle East's secular autocracies.⁸⁸ For all its fragility, the global state system is thus sufficiently institutionalized and internalized as to make its direct overthrow by the jihadists a remote possibility.

IV. TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS INSURGENCIES COMPARED – CALVINISM, JIHADISM, AND THE DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

The confessional networks of Reformation Europe and today's jihadist networks emerged in vastly different circumstances. Consequently, attempts to compare these cases for the purposes of better understanding the dynamics of international systems change must be undertaken with great caution. This caveat aside, some provisional conclusions concerning processes of international systems change can be derived from this comparison. Specifically, I maintain that the superior ideological appeal of Calvinism, the greater mobilizational opportunities available to early modern confessional militants, and the qualitatively greater

vulnerability of sixteenth century Christendom to subversion together account for the increased transformative potential of transnational insurgency in Reformation Europe. Conversely, jihadism's narrow ideological appeal, together with jihadists' inability to exploit the mobilizational capacity of existing transnational religious networks, fatally constrains their potential to exploit existing vulnerabilities within the global state system. Such observations do not discount the possibility that jihadist violence may indirectly provoke states into over-reacting in ways that threaten the global state system's constitutional principles, but they nevertheless suggest that the direct transformative potential of transnational religious insurgency in the contemporary period is significantly less now than it has been in earlier historical epochs.

One of the main factors accounting for the intensity and longevity of Europe's Wars of Religion was the extent to which insurgent belief systems acquired popular support among a broad range of social groups, who were then prepared to mobilize militarily in defence of their newly adopted confessions. For all of its iconoclastic fury, the austere and ascetic form of devotion that defined Calvinism tapped into genuine popular longings for a more intense and unmediated experience of the divine. The political authority Calvinism accorded to the lower magistrates additionally enhanced Calvinism's appeal among Europe's notoriously independent nobility, providing them with an ennobling rationale for rebellion against over-reaching monarchs. Paradoxically, however, the Calvinist ideal of the disciplined ecclesial community also supplied a valuable template to early modern state builders, while broader Protestant beliefs concerning the divinely delegated character of civil power and the centrality of law-making as a function of rule also facilitated the construction of enduring structures of political authority in the wake of Europe's religious wars.⁸⁹

Conversely, jihadism's ideological appeal is far more limited, as is its capacity to serve as a basis for an alternative political order. Undoubtedly, the growing popularity of ascetic forms of devotion among the devout middle classes in many Muslim communities in

recent decades suggests muted parallels with the much-noted affinity between Protestantism and the merchant classes in early modern Europe.⁹⁰ But the dramatic growth of moderate Islamist movements must be distinguished from the specific ideology of Salafi-jihadism, which in its elevation of violent jihad as the defining expression of religious piety will only ever appeal to a tiny minority. The literalist, de-territorialized brand of Islam favoured by jihadists deliberately denudes the faith of many of the traditions, rites and practices that render it such a powerful source of identity and ontological security for many Muslims, thereby limiting its ability to acquire a broad basis of popular support. More problematic even than this, however, is jihadism's limited scope to sustain a coherent alternative order to the current state system. For all of his antipathy towards the Catholic hierarchy, Calvin recognized the need to confine the interpretation of Scripture to officers of the Reformed Church, if only to preserve a uniform public truth against the centrifugal effects of private religious visions.⁹¹ Calvinism delegitimized and displaced the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, but it also provided a detailed institutional blueprint for the hierarchical order that was to succeed it. Jihadist propagandists have by contrast failed to articulate such a vision, instead insisting that legislative sovereignty lies solely with Allah, and that *sharia* constitutes the self-sufficient legal code by which human societies must be governed. The example of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, in which no legislation was passed, and the key institutions of the state were largely dismantled, is suggestive of jihadism's sterility as a resource for would-be state-builders.⁹² Where the Protestant ethic enjoyed an elective affinity with the forms of rational-bureaucratic domination characteristic of the modern state, the spirit of jihadism remains defiantly charismatic in its essential nature, a feature that precludes it from following Calvinism as the begetter of a new political order.

In addition to jihadism's self-limiting character as an insurgent ideology, today's jihadists are unable to access and mobilize social networks for the purposes of transnational religious insurgency with nearly the same ease as their Calvinist predecessors. In Reformation

Europe, social ties built around the institutions of aristocratic kinship and patronage were deeply interwoven into the constitutional architecture of early modern composite monarchies, providing confessional rebels with a scope for subversion and destabilization that finds few structural analogues in the modern state system. Today, many polities are extensively permeated by transnational religious networks, including *Tablighi Jamaat* and various Sufi brotherhoods, which could conceivably provide the mobilizational resources for mounting localized challenges to incumbent regimes.⁹³ But such networks are not threaded through governance structures in nearly the same way as were the kinship and patronage networks that the Huguenots harnessed in mobilizing to confront the Valois monarchy. Additionally, the jihadists' extreme doctrinal exclusivity precludes any opportunities for effectively penetrating (much less co-opting for subversive purposes) either *Tablighi Jamaat* or the Sufi brotherhoods, thereby further inhibiting their abilities to mobilize transnationally to subvert the global state system.

For an international order to be transformed, it is necessary for there to be available agents of transformation, imbued with an appealing ideology and capable of accessing available social networks to mobilize against the old order. Additionally, for anti-systemic agents to be successful, the existing order must also be weak enough to give them adequate opportunities to exploit its structural vulnerabilities to full effect. As the sixteenth century confessional militants demonstrated, Christendom was eminently susceptible to subversion. Given their internal weaknesses and longstanding rivalry, neither Church nor Empire proved capable of collaborating to suppress Protestantism before it had become indelibly entrenched as a feature of Europe's political and religious landscape. Moreover, in the absence of institutionalized norms of sovereignty and non-intervention, Europe's rulers were unable to resist the possibilities for predation and intervention presented by the eruption of heresy and rebellion among neighbouring rivals. Between the Peace of Augsburg and the Peace of Westphalia, Europe's polities dwelled in a state of 'immature anarchy', marked by the

absence of viable ordering institutions, and by the persistence of endemic wars fed by a combination of dynastic ambition and bitter sectarian conflict.⁹⁴ It was within this fluid institutional environment that Europe's militant confessional networks flourished, contributing in both the ideas that they directly propagated and the Absolutist counter-reaction that they inspired to the formation of the modern state system.

Today's global jihadists conversely find themselves in an international environment that is far more densely institutionalized than the one that prevailed in Reformation Europe. During the Wars of Religion, rulers routinely exploited the inter-connected character of Europe's composite monarchies to foment rebellion and support co-religionists in neighbouring polities. Such practices were part of the natural practice of early modern statecraft, but they nevertheless proved mutually enfeebling in the long term. Conversely, one of the great strengths of the Westphalian state system is its mutually empowering character, a feature that has been no more evident than in the aggressive mobilization of inter-state cooperation to suppress jihadist terrorism since 9/11.⁹⁵ Unlike the tottering order of Christendom, which rested upon religious foundations and which thus crumbled once its spiritual unity was undermined, the global state system is a reflexively monitored social institution that finds its *raison d'être* in the ecumenical goals of promoting popular eudemonism and national self-determination. Consequently, and precisely because its animating purposes are not anchored in any particular religious vision, the state system's ordering mechanisms have not been paralysed by the emergence of a religiously inspired challenge. This has enabled states to mobilize against a movement that threatens their monopoly on violence, and thus challenges their ability to provide for the physical security of their citizens. Moreover, whereas the European economy in the sixteenth century was predominantly localized and non-monetized, and was arguably more resilient in the face of protracted periods of disorder, the ordering requirements of the contemporary global capitalist economy are by contrast infinitely more demanding, providing an additional incentive for

states to mount a robust defence against jihadist terrorism.⁹⁶ In both the threat it has posed to the state system's legitimacy and its proper functioning, and in the indirect challenge it has by implication presented to the undisturbed operation of the global capitalist economy, jihadism has thus inspired a vigorous counter-mobilization by the international community that has dramatically weakened its capacity to subvert the prevailing order.

V. THE SHADOW OF HOBBS AND SPECTRE OF THE LOOMING TOWERS – THE FUTURE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN AN AGE OF TERROR

International orders are susceptible to transformation when confronted by revolutionary actors possessing both broad ideological appeal, as well as well-developed capacities to access social networks for the purposes of engaging in anti-systemic mobilization. Even in such instances, systemic transformation is only likely in situations where the existing order is already in an advanced state of decay, and its vulnerabilities are of a sufficient scale as to be effectively exploited by anti-systemic actors. The preceding analysis demonstrates that the transformative trinity of ideological appeal, mobilizational capacity, and systemic vulnerability does not obtain in the case of the jihadist challenge to world order. This observation aside, my argument should not be read as a complete vindication of the sceptical position on post 9/11 systems change. For while it may be that jihadists are unable to properly *exploit* the state system's existing vulnerabilities, they have nevertheless been effective in *exposing* these vulnerabilities, something that itself could potentially catalyse revisions in the practice of sovereignty in the long term.

What 9/11 and the ensuing war on terror have brought to the fore is a growing tension – not yet a contradiction – between two of the state system's core constitutional norms, specifically the Hobbesian protection bargain that legitimates the modern state in the eyes of its citizens, and norms of sovereign equality and non-intervention that have mediated relations

between strong states and weak states alike throughout the modern era. The existence of weak and failing states in parts of the developing world has facilitated the growth of transnational threats such as jihadist terrorism, which have in turn compromised the integrity of the state's monopoly on violence in the state system's developed core. With 9/11 and subsequent mass casualty terrorist attacks in Western capitals, the strategic distance between North and South has been radically compressed, producing a political imperative for Northern governments to take ameliorative measures to strengthen public confidence in the state's capacity to provide for their protection. During the immediate post-colonial period, when peripheral state weakness posed no obvious threat to core states' interests, Western governments were more ready to ignore the dissonance between post-colonial states' juridical status as formally equal sovereign entities, and their actual character as fragile and often highly dysfunctional governance units. Conversely, with the onset of the war on terror, this liberal attitude to the discrepancy between prescriptive norm and material fact has diminished, as the nexus between state failure and global threats has become more apparent to Western policy-makers.⁹⁷ Enhanced security interdependence between North and South has already seen a waning commitment to a negative sovereignty regime, in which the imperative of respecting self-determination previously mandated sovereign recognition of governments, regardless of their capacity to project power effectively throughout their territory.⁹⁸ I suggest that this trend may continue in future, particularly were jihadists or other violent non-state actors to succeed in acquiring and deploying a Weapon of Mass Destruction against Western targets. In the wake of such a cataclysm, it is easy to imagine that strong states would increasingly make the granting of sovereign recognition dependent upon a state's demonstrated capacity to project its power and authority effectively within its territory.⁹⁹ This trend would likely be accompanied by an internationalization of Northern states' Hobbesian protection compact, with newly conceived responsibilities to prevent the emergence of global

threats potentially taking priority over established norms of sovereign equality and non-intervention.¹⁰⁰

Both the Hobbesian protection bargain and the modern sovereignty regime were the unintended by-products of Europe's Wars of Religion, intended to bring a modicum of domestic and international order to the Continent following over a century of ideological strife and transnational insurgency. For the better part of the state system's subsequent history these norms evolved in tandem, but with the advent of post-colonial state failure and the inter-related emergence of transnational security threats, they are now in danger of diverging. Increasingly, norms of non-intervention and sovereign equality – procedural norms that have long been seen as fundamental to the realization of substantive values of national self-determination and human equality – may be qualified by Northern states seeking to minimize the leakage of transnational security threats from failing post-colonial states to the developed world. Should Northern states' extension of policing functions to the transnational level be accompanied by sincere and comprehensive attempts to re-establish viable states in the developing world, both the Hobbesian compact and traditional norms of non-intervention might again be reconciled. Conversely, if transnational policing is pursued in an exclusively prophylactic manner, with Northern states' interests in containing transnational threats being exclusively privileged over the need to reconstitute robust state structures in the developing world, a far more unequal, disordered, and bloody future awaits.

¹ This line of argument is consistent with the position articulated in Munkler. *The New Wars*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

² On the state system's historical success in suppressing non-state violence, see for example Donald J. Puchala. "Of Pirates and Terrorists: What Experience and History Teach." *Contemporary Security Policy* 26, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1-24.

³ Its anachronistic connotations notwithstanding, the term 'transnational' is favoured here over the more accurate but more inelegant descriptor of 'trans-polity' to characterize religious insurgency networks in both the historical and contemporary periods.

⁴ See generally Robert H. Jackson. *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵ On this point, see generally Bertrand Badie and Claudia Royal. *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁶ Robert Rotberg. "Failed States in a World of Terror." *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2002), p. 129.

⁷ Francis Fukuyama. "The Imperative of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004), p.18.

⁸ Fiona B. Adamson. "Globalisation, Transnational Political Mobilisation, and Networks of Violence." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2005), p. 33.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The literature on the resurgence of private international violence and its implications for the changing nature of warfare is now extensive. See for example John Arquilla, and David Ronfeldt, eds. *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Crime, Terror, and Militancy*. (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001); and Andrew Latham. "A Braudelian Perspective on the Revolution in Military Affairs." *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2002), pp. 231-66.

¹¹ On bond-relationship targeting and its relevance in the context of asymmetric warfare, see for example Robert J. Bunker, and Matt Begert. "Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network." *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 11, no. 2-3 (2002), p. 327.

¹² On jihadists' distinction between the near and far enemy, see Fawaz A. Gerges. *The Far Enemy - Why the Jihad Went Global*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1.

¹³ On the global rise of fundamentalist forms of religiosity across the Abrahamic faiths, see Karen Armstrong. *The Battle for God - Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000.

¹⁴ On this point, see for example Barak Mendelsohn. "Sovereignty under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al Qaeda Network." *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005), pp. 60-63.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ On the 'revolt against the West', see generally Hedley Bull. "The Revolt against the West." In *The Expansion of International Society*, edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 217-28.

¹⁷ On the distinction between state authority and control, and its relevance for assessing the import of putatively transformative trends in the international system, see Janice E. Thomson. "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Empirical Research." *International Studies Quarterly* 39 (1995), pp. 222-223.

¹⁸ On the renewed importance now accorded Third World state-building as a prophylaxis against transnational security threats, see Stewart Patrick. "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?" *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006), p. 28.

¹⁹ On the role played by norms against private international violence in consolidating states' collective control over their citizenry in the nineteenth century, see Janice E. Thomson. *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 145.

²⁰ See for example Michael Hanagan. "Irish Transnational Social Movements, Deterritorialized Migrants, and the State System: The Last One Hundred and Forty Years." *Mobilization: An International Journal* 3, no. 1 (1998), pp. 107-26.

²¹ The concept of 'violence interaction capacity' is taken from Daniel H. Deudney. "Regrounding Realism: Anarchy, Security, and Changing Material Contexts." *Security Studies* 10, no. 1 (2000), p. 2. On the decisive influence played by strong states in structuring the environment within which transnational flows and actors must operate, see generally Stephen Krasner. "Power Politics, Institutions, and Transnational Relations." In *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In*, edited by Thomas Risse-Kappen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 257-79.

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- ²²On the importance of sustainable pulsing, or the maintenance of swarmed attacks over time, as a feature of successful asymmetric 'net-war', see Brad McAllister. "Al Qaeda and the Innovative Firm: Demythologizing the Network." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no. 4 (2004), p. 303.
- ²³An argument for the limited transformative significance of private international violence and the durability of more traditional forms of inter-state conflict can be found in Colin S. Gray. "How Has War Changed since the End of the Cold War?" *Parameters* 35, no. 1 (2005), pp. 22-23.
- ²⁴On transnational jihadists' marginality within the broader global jihadist movement, see Gerges, 'The Far Enemy', pp. 109-111.
- ²⁵On this point, see Mohammed Ayoob. "Deciphering Islam's Multiple Voices: Intellectual Luxury or Strategic Necessity?" *Middle East Policy* 12, no. 3 (2005), p. 83.
- ²⁶Gerges, *The Far Enemy*, pp. 189-192.
- ²⁷Mack Holt. *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 24.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 25.
- ²⁹Robert M. Kingdon. *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France, 1555-1563*. Geneva: Droz, 1956, p. 93.
- ³⁰H.G. Koenigsberger. "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands During the Sixteenth Century." *The Journal of Modern History* 27, no. 4 (1955), p. 337.
- ³¹Robert Jean Knecht. *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598*. London: Longman, 1989, p.14.
- ³²*Ibid.*
- ³³*Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*
- ³⁵Robert M. Kingdon. "The Political Resistance of the Calvinists in France and the Low Countries." *Church History* 27, no. 3 (1958), p. 222.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*
- ³⁷*Ibid.*
- ³⁸Graeme Murdock. *Beyond Calvin - the Intellectual, Political, and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp 48-51.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ⁴⁰Koenigsberger, 'Organization of Revolutionary Parties', p. 346.
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 338.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 350-351.
- ⁴³*Ibid.*, p 350.
- ⁴⁴On the cultural meaning of ritualistic mob violence and acts of desecration in France's wars of religion, see Natalie Zemon Davis. "The Rites of Violence: Religious Violence in Sixteenth Century France." *Past and Present* 59 (1973), pp. 51-91.
- ⁴⁵On this point, see Philip S. Gorski. "Historicizing the Secularization Debate: Church, State and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Ca. 1300 to 1700." *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000), p. 151.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 151-158 *passim*.
- ⁴⁷On this point, see Quentin Skinner. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought Volume Two: The Age of the Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 15-16.
- ⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 230-233.
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 268.
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 301.
- ⁵²On this point, see Nannerl O. Keohane. *Philosophy and the State in France - the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 254.
- ⁵³Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, p. 24.
- ⁵⁴Samuel E. Finer. "State and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military." In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, edited by Charles Tilly, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). pp. 84-163. See specifically pp. 87-88.
- ⁵⁵Philip S. Gorski. *The Disciplinary Revolution - Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 158-159.
- ⁵⁶On this point, see generally Harold Berman. "Religious Foundations of Law in the West: An Historical Perspective." *Journal of Law and Religion* 1, no. 1 (1983): 3-43.
- ⁵⁷On the distinctive character of early modern composite monarchies, see generally J.H. Elliott. "A Europe of Composite Monarchies." *Past and Present* 137 (1992), pp. 48-71.
- ⁵⁸Daniel Philpott. *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 148.
- ⁵⁹On the 'hard-shell rimmed' character of the Absolutist state, see John Herz. "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State." *World Politics* 9, no. 4 (1957), p 483. On the material drivers propelling the emergence of the modern

state and the modern state system, see generally Charles Tilly. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, Ad 990-1992*. Cambridge, Mass.: B. Blackwell, 1992.

⁶⁰ Quintan Wiktorowicz. "A Genealogy of Radical Islam." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28 (2005), p. 75.

⁶¹ Olivier Roy. *Globalised Islam - the Search for a New Ummah*. London: Hurst and Company, 2005, p. 265.

⁶² On the supreme emphasis placed on the notion of divine sovereignty (*hakimiya*) within Salafi thought, see Gerges, *The Far Enemy*, pp. 4-5.

⁶³ The notion of a 'modern *jahiliyya*' was first introduced into Salafi thought by Mawlana Abdul A'la Mawdudi in the 1930s; see Wiktorowicz. 'A Genealogy of Radical Islam', p. 78.

⁶⁴ On the clear distinction between Salafism and Salafi-jihadism, see "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix." Southeast Asia/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2004, p.1.

⁶⁵ Gerges, *The Far Enemy*, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Wiktorowicz, 'Genealogy of Radical Islam', p. 80.

⁶⁷ Mendelsohn, 'Sovereignty Under Attack', pp. 62-64.

⁶⁸ Marc Sageman. *Understanding Terror Networks*. (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 35-37.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ For an overview of Al Qaeda's origins and evolution, see for example Jason Burke. *Al Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

⁷¹ On the achievements and limitations of the Bush Administration's leadership interdiction strategy against Al Qaeda, see Michael Kenney. "From Pablo to Osama: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the War on Drugs." *Survival* 45, no. 3 (2003), pp.193-195.

⁷² Michael Mann. *The Sources of Social Power*. Vol. 1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 22.

⁷³ On the suitability of on-line media for the oral traditions preferred by many of Al Qaeda's tribal constituents, see David Ronfeldt. "Al Qaeda and Its Affiliates: A Global Tribe Waging Segmental Warfare?" *First Monday* 10, no. 3 (2005), p. 10.

⁷⁴ On Al Qaeda's diverse financial resources, see McAllister, 'Al Qaeda and the Innovative Firm', p. 305.

⁷⁵ On the importance of the 'Ngruki' alumni network for Jemaah Islamiyah, see generally 'Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia', International Crisis Group Asia Briefing No. 20, 8 August 2002. The significance of pre-existing social networks for the jihadist insurgency more generally is noted in David J. Kilcullen. "Countering Global Insurgency." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 4 (2005), pp. 600-603 *passim*.

⁷⁶ On the deterritorialized character of Salafi-jihadism, see Roy, *Globalised Islam*, pp. 288-290. On the role played by Salafi-jihadism in recasting social identities in Pakistan's tribal areas along fundamentalist lines in response to the encroaching power of the Pakistani state, see *Ibid.*, p. 284

⁷⁷ On the social networks that jointly comprise the global jihadist movement, see generally Sageman, 'Understanding Terror Networks', chapter 5, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Koenigsberger, 'Organization of Revolutionary Parties', p. 350.

⁷⁹ On this point with reference to Al Qaeda's collective action framing activities in Southeast Asia, see David Leheny. "Terrorism, Social Movements, and International Security: How Al Qaeda Affects Southeast Asia." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 6 (2005), pp. 87-109.

⁸⁰ On Al Qaeda's failure to create a fundamentalist state in Bosnia for want of local support, see Evan F. Kohlman. *Al Qaeda's Jihad in Europe - the Afghan-Bosnian Network*. (New York: Berg, 2004), p. 229. On tensions between indigenous Iraqi insurgents and foreign insurgents, see Sabrina Tavernise and Dexter Filkins. "Local Insurgents Tell of Clashes with Al Qaeda's Forces in Iraq." *New York Times*, January 12 2006 2006, 1.

⁸¹ Sageman notes that this cultural and ideological disconnect between transnational jihadists and their hosts manifested itself as earlier as the Afghan jihad in the 1980s; see Sageman, 'Understanding Terror Networks', pp. 59-60.

⁸² Roy, 'Globalised Islam', pp. 288-290.

⁸³ Koenigsberger, 'Organization of Revolutionary Parties', p. 339.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

⁸⁵ Gilles Kepel. "The Origins and Development of the Jihadist Movement: From Anti-Communism to Terrorism." *Asian Affairs* XXXIV, no. II (2003), pp. 98-100.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

⁸⁷ On the relationship between the rise in republican government in the nineteenth century and the delegitimation and elimination of mercenarism, see Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, p. 148.

⁸⁸ Ayoob, 'Islam's Multiple Voices', p. 83.

⁸⁹ On this point, see for example Philip S. Gorski. "Calvinism and State Formation in Early Modern Europe." In *State/Culture - State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*, edited by George Steinmetz, 147-81. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

⁹⁰These parallels have been pursued with considerable sophistication in Ellis Goldberg. "Smashing Idols and the State: The Protestant Ethic and Sunni Radicalism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33, no. 1 (1991): 3-35.

⁹¹On this point, see Sheldon S. Wolin. *Politics and Vision - Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960, p. 173.

⁹²On this point, see Gilles Kepel. *Jihad - the Trail of Political Islam*. 4th ed. London: I.B. Taurus, 2006, pp. 229-232.

⁹³On this point, it is worth noting the key role played by transnationally dispersed Sufi brotherhoods in organizing resistance against European imperial expansion in locales as diverse as Algeria, the Caucasus, and Java in the mid-late nineteenth century. This precedent demonstrates the role played by transnational religious networks in the Islamic world facilitating military mobilization well into the modern era. See John Voll. "Sufi Brotherhoods: Transcultural/Transstate Networks in the Muslim World." In *Interactions - Transregional Perspectives on World History*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal and Anand A. Yang, 30-47. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. See specifically pp. 41-43.

⁹⁴On the distinction between more and less forms of 'mature' anarchy in international politics, see Barry Buzan. *People, States and Fear*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983, pp. 175-181.

⁹⁵For a discussion of the international community's counter-terrorism measures in the wake of 9/11, see generally Andrea Bianchi. "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Security Council's Anti-Terrorism Measures: The Quest for Legitimacy and Cohesion." *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 5 (2007): 881-919. On the mutually empowering character of the modern sovereignty regime, see Hendrik Spruyt. *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 167-171.

⁹⁶On this point, see Paul Hirst. *War and Power in the 21st Century - the State, Military Conflict, and the International System*. Cambridge: Polity, 2001, pp. 129-130.

⁹⁷On Western policy-makers' increased sensitivity to the link between state failure and global threats, see Patrick, 'Weak States and Global Threats', p. 28.

⁹⁸The raft of uniform obligations imposed on sovereign states by the United Nations Security Council in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks provides suggestive early evidence of a turn towards a more demanding and more conditional sovereignty regime than existed in the immediate post-colonial period. On the nature of these obligations, which included sovereign obligations to suppress terrorist financing, deny safe haven to terrorist organizations, and reduce terrorists' mobility through the implementation of rigorous border controls, see generally Eric Rosand. "Security Council Resolution 1373, the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and the Fight against Terrorism." *The American Journal of International Law* 97, no. 2 (2003): 333-41.

⁹⁹This argument echoes speculation advanced by Stephen Krasner about the likely future of the sovereignty regime in the wake of a hypothetical future increase in catastrophic terrorism; see Stephen D. Krasner. "The Day After." *Foreign Policy*, no. 146 (2005), pp. 68-70.

¹⁰⁰On the notion of responsibilities to prevent as a potentially sovereignty-compromising moral obligation of governments analogous to the responsibility to protect already being cited as a justification for humanitarian intervention, see generally Lee Feinstein, and Anne-Marie Slaughter. "A Duty to Prevent." *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2004), pp. 136-50.

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