

# **‘Ungoverned Spaces?’ The Islamic State’s Challenge to (Post-)Westphalian ‘Order’**

Written by Matt Gordner

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MATT GORDNER, JUN 24 2017

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The existence of ‘rogue,’ ‘weak,’ or ‘failed’ states generates frequent academic debate over the ubiquity and success of an international Westphalian ‘order.’ To what extent can we maintain that this order is stable and lasting given the recurring evidence of its breach? Following 9/11, the ‘War on Terror’ called into question the coherence of the Westphalian system’s most salient feature — state sovereignty — on two fronts. First, for al-Qaeda’s means and ambitions to found a global caliphate, and second, for the rationale that then United States President George H. W. Bush proffered over ‘selective sovereignty’ in justifying the rupture of the sovereignty of certain states suspected of harbouring terrorists in order to secure the sovereignty of the so-called ‘well-ordered’ states (Acharya 2015).

The Islamic State’s declaration of a caliphate in June 2014 reinvigorated this debate and a newfound sense of urgency. As Mark Lynch argues, ‘The Islamic state has indisputably reshaped the region’s strategic and intellectual agenda ... [posing] an intriguing ideational challenge to the norms of state sovereignty that underlie international society’ (Lynch 2015: 2). This chapter contributes to the debate over the challenge that the Islamic State poses to Westphalian and post-Westphalian international order. The first section draws on Ikenberry’s (2014) work on order as power, legitimacy, and functionality to chart the relevant intellectual terrain. The second section examines the Islamic State in terms of establishing and imposing the ‘Caliphate’ on local populations (power), support for its normative project (legitimacy), and its ability to provide an alternative order (functionality). In the third section, I argue that the Islamic State’s ability to project an alternative ‘order’ derives in part from the uneven, inconsistent, and incoherent application of the tenets of global democracy and international liberalism — the same tenets that are purportedly threatened by the Islamic State’s advance.

### **(Post-)Westphalian ‘Order’ and its Discontents**

Assessing the kinds of challenges that the Islamic State poses to Westphalian and post-Westphalian norms of international order requires a brief discussion of what constitutes an international order in the first place. According to Ikenberry (2014: 85), international order refers to ‘the settled arrangements that define and guide relations between states.’ Lasting and pervasive international orders exhibit three defining characteristics: power, legitimacy, and functionality. States can only create and enforce international order where they are materially capable of coercion and enticement (power); the institutions and the ‘rules of the game’ they prescribe must garner ‘normative approbation’ (legitimacy); and participating states must find within the order some benefit, whether the provision of services or the ability to overcome collective problems insufficiently or unsatisfactorily resolved by the previous order (functionality). New orders therefore ‘need only exist relative to alternative orders that might be on offer. Orders may be more or less built around a dominant power, more or less based on a normative consensus, and more or less able to provide functional benefits and services’ (ibid.: 84).

Signed in 1648, The Treaties of Westphalia (or Peace of Westphalia) brought about an end to the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) fought between Protestant and Catholic powers in Europe. The commonly held understanding of

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'Westphalia' today is that it is an international order marked by 'sovereign, equal, territorial states in which non-intervention into the internal affairs of another state is the rule' (Schmidt 2011: 602). As Falk reminds us, however, "'Westphalia" contains an inevitable degree of incoherence by combining the territorial/juridical logic of equality with the geopolitical/hegemonic logic of inequality' (Falk 2002: 312). Rival states, great powers, and domestic elites frequently breach and circumvent sovereignty and equality when and where it serves their interests to do so (Krasner 1999). Colonialism and post-colonialism both reified and weakened — at different times and in different places — the establishment of borders (Keene 2002). The idea that Westphalia is the harbinger of world 'order' leaves us with the mistaken understanding that it solved a problem of 'anarchy' elsewhere, namely, outside of Europe. For its Eurocentrism and anachronisms many scholars have thus committed to calling 'Westphalia' a myth or narrative that does more to obfuscate the realities of international relations than it does to elucidate them (Kayaoglu 2010). Students of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) politics have long noted the differential identity politics that communities of this region subscribe to, both pre- and post-Ottoman times — many of which prioritize the family or tribe far above that of the nation (Tibi 1990). This not only complicates the Euro-centric understanding of nationalism, but it also affirms more recent studies that demonstrates how scholarship tends to consider the concept of sovereignty among MENA states and peoples as somehow deficient or lacking compared to the ideal-type assumed by the Western, European trajectory (Allinson 2016). Indeed, not all sovereignties are constructed, let alone conceived, alike. Falk argues that there are four possible 'Westphalias': the event, the idea, the process, and the 'normative score sheet'.

As event, Westphalia refers to the peace settlement negotiated at the end of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), which has also served as establishing the structural frame for world order that has endured, with modifications from time to time, until present. As idea, Westphalia refers to the state-centric character of world order premised on full participatory membership being accorded exclusively to territorially based sovereign states. As process, Westphalia refers to the changing character of the state and statecraft as it has evolved during more than 250 years since the treaties were negotiated, with crucial developments as both colonialism and decolonization, the advent of weaponry of mass destruction, the establishment of international institutions, the rise of global market forces, and the emergence of global civil society. As normative score sheet, Westphalia refers to the strengths and weaknesses, as conditioned by historical circumstances, of such a sovereignty based system, shielding oppressive states from accountability and exposing weak and economically disadvantaged states to intervention and severe forms of material deprivation (Falk 2002: 312).

According to Ikenberry, liberal internationalism exists uneasily alongside Westphalia. This liberal project 'has entailed a commitment to international order that is open and at least loosely rule based... most of which are complimentary but some of which conflict' (Ikenberry 2014: 93–94). Democratic rule of law at home and abroad, secured by regional and international institutions, the full-scale promotion of open markets and free trade, and shared concerns for global security and human rights all suggest liberal internationalism was at its height following the cold war (Hoffmann 1995). Yet liberal internationalism is being forced to undergo a substantial revision following from its first (Wilsonian) and second (post-cold war) iterations, both of which took place during eras of American hegemony. Proponents of liberal internationalism '3.0' face a number of obstacles: the scope and hierarchy of the previously United States-dominated versions are at odds with the more inclusive and universalized vision sought out by an increasing share of states (and regions), indicating not only the need for more robust capacity and legitimacy for international institutions, but for a consensus on the norms of intervention in the post-Westphalian system (Ikenberry 2010).

The contours and contents of post-Westphalia differ markedly within the literature along a utopian-dystopian axis. Falk imagines post-Westphalia as a turn towards cosmopolitan democracy (global citizenship) alongside economic and political regionalism. Within the economic camp lies the 'image of a borderless world dominated by markets and global corporations and banks' that are at the same time 'reinforced by the rise of cyber-consciousness with its affinities for "self-organizing systems" and libertarian critiques of government', indicating the potential formation of both supranational institutions as well as those emerging respectively 'from within and below'. The political camp aims to consolidate a 'unified world order' of global peace and security through international institutions (Falk 2002: 326). Sarkar's evaluation of the political elements of post-Westphalia is based on four facets of international relations: (1) the increasing 'agency' (read: power) of transnational corporations based particularly on 'trading states'; (2) the uptick in non-governmental organizations corresponding to the inability or unwillingness of governments to

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adequately address the fast paces of economic, social, and political change brought on by rapid technological advances, political fragmentation, and economic interdependence; (3) the need for a more comprehensive military policy at the international level especially given the failed United States-led military initiatives of the past decade and a half; and, (4) the tensions between humanitarian intervention — or the threat of intervention — in order to promote human rights, and the principle of sovereignty enshrined in the Westphalian order (Sarkar 2015).

Falk also raises a dystopian variant of post-Westphalia based on 'intensifying trends toward religious and ethnic exclusivism as the claimed basis for fulfilling a right of self-determination and an array of chauvinistic backlashes that seek to hijack government to carry out an anti-immigrant agenda' (Falk 2002: 332). In light of recent national and international trends, Falk's dystopian variant applies equally to democratic and non-democratic institutions and governance structures. The success of the 'leave' vote in the 'Brexit' referendum, and the ascendance of Donald Trump in the United States, all speak to the confluence of demagoguery and populism driven by political and economic pressures whose safety valves rely on exclusivist, racist, anti-immigrant, and xenophobic discourses as solutions to the problems of legitimacy and confidence in the existing structures of finance and governance. So, too, however, is the rise of the Islamic State a portent of the dystopian post- and decidedly anti-Westphalian (dis)order, one based on a radical project to re-imagine international relations and a sharp bifurcation between 'us' and 'them' in the form of *dar-al-harb* and *dar-al-Islam* — the abode of war and the abode of peace, respectively.

## **The Islamic State: The Proto-State 'Caliphate'**

The Islamic State's organizational roots date back to al-Tawhid wal Jihad, founded in 1998 by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In 2004, Zarqawi (d. 2006) pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden (d. 2011), and his organization was renamed al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers. Two years later, that organization morphed into al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) under the leadership of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi (d. 2010). Upon the death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was elected the new leader of AQI.

In 2011, Baghdadi sent one of his high-ranking officials, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, to establish an al-Qaeda affiliate, Jahbat al-Nusra, in Syria, with the blessing of al-Qaeda's current leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Baghdadi then unilaterally declared Nusra and AQI as one under The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). When Zawahiri condemned the move and ordered ISIS to return to Iraq, Baghdadi paid no heed, and a chasm emerged that ended in waves of Nusra fighters defecting to ISIS. On 1 July 2014, The Islamic State was officially declared the 'Caliphate,' with Baghdadi the purported 'Caliph' of all Muslims worldwide.

The shortening of the Islamic State's appellation is significant for several reasons. Here, let us recall Ikenberry's three qualifications for establishing a world order: power, legitimacy, and functionality. First, it marked a point of transition from terrorist group to proto-state, including a government, central administration, and military capable of 'lasting,' and to some extent, 'expanding' (power). For another, it was a titular representation of the successful takeover of territories straddling the borders of eastern Syria and western Iraq. For many in the Arab and Muslim world, the symbolic (or not so symbolic) erasure of the border is both a political and religious goal that transcends Salafi-Jihadists' minoritarian interpretations of Islamic order.

Not even the most powerful Arab leaders like Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser could wipe away the colonial borders established by the secretive Sykes-Picot agreement between the British and French in 1916, and not since the Ottoman Empire has any Muslim group or leadership claimed the mantle to uphold 'true' Islam, let alone to usher in the apocalypse through the establishment of a caliphate. The Islamic State therefore positioned itself as *the* focal point for Salafi-Jihadist organizations and some Muslims who, though abhorring violence, share some affinity with the project of (re)establishing a transnational Islamic polity (legitimacy). Finally, the Islamic State is in a position to provide a model and, to a lesser extent, a means of establishing an alternative to Westphalia; an 'Islamic' order that brings religion back into the fold as a guiding and authoritative principle in politics (functionality).

## ***The Power of the Islamic State: 'Lasting and Expanding'?***

The Islamic State capitalized upon the destruction of Iraq following the 2003 United States invasion and the 2011

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breakout of civil war in Syria in order to carve out vast territory over a population estimated to be six to ten million inhabitants, including most notably Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq. Although the Islamic State faces obstacles in expanding its revenue streams and normalizing its ideology (Revkin and McCants 2015), its motto — 'lasting and expanding' — will hold true in the short term:

the more the Islamic State actually resembles a state, with its security provision and regulatory institutions, the less international actors will be able to "degrade" or "destroy" the group without also degrading or destroying the fundamental functions of the state. Attempts to degrade and destroy these emergent state institutions will likely lead to anarchy, which often comes with profoundly negative consequences (Mecham 2015: 21).

Mecham compares the Islamic State to a 'normal' state, measuring its performance along six functions, and 'grading' each of them accordingly:

1. Tax and labour acquisition (7/10)
2. Citizenship (4/10)
3. International security and foreign relations (2/10)
4. Domestic security (6/10)
5. Social services (5/10)
6. Economic growth (3/10)

In addition to the Islamic State's passing grades in taxation and labour acquisition, domestic security, and social service provision, a pragmatic relationship with the Syrian regime, creative use of online propaganda, enlisting foreign fighters and controlling local populations, and the maintenance and building of a centralized military apparatus are further indications that 'degrading and destroying' the Islamic State will require concerted international cooperation (Khatib 2015: 2). United States Department of Treasury estimates from 2015 show that the Islamic State benefited from more than a half a billion dollars in oil trade with Syria, and to a lesser extent Turkey (Faulconbridge and Saul 2015). At a United Nations council meeting in November 2015 Russian U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin estimated that the group took in \$250 million dollars from phosphate sales, \$200 million from barley and rye, and an additional \$100 million from cement, with \$30 million allocated monthly for the purchase of weapons through Eastern European shell companies (Nichols and Irish 2015).

While popular media continues to label the Islamic State as a 'terrorist organization,' its tactics and capabilities more closely approximate an insurgency (Moghadam, Berger, and Beliakova 2014). Its shift from armed attacks and targeted killings to house demolitions and the establishment of checkpoints to control cities 'resembles the "Clear, Hold, Build" strategy of classic insurgency literature' (Bilger 2014: 11). The Islamic State operates an organized security service that includes military intelligence (*amn al-askari*), foreign intelligence (*amn al-kharji*), state security (*amn al-dawla*), and an interior ministry (*amn al-dakhili*). Estimates on the number of fighters the Islamic state had across Syria and Iraq in 2015 vary wildly, from 20,000 to 200,000 (Gerstein-Ross 2015). U.S. estimates place the figure at 25,000, with an additional 6,000 fighters stationed in Libya (Landay 2016). A 2016 Military Balance Report indicated that despite setbacks, and the attentions of an American-led air coalition that had been attacking ISIS in Syria since September 2014 (and in Iraq since earlier in the year), the jihadist organisation continued to resist and expand, surprising local and international audiences with its resilience, adaptability, and brutality.

## *The Legitimacy of the Islamic State: Normalizing the Salafi-Jihadist Ideology*

Do the institutions and the 'rules of the game' that the Islamic State practices and enforces garner 'normative approbation,' or legitimacy? Brunzel's analysis indicates that the Islamic State's foot soldiers may not be well versed in its ideology upon joining, but that its leadership is comprised of hardened adherents to Salafi-Jihadist ideology (Brunzel 2015). Recruits reportedly take two-week seminars before being assigned to their battalions (Weiss 2015a). Those who defect from rival factions are rung through three-month re-indoctrination boot camps (Weiss 2015b). In Raqqa, men with prior experience in Islamic education are provided training in order to be placed within the administration as teachers, prayer leaders, and imams, as the first issue of *Dabiq*, the Islamic State's English language publication, suggests.

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In addition to providing some social services, law enforcement, and medical care, the Islamic State is beginning to institute a school curriculum informed by its radical brand of Salafi-Jihadism. A document obtained by *Niqash* reports that pre-teens learn arithmetic through war scenarios: 'If the Islamic State has 275,220 heroes in a battle and the unbelievers have 356,230, who has more soldiers?' (*Daily Beast/Niqash* 2015). In a recent PBS documentary, journalist Najibullah Quraishi visits an Islamic State school in Afghanistan where children learn Jihadist ideology, review military tactics, and practice combat drills. Teachers showcase online videos on 'how to kill people, how to behead, and how to become suicide bombers' (*PBS Newshour* 2016). In Raqqa, the Islamic State recently opened twelve schools for boys and twelve schools for girls, including courses for teenagers and adults with officially sanctioned curriculums (Khatib 2015).

Preference falsification and small sample sizes render reliable data on local support difficult to secure, but defectors report un-Islamic behaviour, in-group fighting, and low standards of living (Neumann 2015). Conceivably, the longer the Islamic State 'lasts,' the more likely that it is able to consolidate the institutions of state, and the more likely local populations could be normalized into its systems of governance and indoctrination.

## *The Functionality of the Islamic State: Towards a Trans-National Caliphate?*

Providing an alternative to the Westphalian order requires that the Islamic State offers a model that benefits other 'states,' whether materially or ideologically. One of the indirect aims of the Islamic State is to overturn the Westphalian model by introducing a global caliphate in the region. Rather than beginning with a monolithic, contiguous entity that expands outwards from its territory in Syria-Iraq, the Islamic State seeks to carve out 'statelets,' or *wilayat*, within preexisting (Westphalian) state entities that, ostensibly, the Islamic State aspires to join together at a later date. Insofar as this model depends on taking over smaller blocks of territory within weak or ungoverned areas, the functionality of their model thus relies on its exportability, the dysfunctionality of weak states, and the delegitimization of Westphalian order.

Salafi-Jihadist groups gain easy access to what is believed to be the Islamic State's three-step strategy. Released online in 2004, the 248-page document entitled *The Management of Savagery* instructs readers to first pull western militaries into a 'stage of vexation and exhaustion,' followed by 'the administration of savagery,' and, finally, 'the establishment of the Islamic State' (Atwan 2015: 153–165). One ISIS cleric avers that the book is already 'widely circulated among provincial ISIS commanders and some rank-and-file fighters as a way to justify beheadings as not only religiously permissible but recommended by God and his prophet' (Weiss and Hassan 2015: 41).

Though refusing to recognize the sovereignty of other states, the Islamic State goes to great lengths to legitimise its own by projecting itself as *the* Islamic alternative to Western hegemony (Nielson 2015). Following the annexation of a swath of land across the Iraq-Syrian border, the fourth issue of *The Islamic State Report* (2016: 1) declared that,

Years after the [Sykes-Picot] agreement, invisible borders would go on to separate between a Muslim and his brother, and pave the way for ruthless, nationalistic tawaghit [idolaters] to entrench the ummah's division rather than working to unite the Muslims under one imam carrying the banner of truth. Each taghut [idolater] in the lands of the Muslims was satisfied having his own piece of land to rule over and, in some cases, a grandiose title he assigned himself, such as Ghaddafi's "King of the Kings of Africa". This was in spite of that same ruler's humiliated position as a kafir [non-Muslim] puppet.

In the twelfth issue of *Dabiq*, captured-photojournalist John Cantlie was named as the purported author in an article quoting a United States Brigadier General as saying:

The Islamic State meets all requirements ... to be recognized as a state," he said. "It has a governing structure, it controls territory, a large population, is economically viable, has a large and effective military and provides governmental services such as health care to its population. Dealing with it as if it were a terrorist movement is a non-starter. It is a State and if the West wants to defeat it, it must accept either: 1) The Islamic State is enough of a threat to world or regional peace that the West is willing to go to war with it, or 2) The costs of a war are too great and the West must plan to contain the Islamic State and ultimately negotiate with it as a sovereign State (*Dabiq* 2015, 49).

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In addition to the 43 organizations across Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe that pledged allegiance or support to Baghdadi (*IntelCenter* 2015), its foreign fighters hail from over 100 nations worldwide in what the United Nations has deemed both 'an immediate and long-term threat' (Burke 2015). Returning fighters pose significant regional security risks as conveyor belts for the Islamic State's ideology and for the implementation of its local terror plots. According to Zelin, 'its wilayat in Libya and Sinai are following the same methodology on the ground and in the media as the Islamic State's wilayat have in Iraq and Syria' (Zelin 2015: 25). Libya is crucial, since its oil wealth could provide additional resources to maintain and expand the Islamic State's territorial claims and strongholds in self-proclaimed wilayats across the African continent (Dyer 2016).

Salafi-Jihadism is a continent-wide security concern that claims tens of thousands of lives across Africa annually (*The Economist* 2015). The acceptance of the pledge of allegiance by Nigeria's Boko Haram in March 2015 — a group responsible for over six thousand deaths in Northern Nigeria in 2014 alone (Karimi and Almasry 2016) — is further indication that its overall strategy of taking over insecure and ungoverned areas is succeeding. If seized, co-opted, and/or monopolized by a network of Islamic State wilayats, ancient trade routes across the Sahel could pose a major obstacle to stemming the flow of arms and funds to Islamic State-aligned Jihadist groups across Africa and into Asia and Europe (Caulderwood 2015). An overturned Westphalian 'order' is just as, if not more, likely to emanate in the long run from an epicentre on the African continent as it is from the 'Caliphate' in Iraq-Syria.

## **Conclusion**

The current 'order' is marked neither by the Westphalian 'idea' of absolute nation-state sovereignty nor by the post-Westphalian imaginary of global democracy. On the one hand, globalization renders the Westphalian state porous. On the other, cosmopolitanism remains the privilege of social minorities. States are the primary holders of power over and within the *inter-national* system, yet a hierarchy exists among them, and loose networks of political and economic elites comprise a class that preserves an uneven distribution of power within and between them. A vision of liberal internationalism that aims at promoting democracy, human rights, and free markets through international laws and institutions occupies this uneasy interregnum through a more or less universal consensus reached by state leaders that no viable alternative is available despite the many apparent problems with maintaining an 'order' that is capable of being so dis-orderly. This consensus garners only partial legitimacy, however, and both within and across states a polarization is emerging that contests the legitimacy of a system that proposes democracy while aiding to contravene its substantive theoretical commitments to 'freedom and equality.'

Many among Arab, Muslim, and post-colonial communities harbour understandable resentment towards those states that practiced and continue to maintain relationships of dependency and uneven development between what, for simplicity's sake, is often referred to as the 'global North' over the 'global South.' Oftentimes, perpetuating these relationships thwarts economic equalities and political liberalisation. On the one hand, the economic policies advocated by international financial institutions beginning in the 1980s led to the withdrawal of social security with severe forms of privatisation that restricted social movements for human rights while enriching the political and economic elite across the MENA region and widening domestic economic inequalities (Hanieh 2013). On the other hand, selective military interventions (Libya, Syria, Iraq) in the name of 'democracy' further destabilized the security of the region, while continued support for dictatorships proved Western commitments to democratic transformations to be empty rhetoric.

'The reluctance of politicians to use the word "state,"' Napoleoni argues, 'springs from the fear of accepting, if only with a word, the claim of the Islamic State to be not a terrorist organization, but a legitimized war of conquest and internal consensus' (Napoleoni 2014: xi). The Islamic State's territorial claims over large areas of Iraq and Syria; its ability to exploit weak and failed states to secure footholds across the African and Asian continents; and the 'lone wolf' and pre-meditated attacks in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the United States make the Islamic State a veritable security threat to regional and international populations. Yet, neither its terrorist nor insurgency tactics make the Islamic State particularly unique in the annals of political violence.

Its challenge to international order arises from the fact that it 'rejects the central principles and institutions of the international society and outlines an alternative way to organizing the world that is not based on states' (Mendehilson

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2015: 10). The possibility for the Islamic State to threaten (and not only challenge) the (post-)Westphalian international order exists insofar as it can successfully establish the 'Caliphate' as both an empirical reality and ideational construct. As argued above, this involves imposing the 'Caliphate' on local populations (power) while garnering and maintaining support for its normative project (legitimacy) and continuously providing materially and ideologically visions of an alternative Islamic order (functionality). In other words, the Islamic State poses a challenge to international order by calling out the foundational principles and tenets upon which (post-)Westphalianism is based, starting — according to its own narrative — with the imposition of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 in formerly Ottoman Caliphal lands. It only becomes a veritable threat when the Islamic State is able to assert its model of statehood as a reliable competitor to the Westphalian state system. That project began with the erasure of the Sykes-Picot border, and it ends — again, according to its own narrative — with the extension of the 'Caliphate'*in toto*. The possibility of the Islamic State replacing (post-)Westphalia is well-nigh impossible, and its ability to pose an actual threat to international order is highly unlikely insofar as a clear majority of the world's states are invested in the 'order' that liberal internationalism and its primary backers support.

Nonetheless, the threshold between a 'challenge' and a 'threat' is tenuous, and diffusion effects are unpredictable especially in regions wrought by weak and failed states with sizeable unstable or 'ungoverned' spaces. Thus, while cautioning against the self-fulfilling prophecy of the 'clash of civilizations' that replaced the Cold War as the next worst threat against 'Western' interests, it is important at the same time to acknowledge the regional insecurity that the continued presence of the Islamic State signifies alongside some of the underlying causes of the Islamic State's rise, including the grievances of its leadership and cadre of militants and supporters. In this regard, Salafi-Jihadism generally, and the Islamic State in particular, will likely remain a challenge to regional, if not international, order, for the foreseeable future. The rise of the Islamic State indicates a high level of disaffection with the current 'order,' as well as some support for an alternative, dystopian post-Westphalian order based on so-called 'Islamic' (read: Salafi-Jihadist) values. While not diametrically opposed or locked into some Manichean dualism, liberal internationalism and the Islamic State's model of the 'Caliphate' nonetheless represent competing universalisms.

As Hayman and Williams (2006: 531) propose:

Maintaining a norm system in the face of multi-faceted opposition may produce two polar outcomes. Either the system realises its ultimate form by a process of incremental strengthening or its opponents succeed in dissolving the mortar of its foundations. Alternatively, an uneasy balance emerges between the two, whereby a new, but inherently unstable, position is adopted containing in it a delicate and shifting relationship aspects of both establishment and oppositional principles. This requires rendering malleable the establishment principle that the established teleology has petrified.

Putting the onus on Muslims alone to 'fill' the 'ungoverned spaces,' as quoted at the outset of this chapter, overlooks the role of international actors as either directly or indirectly responsible for the outbreak of increasingly violent and capable generations of Salafi-Jihadists. It is, after all, the uneven and incoherent application of the admixture of Westphalian and post-Westphalian 'order' that produced the structural conditions upon which the Islamic State capitalized to produce a proto-state in the first place (Nuruzzaman 2015). The central grievances expressed by the Islamic state and its supporters indicate a keen awareness of regional and international injustices based upon a history of colonialism, corrupt Arab leaderships, and continued Western support for them — militarily, economically, politically, or all of the above. While the brand of violence they use to oppose these grievances are brutal and anathema to regional and international peace, it is important to recognize that their critique of the international order and its imbalances is not mistaken. It should therefore come as no surprise that in the face of a secular world order, religion was brought back as a central organizing principle with Salafi-Jihadists as the 'couriers of religious logic' (Mendelsohn 2012).

Remedying the advance of the Islamic State will undoubtedly require military measures. Bearing in mind that bombing the populations under Islamic State control may produce more rather than less radicalism, halting the ideological advance of the Islamic State will require, as Hayman and Williams are cited above, that we 'realise the ultimate form of the system by a process of incremental strengthening.' One might then consider countering the Islamic State's ideology with a consistent application of our own. In this scenario, delegitimizing the Islamic State's

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dystopian post-Westphalian 'order' requires that the international community (re)formulate and actively practice a coherent doctrine in which the pillars of global democracy and liberal internationalism are prioritized above and beyond realpolitik. We might start, as this chapter suggests, by targeting the most vulnerable people residing in the so-called 'ungoverned spaces' most inclined to produce the territorial, material, and human resources capable of further empowering the Islamic State and its Salafi-Jihadist kin. We might also consider the cadre of foreign fighters hailing from the diverse community of nations as an indication that 'a "clash of civilisations" between Islam and the West is woefully misleading' (Atran 2015). Expounding on the Islamic State's fighters, Atran (2015) avers:

[v]iolent extremism represents not the resurgence of traditional cultures, but their collapse, as young people unmoored from millennial traditions flail about in search of a social identity that gives personal significance and glory. This is the dark side of globalization. Individuals radicalise to find a firm identity in a flattened world. In this new reality, vertical lines of communication between the generations are replaced by horizontal peer-to-peer attachments that can cut across the globe.

Countering the Islamic State's ideology thus requires a better understanding of its adherents' grievances. This includes acknowledging the connections between the destruction wrought by a history of colonialism, illegal and ill-conceived patterns of foreign military intervention, the continued support for dictatorial regimes through direct or indirect military armaments, and the deleterious promotion of neoliberal economic policies that further dependency relationships and thwart local and regional forms of economic sustainability and cooperation. All of these contribute to the self-fulfilling prophecy of 'clashing civilizations' and world (dis)orders that serve to perpetuate the legitimacy, power, and functionality of the counter-order upon which the Islamic State bases its religious, political, and moral claims. Conceiving of non-military medium-term and long-term solutions to the Islamic State's challenge means not only looking forward to consider how the international community can buttress domestic and regional advancements in democracy and stability through 'incremental strengthening' of commitments to the utopian variant of Westphalia. It also means reflecting back upon the historical prioritization of stability over democracy endemic to Westphalia's shifting and uneven conceptualization and application.

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