Edmund Burke and International Relations

The Commonwealth of Europe and the Crusade against the French Revolution

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> If I had but one hour to live, I would employ it in decrying this wretched system, and die with my pen in my hand to mark out the dreadful consequences of receiving an arrangement of Empire dictated by the despotism of Regicide to my own Country, and to the lawful Sovereigns of the Christian World.[139]

His solution is a crusade on the part of Christian sovereigns to protect the legitimacy, property and religion of Europe from anarchy and atheism. "It is not the Cause of Nation against Nation", he avows, but "the cause of mankind against those who have projected the subversion of that order of things under which our part of the world has so long flourished." Indeed, Burke defines the stake of this contest as the "Cause of Humanity itself".[140]

To meet the social and transnational challenge of the Revolution, Burke proposes a war of an entirely new kind. "We must walk in new ways," he entreats, "or we can never encounter our enemy in his devious march."[141] In the process, however, his former affinity with constitutionalism seems to disappear: "In a cause like this, and in a time like the present, there is no neutrality . . . They who are not actively . . . against Jacobinism, are its partisans."[142] The consequences of this crusading disposition for the traditional rules of international relations – particularly the principle of nonintervention and the laws of war – are the subject of the following chapters.

5 Interventionism

Given Burke's characterisation of the contagious revolutionary disease, it follows that his remedy for dealing with it condemns the neutrality and nonintervention espoused by his British contemporaries. "However unexceptionable Burke may have found these maxims as guides to the conduct of international relations in fair weather," Vincent observes, "he thought the French Revolution made nonsense of them."[1] For Burke, the Revolution has an exemplary power which explodes geographical limits. Thus, as this chapter will argue, he believes it cannot be overthrown solely from within France. Instead, an intervention must be launched by Britain and its continental allies to prevent its contagion from undermining the Commonwealth of Europe. Furthermore, because Burke perceives the Jacobins as inaugurating a *civil war* in Europe, he insists that his counterrevolution is not a *foreign* invasion, but rather a crusade by neighbouring sovereigns on behalf of their beleaguered brethren.

This chapter outlines Burke's policy of intervention as it develops from the winter of 1791, through the outbreak of hostilities on the continent in 1792, to the declaration of war against Britain in February of 1793. In contrast to Pitt's Ministry, he supports military intervention very early on as the best remedy for the revolutionary disease. Second, Burke's arguments in favour of armed force are synthesised into three main theoretical justifications for intervention: the right of preventive war; the right of intervention in civil conflict; and the Laws of Vicinity and Neighbourhood. In the process, Burke's thoughts on intervention are related to other aspects of his international theory, such as his views on state sovereignty and international legitimacy, to show how they form a part of his overall conception of international order.

BURKE'S CAMPAIGN FOR INTERVENTION

The Prelude to the Continental War

While Burke's war against the Revolution on the domestic front is already well under way by early 1790, his advocacy of armed intervention against France does not begin in earnest until after the

completion of the *Reflections*. His private correspondence from January 1791 onward reveals a growing preference for this solution as the only one capable of fighting off the contagion of radicalism. As he writes to a French émigrée, the Comtesse de Montrond:

> Alas! Madam, it is not to me, or to such services as can come from me, that the persecuted honour of France must apply. Nothing more can be said. Something must be done. You have an armed Tyranny to deal with; and nothing but arms can pull it down.[2]

In short, there is a limit to what the reasoning power of private individuals such as he can accomplish. "Nothing else but a foreign force can or will do", he avows. "Nor is it a small military force that can do the business. It is a serious design, and must be done with combined strength."[3]

Burke more clearly indicates his scepticism for "internal Remedies" in a letter to Britain's foreign representative at Turin, John Trevor:

> I cannot persuade myself that any thing whatsoever can be effected without a great force from Abroad. The predominant faction is the strongest as I conceive, without comparison. They are armed. Their Enemies are disarmed and dispersed. The Army seems hardly fit for any good purpose. But the grand point against all interior attempts, is that the faction are in possession. Unless it be taken by surprize, as the last French Monarchy was, it is not easy by conspiracy or insurrection to overturn any Government.[4]

The longer the Jacobin faction survives, he continues, "the more it obtains consistency . . . and the less the people . . . will be disposed to any enterprizes for overturning it." Hence, it is up to France's neighbours "to act in concert, and with all their forces" in a campaign for the restoration of the *ancien régime*.[5]

Burke's *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, written in January of 1791, gives public expression to these private suspicions that France's salvation has to come from abroad. After recounting the difficulties facing the counter-revolutionary French "patriots", Burke states:

> This power, to such men, must come from *without*. It may be given to you in pity: for surely no nation ever called so pathetically on the compassion of all its neighbours. It may be given by those neighbours on motives of safety to themselves. Never shall I think any country in Europe to be secure, whilst there is established, in the very centre of it, a state (if so it may be called) founded on principles of anarchy . . . The princes of Europe, in the beginning of this century, did well not to suffer the monarchy of France to swallow up the others. They ought not now, in my opinion, to suffer all the monarchies and commonwealths to be swallowed up in the gulph of this polluted anarchy. They may be tolerably safe at present, because the comparative power of France is little. But times and occasions make dangers. Intestine troubles may arise in other countries. There is a power always on the watch, qualified and disposed to profit of every conjuncture, to establish its own principles and modes of mischief, wherever it can hope for success.[6]

In this passage, one can find the germ of all subsequent arguments made by Burke regarding the need for outside intervention. First, while the other European powers might pity France, Burke insists that the real motive for their combined action must have collective interests at heart: the preservation of European order, founded on principles of dynastic legitimacy. This order is under assault not from the force of French arms, but from the subversive doctrine disseminated by the Revolutionaries. And second, while the danger may not be immediate or obvious, Burke entreats France's neighbours to strike *before* an actual armed assault occurs.

To Burke's chagrin, Britain and her continental allies do not seem to appreciate the gravity of the French threat that he outlines above. Instead, they continue "contending with each other about points of trivial importance, and on old, worn out principles and Topics of Policy. . . ."[7] For Burke, however, all other conflicts are "child's play"[8] in comparison with the Revolutionary crisis facing Europe. If intervention could be justified on behalf of the Ottoman Empire – "a barbarous nation . . . in eternal enmity with the Christian names" – then surely Europe could "employ the same power, to rescue from captivity a virtuous monarch (by the courtesy of Europe considered as Most Christian)."[9] As we shall see, the "blindness of the States of Europe",[10] and their lack of enthusiasm for counter-revolution, is a consistent source of frustration for Burke in the years to follow.

Burke's growing concern over the need for intervention reaches a climax with the Parliamentary Debate on the Quebec Bill in May, 1791. During this debate, Burke condemns the democratic principles of the French Republic by underscoring their subversive potential. The Revolutionaries in France, he proclaims, are "as much disposed

to gain proselytes as Louis 14th had been to make conquests."[11] Furthermore, he intimates that this menacing posture gives other European states an implicit right to take precautionary measures. In Burke's mind, the social and doctrinal aspects of the Revolution are sufficiently ominous to warrant such preventive action. Nevertheless, he also warns his fellow parliamentarians of the possible translation of Revolutionary ideas into traditional armed force:

> Let it be remembered, that there were 300,000 men in arms in France, who at a favourable moment might be ready to assist that spirit; and though there might be no immediate danger threatening the British constitution, yet a time of scarcity and tumult might come, and in such case it was certainly safer and wiser to prevent the consequences, than to remedy the evil.[12]

For Burke, then, "the present was the the moment for crushing this diabolical spirit".[13]

During the spring and summer of 1791, indications that the monarchs of Europe might heed Burke's advice began to appear. On July 6, Marie Antoinette's brother, the Emperor of Austria, issued the Padua Circular and called for combined action against the Revolution to restore the liberty of the French royal family.[14] This sentiment culminated in the famous Declaration of Pillnitz (August 27), in which Prussia and Austria appealed to all European sovereigns to join together to consolidate the bases of monarchical government in France.[15]

Burke's hopes for counter-revolution were raised by these declarations and by the visible signs of military preparation among the émigré community in Coblenz. The Prince de Condé had assembled troops on the frontier with France, with the King of Sweden pledging reinforcements and guidance, and the Austrian Netherlands hinting at the possible use of their border troops for an invasion. Buoyed by these rumours, Burke sends a letter to Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, Condé's military adviser, offering advice on the proper size, composition and mission of the émigré forces. In particular, Burke recommends that the army be composed predominantly of those who can speak French.[16] This stipulation reflects Burke's desire to portray the interventionist forces as liberators rather than conquerors:

> Le Manifeste devroit être court mais satisfaisant – 'Qu'on n'entre point come Ennemis, mais comme Alliés et Amis – pour rendre au Roi sa liberté – remettre l'ordre, la paix (*ou tranquillité*) et l'affluence – pour donner vigeur aux Loix et sûreté à la proprieté. . . .[17]

It is Burke's hope that the counter-revolutionaries will be received not as foreigners, but as friendly European neighbours.

That same summer, Calonne visited London to request from the British Government a declaration of support for armed intervention in France. When his appeals failed to persuade Pitt's Ministry, Calonne approached Burke.[18] Following this interchange, Burke's son Richard was sent to Coblenz to meet with the émigrés and assist in the promotion of a military alliance for intervention.[19]

In subsequent correspondence with his father, Richard reports on the progress of the counter-revolutionary campaign. But while Richard speaks favourably of the military preparations at Coblenz, he raises doubts about the receptivity of the King and Queen of France to such outside assistance. In particular, he questions their acceptance of the new constitution and their apparent willingness to negotiate with the Feuillants.[20] Angered by the contents of Richard's messages, Burke drafts an impassioned letter to the Queen of France, urging her to refrain from associating with any domestic forces in France: "The greatest powers in Europe are hastening to your rescue. They all desire it. You can never think that a time for surrendering yourself to Traitors along with the rights of all the sovereigns allied to you, and whose Cause is involved in yours."[21] For Burke, it is not only the fate of a particular King and Queen which hangs in the balance, but the fate of all monarchs in Europe: "This is not the Cause of a King, but of Kings; not the Interest of the French Nation but of all nations; Not the Business of this time, but what must decide on the Character and of course on the happiness of many Generations. The K. of F. cannot annihilate the monarchy. He holds his power in Trust."[22] These excerpts echo the earlier assertion that Burke regards monarchical government as a permanent political and social component of the Commonwealth of Europe – the very basis of international legitimacy – and as something much larger than the individuals who may temporarily comprise it.

In September, alarmed by Richard's reports that the European powers were refusing to act without a sign of British acquiescence in the aims of Pillnitz,[23] Burke launches a strong appeal to Pitt's Ministry for a more forthright declaration of support for intervention. In the process, he dismisses the government's strategy of using solely

domestic policy to counteract the spread of radicalism: "Very little can be done *at home* in my opinion . . . the root of the Evil is *abroad*; and the way to secure us at *home* is to deprive mischievous factions of the *foreign* alliances."[24] Surveying the landscape of European politics, Burke suggests that the present state of Europe affords a golden opportunity for intervention: "All its powers are . . . indisposed to this French System. A few months may change a situation and dispositions so rarely found and combined."[25] In Burke's opinion, the time has come for Britain to assume the leadership of the anti-revolutionary coalition.

The Ministry's reply reiterated "the line of the British Government to adhere to an honest and fair neutrality . . . on the Subject of French affairs."[26] As a consequence, Burke intensifies his lobbying efforts by consolidating his musings on the need for a collective European intervention into one coherent tract. The result is his *Thoughts on French Affairs*, written in December of 1791.[27]

The precipitating event for this work was Louis XVI's forced acceptance of the constitution, and his notification of that acceptance to foreign courts through two diplomatic circulars. Burke sees these actions as unprecedented in diplomatic history, for they give express attention to matters of *domestic* politics. In turn, he argues, they give foreign governments both a right and an obligation to judge the internal affairs of France:

> [The] circumstance of these two notifications, with the observations with which they are attended, do not leave it in the choice of the Sovereigns of Christendom to appear ignorant either of this French Revolution, or (what is more important) of its principles.[28]

For Burke the extraordinary foreign policy practices of the French Directory have inaugurated a new kind of international relations in Europe, where the old rules and procedures no longer apply.

Burke begins his *Thoughts* by establishing a civil war context in France, and outlining the policy options available to Britain in such a legally defined situation:

> She may decline, with more or less formality, according to her discretion, to acknowledge this new system; or she may recognize it as a Government *de facto*, setting aside all discussion of it's original legality, and considering the ancient Monarchy as at an end. The law of nations leaves our Court open to it's choice. We have no direction but what is found in the well-understood policy of the King and kingdom.[29]

In deciding on their course of action, however, British policy-makers must take account of the "*new species*" of government which has overtaken France. "The conduct which prudence ought to dictate to Great Britain," he writes, "will not depend . . . upon merely *external* relations; but, in a great measure also upon the system which we may think it right to adopt for the internal government of our country."[30] In other words, Britain must adjust her policy to meet the transnational effect of revolutionary principles, and their blurring of the traditional distinction between domestic and international politics.

If it is Britain's goal to "assimilate" her government to that of France, Burke continues, then a policy of legal recognition of the new regime in France would naturally follow. Britain could then "wink at the captivity and deposition" of the Prince, and negotiate with the functionaries who act under the new powers in France. As a corollary of this recognition, she would have to eschew all links with the counter-revolutionary community stationed elsewhere in Europe.[31] But while a policy of legal recognition may have served Britain well in past revolutionary situations – those which were limited in both "persons and forms" – Burke alleges that the profound and contagious nature of the changes in France demands a *new* kind of foreign policy. As we have seen, he believes the social revolution in France bears little resemblance to previous revolutions based solely on political change.[32]

Instead, Burke's anxiety over the vulnerability of France's neighbours, coupled with his assessment of the stability of the revolutionary regime in France,[33] leads him to three hypotheses: 1) "that no counter-revolution is to be expected in France from internal causes solely"; 2) "that the longer the present system exists, the greater will be it's strength; the greater it's power to destroy discontents at home, and to resist all foreign attempts in favour of these discontents"; and 3) "that as long as it exists in France, it will be the interest of the managers there . . . to disturb and distract all other governments."[34] In the final analysis, Burke concludes, intervention is the only viable policy available to Pitt and his ministers: "I wind up in a full conviction within my own breast . . . that the state of France is the first consideration in the politicks of Europe, and of each state, externally as well as internally considered."[35]

British Neutrality in the Revolutionary Wars

In the summer of 1792, following the French declaration of war against Austria and Prussia, Burke's crusade for military intervention enters a new and more urgent phase. As he writes to the Abbé de la Bintinaye: "Arms, and I am sorry to say, foreign Arms, must decide your fate."[36] Henceforth, Burke's mission is to convince Pitt's Administration to shift Britain from its stance of neutrality, to abandon any plan to recognise or treat with the French Republic, and to join in the continental campaign. As he writes to Lord Grenville:

> A more mischievous idea cannot exist than that any degree of wickedness, violence and oppression may prevail in a Country, that the most abominable, murderous and exterminatory Rebellions may rage in it, or the most atrocious and bloody tyranny may domineer, and that no neighbouring power can take cognizance of either, or afford succour to the miserable Sufferers.[37]

Nonetheless, such appeals to Pitt and his Ministers continue to go unheeded.[38] In fact, rather than preparing for an eventual war on the continent, the Prime Minister had called for a reduction of the British armed forces, claiming that "there never was a time in the history of this country, when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace".[39] As Ehrman concludes, "few people early in 1792, and certainly very few Members – one is tempted to say no Member except Burke – were prepared to become involved in a war over France".[40] Even the gathering storm clouds of the autumn – the deposition of the monarch, the September massacres, and the French victory at Valmy – did not convince Britain to shift its neutral stance to support Prussia and Austria.[41]

Burke's calls for decisive action against the Revolution from the continental powers also seem to fall on deaf ears. Indeed, he does not confine his criticisms of foreign policy to the British government alone. While Burke welcomes the outbreak of war in 1792, he suspects that the Prussians and Austrians may not share his interpretation of that war as a counter-revolutionary crusade. This suspicion is heightened following the defeat of the Duke of Brunswick at Valmy. For Burke, the Prussian humiliation and subsequent willingness to negotiate with the French regime are fatal blows to the the prospects for a European crusade of restoration: "The United military glory of Europe has sufferd a Stain never to be effaced. The Prussian and Austrian combined forces have fled before a Troop of strolling Players with a Buffoon at their head."[42]

More troubling than the military defeats of Austria and Prussia, however, is the limited scope of their war aims. In the *Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs*, written in November, Burke argues that "the united Sovereigns [had] very much injured their cause by admitting, that they had nothing to do with the interiour arrangements of France".[43] In Burke's eyes, this policy was "in contradiction to the whole tenour of the publick Law of Europe, and to the correspondent practice of all it's States."[44] Though he agrees that there "never were more solid, more substantial, more convincing reasons given for attacking any country"[45] than those offered by the Prussians and the Austrians, he maintains that these Realist pretexts for war do not go far enough. Instead, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria must proceed so as "to secure the Monarchy as principal in the design".[46] For Burke, then, not just any military action will do; it must be a campaign consistent with upholding the pillars of his Commonwealth of Europe.

Although Burke continues to monitor the progress of the continental war, his overriding objective is to persuade politicians at home of the need for British intervention. He therefore concludes his *Heads for Consideration* by asserting that there is no "rational hope of making an impression on France by any Continental powers, if England is not a part, is not the directing part, is not the soul, of the whole confederacy against it".[47] As he laments to the Earl Fitzwilliam:

> [My] greatest dread of all is from the Conduct of the Kings Servants; – who when the very being and principle of the Christian Religion in every nation, the existence of Monarchy in every state in the world, and the whole body of the Laws, institutions, manners and morals, as well as the very groundwork of the publick Law, which held all States, as well as all Societies together are attacked at once, and by the wickedest and most perilous of all Hostilities – think themselves bound to so strange a Neutrality. . . .[48]

While Pitt's Ministers believe that Jacobin principles can "overturn other states" without posing any danger to Britain, Burke insists that both the "*Quality*" of such principles "and the *means* by which they are supported" constitute an immediate threat to the "whole fabrick of the British Constitution".[49]

For those politicians who worry that a move away from neutrality

will disrupt Britain's trade ties with France, Burke has the following reply: "[Should] we be deterred by our wealth from resisting these outrages? ... shall we live in a temporary, abject state of timid ease, to fatten ourselves like swine to be killed tomorrow, and to become the easier prey to our enemies?"[50] Those who assume that England can escape the fate which has beset its neighbours, he declares, seem to speak "as if England were not in Europe".[51]

To enhance his argument in favour of intervention, Burke also draws on the traditional Realist desire to protect British interests abroad. In particular, he makes a firm bid for British assistance to Spain, which was in a perilous position after the French victory at Valmy. He contends that "it is as much for the interest of Great Britain to prevent the predominancy of a French interest in that kingdom, as if Spain were a province of the Crown of Great Britain".[52] Preventive action now, he reasons, while Spain "is yet in a condition to act with whatever degree of vigour she may have", is preferable to waiting until she has "received material blows", when we shall have her "wounded and crippled body, to drag after us, rather than to aid us".[53] To wait for the traditional pretext of war is not only theoretically unsound, but practically disastrous as well.

Such pleading on behalf of the Spanish, however, is overshadowed by Burke's concern for Europe as a whole. "[We] must put Europe before us", he proclaims, "which plainly is, just now, in all it's parts, in a state of dismay, derangement and confusion; and very possibly amongst all it's Sovereigns, full of secret heart-burning, distrust, and mutual accusation."[54] In fact, Burke suggests that England is more fit for leadership of this European coalition than any other power, given that she has "less of crossing interest, or perplexed discussion with any of them."[55] Moreover, he adds, only England has the naval capacity to balance that of France. And finally, for any doubting Thomas who remains, Burke tugs on the strings of pure self-interest. If England were to show herself indifferent to a European action against France, he warns, she would have to "look with certainty for the same indifference on the part of these Powers, when she may be at war with that nation".[56]

More important than this Realist case for intervention is Burke's anxiety that Pitt's Administration is severing Britain's deeper connection with European affairs:

> The Ministers by their neutrality ... had broken the continuity and chain of their connexions with the continent ... A universal weakness appeared to me to be the result of that neutrality, which by taking away the connexion with Great Britain, took away the cement which held together all other States.[57]

Thus, it is a *societal* consideration – Britain's role in preserving the foundations of the larger Commonwealth of Europe – which is Burke's primary preoccupation.

In Burke's mind, the French military successes of the autumn of 1792 have simply added a new dimension to British vulnerability. His case for intervention does not hinge on evidence of physical aggression. Consequently, during the Parliamentary debates of December, he recites excerpts from the proceedings of the French National Convention which he interprets as tantamount to a "declaration of war against every government". The Revolutionaries' proclamations against dynastic legitimacy, he argues, are provocative enough to justify a British military response: "He wanted to make the people see that France had already declared war against them, and that the two states might be considered as actually engaged in it."[58] In sum, it was impossible for the British to avoid war "when France had denounced destruction against all the kings of Europe. We were forced, on principles of self-defence, into a confederacy with all the sovereigns of Europe."[59]

BURKE'S THEORY OF INTERVENTION

Burke's support for intervention can be seen not only in the context of the British foreign policy debate of his time, but also as part of his more comprehensive theory of international society, outlined in Part I. As these chapters indicate, Burke adheres to a weak and qualified idea of sovereignty, which elevates the goals of international societal cohesion and order above those of absolute liberty or independence. In addition, because Burke looks beyond the confines of the state to conceive of individuals, groups and states as part of a wider moral domain, he claims that it is permissible to make judgments about, and to take action within, the sovereign realm of another state. And finally, given his solidarist vision of the Commonwealth of Europe, which is sustained by an underlying social and cultural homogeneity, he believes the powers of Europe have not only a right, but "an indispensable duty"[60] to counteract forces of disorder within any of its parts. It is from these aspects of his international theory that

Burke builds his case for intervention against the French Revolution. As the following section will demonstrate, he maintains that such intervention should not be conceived as a *foreign* action, but as part of a larger, European civil war.

In the course of his writings and speeches, Burke uses three main theoretical arguments to justify intervention in the affairs of the French state. The first is the pretext of preventive war, derived from his understanding of the relationship between intervention and the balance of power. The second is the right of intervention in civil conflict, which stems from his reading of eighteenth century international law. The third moves beyond existing conventions of the law of nations and applies the civil law notions of Vicinity and Neighbourhood to the war raging within the Commonwealth of Europe.

Preventive War and the Balance of Power

Burke's promotion of intervention can be interpreted as an extension of his particular views on the balance of power. As M.S. Anderson explains, war and intervention were considered by many eighteenth century theorists and politicians to be legitimate means of maintaining the balance, despite prevailing norms concerning state sovereignty and non-interference: "If the balance were [an] overriding good, it followed that lesser goods, however desirable in themselves, must be sacrificed if necessary for its preservation."[61] In fact, minor revisions of the existing equilibrium often required war or intervention and were accepted as part of the balance of power system.[62]

There were two main sources for this hierarchical relationship between the balance of power and the principle of nonintervention. The first was the common tendency among thinkers of the eighteenth century to describe the balance of power as something which ought actively to be sought, as opposed to a phenomenon which was spontaneously generated.[63] The second was the lingering fear of universal monarchy. As Michael Walzer remarks, when eighteenth century leaders intervened in response to a state's sudden acquisition of power, "they thought they were defending, not national interest alone, but an international order that made liberty possible throughout Europe".[64]

Burke's thinking on the balance of power draws on both of these logics. First, as Part I illustrated, Burke conceives of the balance of power in normative rather than mechanistic terms, and describes the existing equilibrium among European states as the result of prudent

collective management. As he sees it, Britain's true interpretation of the balance of power is not a laissez-faire policy of nonintervention, but rather a conscious and vigilant commitment to the common defence of Europe.[65] Indeed, he insists that such cases of intervention "fill half the pages of history".[66] In particular, he refers to the "several Treaties of Guarantee to the Protestant Succession" which "affirm the principle of interference" and which form "the basis of the public Law of Europe".[67] In Burke's perspective, Britain owes its laws and its liberties – and King George "the Throne on which he sits" – to a timely and well-placed policy of interference.[68]

Second, Burke asserts that prudent balance of power politics may require intervention to combat not only *de facto* aggression, but also an "imminent threat" of attack. He finds support for this notion in Vattel's statement that wherever there is a "Nation of a *reckless and mischievous* disposition", all other states "have a right to join *in order to repress, chastise, and put it ever after out of its power* to injure them".[69] Hence, Burke concludes that established international law allows for intervention not only in self-defence against injury received, but also in cases of hostile intention. In his interpretation, the interference of the revolutionaries in the affairs of neighbouring states, coupled with the bellicose foreign policy posture of the French regime, clearly justifies such preventive action.[70]

Burke then extends the sanctioning of preventive intervention to encompass political and social as well as military threats. He does so by analysing a further extract from Vattel:

> If there be any that makes an open profession *of trampling Justice under foot, of despising and violating the right of others,** wherever it finds an opportunity, *the interest of human society will authorize all others to unite, in order to humble and chastise it*... To form and support an unjust pretention, is to do an injury *not only to him who is interested in this pretension, but to mock a justice in general, and to injure all Nations.*[71]

From this passage, Burke reasons that while a principle of nonintervention exists in international law, there is both a right and a *duty* on the part of members of international society to respond to those who violate the rights of others. For him, that violation need not come in the form of "formidable forces" – i.e., an overt military threat – but may also exist in the form of "pernicious maxims" – i.e., a challenge to existing conceptions of international legitimacy.[72] In his theory, the Revolutionary maxim of popular sovereignty is sufficiently

dangerous to mobilise other European states. Thus, the commitment on the part of his fellow countrymen to wait for physical evidence of danger is for Burke tantamount to leaving Britain as a "sitting duck".

Intervention in Civil Conflict

Choosing the Just Side

While Burke clearly acknowledges the legitimacy of intervention in certain instances, he insists that a state does not have an *abstract* right of intervention which can be delineated by absolute rules. As with all matters of politics, he remarks, circumstances are "perpetually variable". Any policy of intervention must continually attend to context and consequences:

> It depends wholly on this, whether it be a *bona fide* charity to a party, and a prudent precaution with regard to yourself, or whether under the pretence of aiding one of the parties in a nation, you act in such a manner as to aggravate its calamities, and accomplish its final destruction. In truth it is not the interfering or keeping aloof, but iniquitous intermeddling, or treacherous inaction which is praised or blamed by the decision of an equitable judge.[73]

It is not intervention *per se* which must be evaluated, but rather the nature, aims and effect of any particular interventionist action. Rather than holding to a steadfast maxim, Burke prefers to judge each case on its merits.

As in the case of preventive war, Burke's treatment of civil conflict draws on the writings of the established international jurists.[74] The notes which accompany his *Thoughts on French Affairs* reproduce Vattel's statement that whenever "a civil war is kindled in a state, foreign powers may assist that party which appears to them to have justice on their side".[75] Extrapolating from Vattel, however, Burke suggests that this legal maxim allows "abundant liberty for a neighbour to support *any* of the parties according to his choice".[76] In other words, he does not limit the "just side" to the forces of rebellion. As a result, Burke pays particular attention to Vattel's assertion that "*he who declares FOR AN UNJUST AND REBELLIOUS PEOPLE, offends against his duty*" and violates the law of nations.[77] In keeping with his views on reform and revolution, Burke shows little sympathy for subject peoples in situations short of "insupportable tyranny".[78]

Thus, in his analysis of the civil war in Revolutionary France, Burke extends Vattel's right of intervention to the benefit of the *ancien*

régime rather than the Jacobin rebels. In a letter to his son Richard, Burke shows how careful manipulation of the policy of recognition can lend assistance to this Royal cause in the French civil war:

> [All] the alliances with France are with the King, and suppose a monarchy the legal Government of their Country. Above all they ought to be highly cautious how they acknowledge this National assembly or call it by any other Name than that part of the King's subjects who are in Rebellion against him. . . .[79]

Provided there is no recognition by outside powers of the National Assembly as a legitimate government, and provided the revolutionaries continue to be treated as rebels, European states can freely and legally intervene on behalf of the King.

To answer his noninterventionist critics in the House of Commons, such as Charles Fox, Burke alleges that his policy of aiding the forces of the *ancien régime* is completely consistent with historical and legal precedent. Fox and his compatriots, he explains, have confused the law of nations by failing to differentiate between two kinds of interference: 1) stirring up dissension in another country; and 2) taking part in a civil war already commenced:

> In the first Case there is undoubtedly more difficulty than in the second, in which there is clearly no difficulty at all. To interfere in such dissensions requires great prudence and circumspection, and a serious attention to justice and to the policy of one's own Country, as well as to that of Europe. But an abstract principle of public law, forbidding such interference, is not supported by the reason of that law, nor by the Authorities on the Subject, nor by the practice of this Kingdom, nor by that of any civilized nation in the World.[80]

This distinction enables Burke to support collective intervention against the Revolution as a legitimate action to preserve the Commonwealth, while opposing the activity of French cabals in neighbouring states as a contravention of the conventions of European order.

The European Civil War

While Burke endeavours to demonstrate the legality of intervention in France within the terms of the existing law of nations, he also moves beyond conventional interpretations of civil war and the right of intervention when arguing for his crusade against the Revolution.

For Burke, the former case of intervention cited above – Jacobin conspiracy – is a matter of unlawful subversion in the affairs of a sovereign state. The latter – intervention by the European powers against the Jacobin regime – is an actual state of war, not against the French *state*, but against a revolutionary *faction* which has thrown all of Europe into civil turmoil. Consequently, a campaign by the European powers on behalf of the French monarchy does not constitute foreign intervention; instead, it is a legitimate act of assistance within the broader parameters of the Commonwealth of Europe. To back up this thesis, Burke again invokes Vattel's description of Europe as "a kind of Republick", whose members are united in the "maintenance of order and liberty".[81]

In Burke's mind the French revolutionaries have inaugurated a civil war in Europe, dividing it into the forces of order and forces of rebellion. The forces of order, in whatever states they happen to find themselves, must join together to defend the monarchical status quo which is under siege in France. He turns to historical precedent to argue that supporters of the *ancien régime* should be characterised not as external invaders, but as friends coming to the aid of a neighbouring Prince: "Foreign Powers have hitherto chosen to give to such wars as this, the appearance of a civil contest, and not that of an hostile invasion."[82] As examples, he cites German assistance to the Protestant Princes, English support for Henry IV, and English and Dutch intervention to support Charles VIth of Spain.[83]

This crusade on behalf of European thrones, Burke contends, is also implicitly endorsed by Vattel. While the latter proclaims the principle of nonintervention, he adds that this rule does not preclude states "from espousing the quarrel of a dethroned King, and assisting him, if he appears to have justice on his side".[84] In addition, Burke interprets Vattel's musings on the subject of Alliances as asserting a duty of European monarchs to support their fellow sovereigns. When asked whether an alliance subsists with a King who has suffered revolution, Vattel replies: "the King does not lose his quality merely by the loss of his kingdom. *If he is stripped of it unjustly by an Usurper, or by rebels, he preserves his rights, in the number of which are* his alliances."[85] By way of example, Burke refers to the 1717 Treaty of Triple Alliance between France, England, and Holland, which stipulates that if "the kingdoms, countries, or provinces" of any of the Allies are disturbed by rebellion or threats to their successions, "the Ally thus in trouble shall have full right to demand of his Allies the succours above-mentioned."[86] An intervention in support of the *ancien régime*, Burke maintains, is in the same spirit as this monarchical guarantee.

In his *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies*, Burke returns to this theme of the right and duty of European sovereigns to assist one another in the maintenance of their domestic authority. In fact, he seems to suggest that the pretext of preserving thrones is somehow more noble than all other justifications for intervention in France. "No considerate Statesmen", he states, "would undertake to meddle with it upon any other condition."[87] It is on the rock of international legitimacy, then, that Burke's penultimate rationale for intervention rests:

> The Government of that kingdom is fundamentally Monarchical. The publick law of Europe has never recognized in it any other form of Government. The Potentates of Europe have by that law, a right, an interest, and a duty to know with what government they are to treat, and what they are to admit into the federative Society, or in other words, into the diplomatick Republick of Europe. This Right is clear and indisputable.[88]

For him, the monarchical form of government is a defining principle of international legitimacy and a fundamental pillar of order in European international society.

Burke's Interventionism and International Law

As the above treatment of preventive intervention and civil war shows, Burke consistently seeks endorsement for his ideas from the current writings and practice of international law. Indeed, the legal language of crime and punishment is a frequent feature of his writings and speeches. Despite the homage paid to eminent jurists, however, it can be argued that Burke is making selective use of international law to rationalise his crusading position. This extrapolation can be illustrated through a closer examination of the writings of Grotius and Vattel on the Just War.

As Hersch Lauterpacht indicates, the works of Grotius vehemently deny the right of preventive war in the interests of maintaining the balance of power.[89] For Grotius, the *possibility* of being attacked did not confer the *right* to attack. Before that right could be justified, there had to be evidence of not only an adversary's power, but also its "animus". In his words: "fear with respect to a neighbouring power is not a sufficient cause."[90] In addition, as Hedley Bull suggests, in

Grotius' time "the concept of the balance of power had not yet achieved the prominence it was to attain early in the next century . . . Grotius makes no mention of the balance of power, and his clear rejection of the concept of preventive war is at loggerheads with balance of power thinking."[91]

Finally, while Grotius does advocate "collective" enforcement of the law of international society, the injuries which justify this right must be "excessively" dangerous to the law of nature, involving abhorrent acts such as cannibalism or piracy.[92] It would therefore seem that his ideas do not give credence to Burke's collectivist crusade against the spread of French revolutionary principles.

Similarly, though there is compelling evidence that Vattel supports some forms of preventive war, his language does not give licence to the kind of offensive envisaged by Burke. Throughout his treatise, Vattel is predisposed to honour the Grotian precept that a "just" cause must be one of self-defence. As a result, he claims that if one nation is perceived to be too strong, other states have the right to form a *defensive* alliance against it.[93] Furthermore, as Walzer points out, Vattel opposes the maintenance of standing armies for the eventuality of an armed attack and denounces any tendency to assume the malign intentions of one's neighbours. Hence, after applying his criteria for a just preventive action – "signs of injustice, rapacity, pride, ambition, or of an imperious thirst of rule" – Vattel condemns the Allied action against Louis XIV during the War of Spanish Succession as "too suspicious".[94]

Turning to Vattel's writings on intervention in civil war, the same charges of selective interpretation can be levelled at Burke. While Vattel recognises the right to intervene on the 'just' side of a civil war, this right is not considered immediate or automatic. Vattel is adamant that in situations of civil war it is illegitimate for foreign powers to decide between citizens who have taken up arms, or between the sovereign and his subjects. Only when the interposition of good offices has failed can other states "decide for themselves the merits of the case, and assist the party which seems to have justice on its side".[95] This requirement accords with Vattel's more general proposition that force is justified only if peaceful means of redress have been exhausted.[96]

Burke's use of Vattel to sanction intervention on behalf of embattled Monarchs is equally problematic. In the same passage on Alliances quoted above, Vattel reminds his readers that an ally of a state "is not its Judge". "If the nation has deposed its King", he writes, "to

oppose these domestick regulations, by disputing their justice or validity, would be to interfere in the Government of the Nation, and to do it an injury."[97] More importantly, he insists that outside states cannot wage an "eternal war" on behalf of a fellow sovereign: "After having made ineffectual efforts to restore him, they must at length give peace to their people, and come to an accommodation with the Usurper, and for the purpose treat with him as with a lawful Sovereign."[98]

There are, to be sure, ambiguities in Vattel's thought which could give rise to such extrapolation.[99] Nonetheless, Vattel's pluralist society of states is ultimately too weak to extract such extensive rights and duties of intervention from it. As Kingsbury and Roberts explain: "While there was agreement on certain principles of order, such as a balance of power system to preserve equilibrium and state independence, this agreement did not extend to the enforcement of law or of more elaborate principles of justice or cooperation."[100] As demonstrated in Chapter 3, while Vattel is notable for advancing the existence of an international society, with rules of conduct for its members, the cornerstone of his system is the liberty and autonomy of states, derived from their natural equality.[101] His principle of non-intervention reflects an unwillingness to sacrifice this autonomy to a more rigid enforcement of societal rules.[102] Thus, while he is prepared to condone intervention in certain cases, such as maintaining the balance of power or aiding the just side of a civil war, his basic predilection remains one of nonintervention.[103]

Burke's willingness to sacrifice state sovereignty must therefore be seen as diverging from the international norms set down by jurists such as Vattel. As shown in Part I, his conception of European international society differs from Vattel's pluralist vision. In the end, Burke's crusade for preventive and legitimist intervention against the revolutionaries places him outside the Just War framework established by the international lawyers and distances him further from his former constitutionalist position.

The Laws of Vicinity and Neighbourhood

Given Burke's solidarist vision of international order and his depiction of the contagious French revolutionary threat, it is hardly surprising that his crusade for intervention explodes the prevailing norms of international law. As a result, he turns to a final theoretical justification for intervention. To further develop his argument that the

revolutionaries have inaugurated a *civil war* in Europe, Burke invokes the Roman law notions of Vicinity and Neighbourhood. In his later work, *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, he relies on these concepts of civil jurisprudence, rather than on the more conventional precepts of international law, to justify military intervention to restore the *ancien régime*. This preoccupation with things domestic coincides with his mounting anxiety over the survival of the old European order, and his frustration with the 'ordinary' procedures of international relations in combatting the transnational revolutionary forces of subversion. In his estimation, the traditional distinction between domestic and international politics is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

The Law of Vicinity, Burke explains, refers to the rights and duties which arise from the circumstance of connectedness:

> Distance of place does not extinguish the duties or the rights of men; but it often renders their exercise impracticable. The same circumstance of distance renders the noxious effects of an evil system in any community less pernicious. But there are situations where this difficulty does not occur; and in which, therefore, these duties are obligatory, and these rights are to be asserted.[104]

As we have seen, Burke frequently asserts this phenomenon of vicinage for the members of his European Commonwealth: "France, by it's mere geographical position, independently of every other circumstance, must affect every State of Europe; some of them immediately, all of them through mediums not very remote."[105] By virtue of not only geography, but also history, religion, and common custom, what happened in France necessarily had an impact on other powers in Europe.

The accompaniment to vicinage is the Law of Neighbourhood:

> When a neighbour sees a *new erection*, in the nature of a nuisance, set up at his door, he has a right to represent it to the judge; who, on his part, has a right to order the work to be staid; or if established, to be removed . . .[106]

Burke goes on to apply this maxim of domestic civil law to the condition between the sovereign states of Europe:

> Now where there is no constituted judge, as between independent states there is not, the vicinage itself is the natural judge. It is, preventively, the assertor of it's own rights; or remedially, their avenger. Neighbours are presumed to take cognizance of each other's acts. . . . This principle, which, like the rest, is as true of nations, as of individual men, has bestowed on the grand vicinage of Europe, a duty to know, and a right to prevent, any capital innovation which may amount to the erection of a dangerous nuisance. . . .[107]

In essence, therefore, Burke sees Revolutionary France as answerable to the larger neighbourhood of Europe, and compares armed intervention against the revolutionaries to a civil lawsuit. "What in civil society is a ground of action," he writes, "in politick society is a ground of war."[108]

Nevertheless, honouring Burke's own views about circumstance, this discussion of Vicinity and Neighbourhood should not be read as granting an abstract or unconditional right of intervention. Rather, it should be seen in the context of the uniquely revolutionary situation facing Europe in the 1790s. War for Burke remains a "serious matter". It should only be contemplated in response to "an aggregate of mischief" and clear "traces of design". "When all these circumstances combine", he remarks, "the duty of the vicinity calls for the exercise of its competence; and the rules of prudence do not restrain, but demand it."[109]

In Burke's mind, these criteria of "mischief" and "design" were always latent in the Revolution. "Long before their acts of aggression", he argues, the Jacobins "had adopted a body of principles. . . . which was in itself a declaration of war against mankind."[110] The "capital innovation" of the French Revolutionaries, in the form of their subversive doctrine, has activated the right of vicinage for all of France's neighbours in the Commonwealth of Europe. "Whenever our neighbour's house is on fire", he remarks, it is better "to be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident a security."[111]

Intervention and International Order

For any international theorist, the willingness to engage in intervention depends on her more general understanding of state sovereignty and international order. As Vincent has noted, observance of the procedural norm of nonintervention does not necessarily exhaust the ingredients for international order. This would only hold true where states are viewed as purely autonomous and self-contained –

as parts of a system rather than a society. "Where this isolation does not obtain", he writes, "but where various degrees of separateness and independence do, the requirements for order are more complex."[112] Hence, the rule of nonintervention will be weighed against competing imperatives. Burke's theory of intervention becomes clearer when set in the context of this larger debate over sovereignty and international order.

The Noninterventionists

Burke's opponents, the noninterventionists, adhere to a "strong sense" of state sovereignty. For them, international society is valuable only insofar as it preserves the independence of its members. As a result, nonintervention is seen as an indispensable feature of international order. This absolutist stance is derived from two possible arguments.

First, in Christian Wolff's formulation, the prohibition on intervention is based on an analogy of the autonomy and equality of states with the autonomy and equality of individuals. In his famous words: "Just as the tallest man is no more a man than the dwarf, so also a nation, however small, is no less a nation than the greatest nation."[113] As with individuals, the natural equality of nations brings with it equal rights and obligations, the most important of which is freedom from interference.[114] Wolff's principle of nonintervention is therefore grounded in his conviction that the sovereign state is a *moral* entity, akin to the individual.

The second, contractarian argument for nonintervention is a liberal one, originating in the ideas of those such as Charles Fox and John Stuart Mill. Here, the state acquires moral value by virtue of its role in protecting the rights and liberties of individuals, which have been transferred to the sovereign through the social contract.[115] Intervention from the outside would infringe upon the autonomy of individuals, since it would suggest that one group of people could impose its ideas of government upon another. Thus, Fox proclaimed that it would be the end of English liberty, if, having made a change in the English constitution, other powers were permitted "to combine and replace what we had rejected, or give us any thing else in its room by fire and sword".[116]

This contractarian approach to nonintervention has been extended in contemporary literature by the communitarian political philosopher Michael Walzer. For liberals such as Mill, sovereignty and nonintervention flow from individual liberties; a state is accorded these rights because it expresses the will of its citizens. Walzer's philosophy, by contrast, is driven by an interest in diversity rather than consent. For him, sovereignty and nonintervention are prized not so much for their protection of individual liberties, as for their protection of individuals *in communities*. In his theory, a state is deserving of such rights even if it does not provide direct political representation for its members, because it expresses an ongoing contract between past, present and future. What is essential is not the degree of individual consent in the contract, but the existence of a viable, historical community.[117]

By comparing Burke's view of international order with the thinkers above, his interventionism is easier to understand. As suggested in Part I, Burke does not share Wolff's tenet of international egalitarianism. Instead, he sees European international society containing an elite of Great Powers which could, and often did, override the independence of 'lesser' members. Furthermore, Burke diverges from Wolff's strong sense of state autonomy. For him, states are not territorially defined black boxes, separate and isolated from each other. Rather, they are arranged horizontally into a Commonwealth of Europe, where the ties which join them are as strong as the forces which divide them. As a result, sovereignty is a relative concept which must be weighed against larger societal obligations.

Nor, alternatively, is Burke committed to a contractarian philosophy – in either of its forms. As shown previously, he perceives the consent-based social contracts of his Enlightenment contemporaries as dangerously temporary and fragile. He sees individuals as part of a continuous, historical society, rather than a "momentary aggregation". Moreover, while Burke's ideas on individual rights, the state and the nation resemble the communitarian notion of contract, his theory of international order does not accord the same prominence to the norm of nonintervention. Where Walzer confines the parameters of his historical community to the sovereign state, Burke casts his net wider. He sees *states*, as well as individuals, as part of a historical community: the Commonwealth of Europe. And within this community, individuals have links to those outside the boundaries of their particular contract.

Burke's theory of international society, which is premised on an underlying homogeneity among its members, resembles more the solidarist vision of the peace theorists than the pluralist conception of the noninterventionists. It is a society of hierarchy, inequality, and interdependence, where sovereignty is a less important ingredient of international order. Consequently, he is prepared to override the

doctrine of reciprocal noninterference, and advance interventionism, if more fundamental components of order are under attack.

The Interventionists

While the noninterventionists hold sovereignty as sacred and indispensable, the interventionists rest their theory of international order on *a priori* assumptions which may necessitate its violation. Unlike the noninterventionists, for whom the character of domestic order is less important,[118] those who favour intervention maintain that the kind of order which exists *within* states is critically important for the order that is achieved *between* them. The norm of nonintervention therefore becomes less valuable in itself, and is left only as a 'gloss' once more fundamental components of order have done their work. In Vincent's words, "If it is the nature of the internal order that ultimately determines the character of international society, then rules about international relations must give precedence to rules about domestic society."[119]

Interventionism is clearly present in the "New Diplomacy" thinking of Burke's Enlightenment contemporaries, such as the French philosophes and Thomas Paine. For them, the principle of nonintervention serves as a slogan for Great Power licence and a shield for autocratic regimes. Lasting international order and peace, they argue, depends not on procedural rules of foreign policy, but on the creation of healthy domestic orders.[120] For Paine, this means spreading the example of the French Revolution, which has abolished monarchical sovereignty and placed power in the hands of "the People". Hence his support for the National Convention's Fraternal Decree and for Lafayette's campaign to stamp out German despotism.[121]

This argument for intervention is also expressed by figures such as Guiseppe Mazzini and Woodrow Wilson. While Mazzini recognises nonintervention as a useful norm for ordering international relations, it can function only *after* a fundamental revision of the international system has taken place to enshrine the principle of self-determination in each of its members.[122] Therefore, he contends that the vehicle of intervention should be used to bring about this doctrinal conformity. In a similar way, Wilson justifies the use of intervention to rid international relations of old-style *Realpolitik* and to "make the world safe for democracy".[123]

As with these thinkers, Burke's interventionism flows from the belief that sovereignty is not an absolute value, but one which must be weighed against other imperatives of international order. For him,

that competing requirement is his substantive view of international legitimacy. Burke construes the Jacobin assault on manners, religion, property and dynastic right as an "act of secession"[124] from European international society. As a consequence, the procedural conventions of that society, such as nonintervention, can be suspended in the name of preserving more critical ingredients of order.

Nonetheless, Burke's crusade to restore the pillars of the *ancien régime* is a conservative version of interventionism. As contended in Chapter 3, while his conception of international legitimacy involves homogeneity, it does not demand the kind of doctrinal conformity enunciated by figures such as Paine or Mazzini. His intervention is in the name of legitimism rather than progressivism.[125]

This conservative interventionism is also exemplified by Metternich, who continues Burke's mission to protect the legitimist order of post-Napoleonic Europe from the upheaval of revolution. Like Burke, Metternich enunciates a vision of international order which is defined internally and well as externally – socially as well as politically. As Ian Clark explains, he sees Europe "not as divided vertically into states but as divided horizontally into rulers, on the one hand, and revolutionists on the other".[126] While his counterpart, Castlereagh, is preoccupied with preserving the external territorial equilibrium achieved at the Congress of Vienna,[127] Metternich hopes to consolidate this balance of power system with a stronger glue: a consensus on internal principles of legitimacy. Hence, in Vincent's words, Metternich adds to the prevailing international political order "a transnational or Europe-wide conception of social order – the European civilization of which the great powers were the custodians."[128]

Thus, there can be a progressive and a conservative abrogation of the norm of nonintervention. Both are based on a conception of international order which holds sovereignty as a relative rather than an absolute value. "In both views," Wight observes, "the independence and separateness of states is less important than the homogeneity of international society, and the inviolability of frontiers is subordinate to the illimitability of truth."[129] Whereas the progressives define that truth as self-determination, Burke defines it as the legitimacy of thrones.

In conclusion, Burke's interventionist campaign against the French Revolution distinguishes him from most of his British counterparts. The latter are concerned primarily with the political independence of states – and the maintenance of order *between* them – rather than with the particular orders *within* those states. As a consequence, they

carefully distinguish between military and social threats, and between the external conduct of states and their internal affairs. For them, revolution is only a *casus foederis* if it proves to be externally aggressive.[130] Burke, however, visualises a stable international order constructed on stable domestic orders. In his mind, statesmen must intervene to address social threats such as revolution, as well as material shifts in power or physical acts of aggression. Because his international theory does not value the principle of nonintervention as fundamental to the preservation of international order, he can temporarily break this convention in the interests of the more substantive assumptions that hold international society together. In this sense, Burke's conception of international order is much more "continental" in character.[131]

6 Holy War

As outlined in the preceding chapters, Burke perceives the French Revolution as an unprecedented event in international history which threatens to destroy the foundations of order in the Commonwealth of Europe. Consequently, when Britain enters the continental conflict in 1793, Burke insists that the struggle it faces is of an entirely new kind. The battle against Revolutionary France, he claims, is not a "common political war with an old recognized member of the commonwealth of Christian Europe".[1] Nor is it being waged for familiar or traditional causes, such as territorial, commercial, or dynastic controversy. Instead, it is a "moral war", dedicated to cleansing Europe of "the evil spirit that possesses the body of France", and to safeguarding the "dignity, property, honour, virtue and religion of . . . all nations".[2] In Burke's perspective, the ordinary means of defence and the procedural institutions of international relations – negotiation, treaty, and the laws of war – have become ineffectual in the revolutionary situation confronting Europe. Only unlimited war, waged by a Grand Alliance of all the European Powers, can halt the spread of the contagion and restore order to European international society.

This chapter will illustrate how Burke's apocalyptic depiction of the revolutionary threat informs his ideas on the conduct of the war against it. In particular, it will examine Burke's critique of Pitt's war strategy, and of his various efforts to secure peace with the French Directory. First, since Burke sees the differences between the two sides as doctrinal rather than material, he reasons that they cannot be settled by conventional diplomatic means or the restoration of the balance of power. In this kind of war, he claims, conflicting interests cannot be settled "by the gain or the loss of a remote island, or a frontier town or two, on the one side or the other."[3] Second, Burke contends that a traditional strategy of defence is doomed to failure, since the war of revolutionary principles operates internally – by corruption and sedition – rather than externally.[4] Instead, Britain and her allies must assume an offensive posture by actively supporting the Royalist factions fighting for ascendancy in France. Moreover, their offensive campaign must incorporate novel instruments of warfare, such as subversion and propaganda. Finally, given the scope and urgency of the danger, Burke entreats the European powers to

contagion to the colonies: "if a single Rock in the West Indies is in the hands of this *transatlantic Morocco*, we have not an hour's safety there." *Ibid.*, p. 99.

114. *Third Letter*, in *WS*, IX, pp. 316–17.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 339.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 383–84.
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 354–55.
118. *Fourth Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 110.
119. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 341. The italics are Burke's.
120. *Third Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 310. Burke focuses much of his fury on the dispersal by English radicals of pamphlets which "publicly avowed doctrines tending to alienate the minds of all who read them from the constitution of their country." See *PH*, vol. 29, 11 May 1791.
121. John Weston, Jr., "Burke's View of History", p. 226.
122. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 341.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
124. Aron, *Peace and War*, p. 101. As a non-religious precedent, Burke harks back to the "Aristocratick and Democratick Factions" which dominated the politics of ancient Greece. Although they differed from religious affiliation, these conflicting "political dogmas concerning the constitution of a Republick" were used by Athens and Sparta to keep "alive a constant cabal and conspiracy in every State" and "were the great instruments by which these leading States chose to aggrandize themselves." *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 343. In the present instance, Burke reasons, France serves as the head of the democratic factions, just as Athens had acted as "the head and settled ally of all democratick factions" in ancient Greece. *Ibid.*, p. 345. As evidence for the presence of these factions in England, Burke refers to the Revolution Society, the Dissenters, and to "all those who hate the Clergy, and envy the Nobility".
125. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 383.
126. Avignon was incorporated into France in September of 1791.
127. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, pp. 362, 354.
128. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 240.
129. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 352. Refer to Chapter 1 for Burke's views on France as the "linch-pin" of the European balance of power.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
131. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 239.
132. *Corr.*, VII, p. 176.
133. *Second Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 289.
134. *Third Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 340.
135. *Second Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 267.
136. *Third Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 339.
137. *Fourth Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 92.
138. *Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs* (1792), in *WS*, VIII, pp. 386–402 (p. 402).
139. *Fourth Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 58.
140. *Corr.*, VII, p. 387.
141. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 193.

142. *Preface to Brissot's Address to His Constituents*, in *WS*, VIII, pp. 500–21 (pp. 519–20).

5. Interventionism

1. Vincent, "Edmund Burke", p. 209.
2. *Corr.*, VI, p. 211.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 217–19.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Letter to a Member*, in *WS*, VIII, pp. 305–06.
7. *Corr.*, VI, p. 242.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
9. *Letter to a Member*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 307. Burke is referring to Prussian action on behalf of the Ottoman Empire in May 1790.
10. *Corr.*, VI, pp. 241–42.
11. PH, vol. 29, 6 May 1791, 371.
12. *Ibid.*, 386.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 386. It was during this debate in the House that the famous breach between Fox and Burke occurred.
14. "It is high time to save our sister", he declared, "and suppress this pernicious French epidemic." Blanning, *op.cit.*, p. 86.
15. For more on this Declaration, see William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 156–57.
16. *Corr.*, VI, p. 258.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 300–01.
19. Cobban, Introduction to *Corr.*, VI, p. xviii. Two schemes emerged from the meeting between Richard and the Comte de Provence at Coblenz. First, an ambassador for the émigrés, the Chevalier de la Bintinaye, was to be sent to England as a formal channel of communication. From September onward, Burke tried to set up meetings between the Chevalier and Pitt's Ministry. (See *Corr.*, VI, 394–96; 431–32). Second, a formal treaty was to be contracted between the exiled princes and King George, with the express aim of re-establishing royal authority in France. (See also MS. Notes at Sheffield, Bk. 10.22)
20. See *Corr.*, VI, p. 339, fn. 1. As Cobban notes, Marie Antoinette had written to the Austrian Emperor on July 30th warning him of the hazards of attempted foreign invasion. See *Ibid.*, p. 348, fn. 4.
21. *Corr.*, VI, pp. 350–51.
22. *Ibid.*, 353.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 377. At Pillnitz, the Austrians and Prussians had qualified their declaration, claiming that they would not commit themselves to action without support from a coalition that included Britain. For its part, Britain kept its distance from the conference at Pillnitz. Indeed, the Declaration was described by Britain's Ambassador at the Hague, Lord Auckland, as "ill-conceived and undignified." (Cited in Blanning,

op.cit., p. 133.) This stance was reiterated by Grenville, the new Foreign Secretary, when he asserted Britain's "most scrupulous neutrality in the French business." (Cited in Ehrman, *op.cit.*, p. 42.)

24. *Corr.*, VI, p. 421–22.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 422. At the very least, Burke demands that the British Government permit Emperor Leopold to withdraw troops from the Austrian Netherlands for use in the campaign against France. *Ibid.*, pp. 400–01.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
27. The *Thoughts* were published posthumously in 1797, as part of the *Three Memorials on French Affairs.* Burke's influence on the ministers was minimal, and they responded to the *Thoughts* with little or no comment. (See *Corr.*, VII, p. 81)
28. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 339.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 340. The spelling of "it's" is Burke's.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 340–41. Here, Burke is particularly concerned with the calls from Fox and his Whig colleagues for recognition of the French regime. Citing historical precedent, Fox would later suggest that the French Republic deserved recognition as much as Cromwell's England or the American Republic. See *PH*, vol. 30, 4 December 1792, 65–67.
32. *Thoughts*, in NS, VIII, p. 341.
33. *Thoughts*, in *WS*, VIII, pp. 362–68. Burke specifically challenges the notion, held in some circles, that because the regime in France was financially unstable, it was unlikely to survive for long. See *Ibid.*, p. 368.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 384–85.
36. *Corr.*, VII, p. 167.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 176–77.
38. One exception to Britain's neutrality was its quick response to calls for independence by the Austrian Netherlands. Nonetheless, British action was aimed not so much at the revolt of the provinces *per se*, but at fears of French control of the Channel. (See Ehrman, *op.cit.*, p. 49.)
39. *PH*, vol. 29, 17 February 1792, 826. This reduction was based on the government's estimate that war was not the most likely outcome of events in Europe. In the East, the danger of conflict seemed to have lessened with the end to the Russo-Turkish War. And in the West, any result could be tolerated provided it did not jeopardise British pre-eminence in the Low Countries. Even if war did break out, France seemed to be in no position to defeat its Austrian or Prussian opponents. (See Ehrman, *op.cit.*, p. 52.)
40. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, p. 53.
41. Not only indifference, but outright contempt, was often shown by the British for the Prussians and the Austrians. In responding to Prussia's failures on the battlefield, Grenville stated: "we had the wit to keep ourselves out of the glorious enterprize . . . and . . . were not tempted by the hope of sharing the spoils in the division of France, nor by the prospect of crushing all democratic principles all over the world." Cited in Ehrman, *op.cit.*, p. 205.

42. *Corr.*, VII, pp. 271–2.
43. *Heads for Consideration*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 392.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *PH*, vol. 30, 28 December 1792, 183.
46. *Heads for Consideration*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 395. As Mitchell explains, the Austrians and Prussians shared Pitt's caution about forging links with the Royalists or the émigrés, for fear of suggesting that Brunswick's army "had the intention of restoring the *ancien régime* in all its aspects. Such an impression was unlikely to win the confidence of moderate opinion within France, whose support might be crucial for the success of the undertaking." See *Ibid.*, p. 393, fn. 2. Blanning also argues that the Austrians and Prussians were motivated more by Realist concerns than ideology. (See *op.cit.*, pp. 120–23.)
47. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
48. *Corr.*, VII, p. 232.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
50. *PH*, vol. 30, 12 February 1793, 386–87. Burke is responding to the speech of the Earl of Lauderdale, who warned parliamentarians of the economic disadvantages of severing the 1786 Anglo-French Commercial Treaty.
51. *PH*, vol. 30, 15 December 1792, 112.
52. *Heads for Consideration*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 390.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Corr.*, VII, p. 309.
58. *PH*, vol. 30, 14 December 1792, 72–73. Burke is responding to the Fraternal Decree of November 19th, in which the French Revolutionaries promise "fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty." (See Doyle, *op.cit.*, p. 199.)
59. *PH*, vol. 30, 15 December 1792, 115.
60. *First Letter on a Regicide Peace*, in *WS*, IX, p. 252.
61. Anderson, "Eighteenth Century Theories of the Balance of Power", pp. 190–91.
62. Wight, "The Balance of Power", p. 103. As Wight notes, wars which modified only a particular distribution of power (e.g. the wars between 1713 and 1792) must be distinguished from those which endangered international order at large, by threatening to destroy the balance altogether (e.g. the French Revolutionary Wars).
63. This distinction between an "automatic" and "contrived" balance of power was set out in Chapter 1.
64. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 76. For a further discussion of the compatibility between intervention and the balance of power, see Stanley Hoffmann, "The Problem of Intervention", *Intervention and World Politics*, edited by Hedley Bull (Oxford, 1984), pp. 7–29.
65. Vincent, "Edmund Burke", p. 209.
66. *Third Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 306.
67. *Corr.*, VII, p. 176.

68. *Ibid.*
69. Appendix to *Three Memorials on French Affairs Written in the Years 1791, 1792, and 1793. By the Late Right Hon. Edmund Burke*, (London, 1797). A series of extracts from Vattel's *Le Droit des Gens*, complete with Burke's annotations, are included in this 1797 edition. The relevant excerpt is from *Le Droit des Gens*, Bk. II, chap. 4, para. 53. The italics are Burke's.
70. In an annotation to the preceding quotation, Burke adds the following list of attempts by the revolutionaries to "raise domestic troubles" as pretexts for intervention: "This the case of France – Semonville at Turin – Jacobin clubs – Liegeois meeting – Flemish meeting – La Fayette's answer – Cloots's embassy – Avignon".
71. Appendix to *Three Memorials* (Bk. II, chap. 4, para. 70.)
72. After the asterisk, Burke provides the following evidence for the violation of right: "The French acknowledge no power not directly emanating from the people."
73. *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies*, in *WS*, IX, p. 474.
74. In his letters to Richard at Coblenz, Burke instructs his son to refer to Vattel's writings concerning the legality of armed intervention. See *Corr.*, VI, p. 317.
75. Appendix to *Three Memorials*. (Bk. II., chap. 4, para. 56.) Here, Vattel is following the lead of Grotius in sanctioning intervention on the "just side" of a civil war. (*De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Bk. II, Chap. xxv, sec. 8.)
76. *Remarks*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 474. (italics mine) Vattel's words in the above passage are directed at assistance for an "oppressed people".
77. Appendix to *Three Memorials*. (Bk. II, chap. 4, para. 53.) The italics and upper case were all inserted by Burke.
78. This qualification would seem to cast doubt on a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, which attempts to extrapolate Burke's views on intervention to argue for external assistance for the Iraqi Kurds. (See *Wall Street Journal*, April 12, 1991, A12.) There is little evidence in Burke for any modern notion of humanitarian intervention.
79. *Corr.*, VI, p. 317.
80. *Corr.*, VII, p. 176. The same distinction had been advanced by Burke fifteen years earlier to justify the involvement of France in the American cause in its war of independence. See Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt*, pp. 115–16.
81. Appendix to *Three Memorials*. (Bk. II, chap. 2, para. 47.) This extract was included by Burke in his Appendix under the heading "System of Europe".
82. *Heads for Consideration*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 394.
83. *Ibid.*
84. Appendix to *Three Memorials*. (Bk. IV, chap. 2, para. 14.)
85. *Ibid.* (Bk. II, chap. 12, para. 196.)
86. *Ibid.* There is a clear parallel here with the federative peace proposals of Saint-Pierre and Penn, discussed in Chapter 3.
87. *Remarks*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 473.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
89. Hersch Lauterpach, "The Grotian Tradition in International Law", p. 37.

90. *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Bk. II, chap. xxii, sec. 5, cited in G.I.A.D. Draper, "Grotius's Place in the Development of Legal Ideas about War", in *Hugo Grotius and International Relations*, pp. 177–207 (p. 195). Thus, for example, Grotius believed the proper response to a neighbour building a fortress was not to resort to arms, but to erect counter-fortifications.
91. Bull, "The Importance of Grotius", in *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.
92. *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Bk. II, chap. xx, sec. 40, cited in Kingsbury and Roberts, Introduction to *Hugo Grotius*, p. 39.
93. *Le Droit des Gens*, Bk. III, chap. 3, para. 50.
94. Walzer, *op.cit.*, p. 79. In his *Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace*, Burke refers to the Wars of the Spanish Succession as a legitimate case of preventive war. (*WS*, IX, pp. 64–65)
95. *Le Droit des Gens*, Bk. III, chap. 18, para. 296.
96. See Brimmer, *Towards a Liberal Theory*, p. 88.
97. Appendix to *Three Memorials*. (Bk. II, chap. 12, para. 196).
98. *Ibid.*
99. These tensions, particularly relating to the obligations of states to obey the precepts of Natural Law, have been illustrated by Brimmer. See *Emer de Vattel*, pp. 18–26.
100. Kingsbury and Roberts, Introduction to *Hugo Grotius*, p. 33. While both solidarism and pluralism posit the existence of an international society, solidarism assumes a basic consensus of states with respect to the enforcement of law, whereas pluralism believes states are capable of agreeing only on certain minimum purposes. See Bull, "The Grotian Conception", p. 52.
101. "De tous les Droits qui peuvent appartenir à une Nation, la Souveraineté est sans-doute le plus précieux, et celui que les autres doivent respecter le plus scrupulesement." *Le Droit des Gens*, Bk. II, chap. 4, para. 54. In this sense, the extracts of Vattel used by Burke are instructive for what they exclude as well as for what they include. This strong statement on nonintervention is not part of the Appendix to the *Three Memorials*.
102. Brimmer, *Towards a Liberal Theory*, p. 88. Vincent presents an opposing view, arguing that Vattel's right of intervention flows from the rights of states as members of an international society, rather than from individualistic notions of state liberty and self-preservation. See *Nonintervention*, p. 290.
103. See *Le Droit des Gens*, Prelimin., para. 15. This more restrictive reading of Vattel is borne out by an analysis of his legal successors. The positivist international lawyers who followed Vattel were even more inclined to favour state liberty over international society, and to deny the legality of collective intervention. See, for example, W.E. Hall, *A Treatise on International Law*, 8th ed., edited by A. Pearce Higgins (Oxford, 1924), pp. 347–48.
104. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 250.
105. *Heads for Consideration*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 386.
106. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 250. Burke's right of vicinage was clearly intended to be a defence against innovation. Ironically, as Wight points

out, it has been incorporated into an innovative doctrine of "racial sovereignty" by the African nationalist writer, Ali Mazrui. Under Mazrui's scheme, colonial territories belong first to their African majorities. If these majorities prove uncertain, they then belong to their African neighbours on the continent. Racial sovereignty therefore renounces the legal fiction that these territories can be considered part of a European metropole. (See Wight, *Systems of States*, pp. 170–71.)

107. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 251. See also Reid, *Edmund Burke and the Practice*, p. 28. As Reid notes, Burke himself was involved in such a civil lawsuit in the summer of 1774, when an "insolent neighbour" claimed the rights to a wooded lane that bounded his farm.
109. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 251.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 260
111. *Reflections*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 60. It is interesting to note that when writing of the duty of sovereigns to assist one another, Emeric Crucé uses much the same imagery: "when you see the house of your neighbour burning or falling, you have a cause for fear as much as compassion, since human society is one body. . . ." Cited in Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, p. 21.
112. Vincent, *Nonintervention*, p. 332. See also Oran Young, "Intervention and International Systems", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1968), pp. 177–88 (pp. 184–85).
113. Christian Wolff, *Jus gentium methodo scientifica pertractatum*, Prolegomena, para. 16, cited in Vincent, *Nonintervention*, p. 27. Vattel makes a similar comparison of states and individuals. See *Le Droit Des Gens*, Prelimin., para. 18.
114. *Jus gentium*, Chap. II, para. 255, cited in Vincent, *Nonintervention*, pp. 27–8.
115. Beitz, *Political Theory*, p. 77. Vattel's theory combines Wolff's argument with this contractarian logic. See *Le Droit des Gens*, Prelimin., para. 18; para. 2.
116. *PH*, vol. 30, 1 February 1793, 304.
117. Brimmer, *Towards a Liberal Theory*, pp. 107–08. Walzer therefore asserts the right of nonintervention for both democratic and undemocratic states. He believes there is a fundamental "match" between populations and their rulers which outside states must respect. See "The Moral Standing of States" in *International Ethics: A Philosophy and Public Affairs Reader*, ed. by Charles Beitz, *et al.* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 217–37 (p. 224).
118. Vincent, *Nonintervention*, p. 341.
119. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.
120. Gilbert, "The New Diplomacy", pp. 13–15. Of particular relevance here are the ideas of Mirabeau, Diderot and Condorcet.
121. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, p. 109.
122. See Vincent, *Nonintervention*, pp. 59–61.
123. Waltz, *op.cit.*, pp. 110–11.
124. Wight, "Western Values", p. 98.
125. This distinction is Vincent's. See *Nonintervention*, pp. 341–47.

126. Clark, *Reform and Resistance*, p. 87.
127. Castlereagh rejected any proposal to wed the European Powers together in an anti-revolutionary Holy Alliance. See Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 36–37. The contrast between Castlereagh and Metternich is best captured by Henry Kissinger in *A World Restored*, Chapters 9–12.
128. Vincent, *Nonintervention*, p. 341.
129. Wight, "Western Values", p. 113.
130. Vincent, *Nonintervention*, p. 75.
131. Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe* (London, 1970), p. 120.

6. Holy War

1. *Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace*, in *WS*, IX, p. 50.
2. *Second Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 264; *First Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 257.
3. *Fourth Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 50.
4. *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in *WS*, VIII, pp. 368–69.
5. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 199.
6. With war expenses and national debt mounting, Pitt's Administration rapidly became disillusioned with war. Accordingly, in October of 1796, Lord Malmesbury was dispatched to Paris to open peace negotiations with the new French Directory. Britain's willingness to negotiate was strengthened by the perceived "mellowing" of the French regime following the fall of Robespierre (July, 1794) and the approval of the new Constitution (August, 1795). See McDowell, Introduction to *WS*, IX, pp. 18–19.
7. MS. Notes at Sheffield, Bk.10.126.
8. *Third Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 340.
9. Here, Burke refers to the 1763 Treaty of Paris, in which Britain obtained Canada, but agreed to restore Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia to France. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
10. *Fourth Letter*, in *WS*, IX p. 70.
11. *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 385.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
13. *Fourth Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 72. Burke does not share the optimism of Pitt's Ministry that the new French Directory may be more amenable to peace than the regime of Robespierre. "It is the old *bon ton* of robbers", he writes, "who cast their common crimes on the wickedness of their departed associates." *Ibid.*, p. 84.
14. *First Letter*, in *Ibid.*, p. 257.
15. *PH*, vol. 30, 12 February 1793, 383.
16. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 216.
17. *Remarks*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 461.
18. *PH*, vol. 30, 18 February 1793, 438.
19. *Remarks*, in *WS*, VIII, p. 465.
20. *Corr.*, VII, pp. 391–92.
21. *First Letter*, in *WS*, IX, p. 208.