



ANDREW BAKER

# CONSTRUCTING A POST-WAR ORDER

THE RISE OF US HEGEMONY  
AND THE ORIGINS OF  
THE COLD WAR

I.B. TAURIS

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the Origins of the Cold War



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*To my Grandmother, Ellen Johnson Liek*

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## PREFACE

I set out, many years ago, to write a multi-archival, interdisciplinary study of the British Commonwealth during and after the Second World War. Little did I know how complex this would prove, particularly at point of presentation. I am going to begin by begging tolerance of my readers: experience suggests that working in a wide range of archives and with a diverse array of material is a good way to open questions, but much more detailed research is necessary before they can be answered with any certainty. It is my hope that this book will generate debate and suggestions for how further investigations might proceed.

Since this is a multi-archival study, I will say a word about abbreviations and notations. A few common ones ('f' for folio, 'p' for page, 'i' for item, 'n' for note and 'col' for column) appear in the footnotes. The only potentially confusing abbreviation is 'BNA' for British National Archives; this is because the BNA calls itself *The National Archive* (or TNA). This study relies on research in many national archives; calling one of them *The National Archive* would be most presumptuous, so I have risked a constitutional crisis and appended 'British' to the front.

I should also say a word about archival citations. In all cases, citations move from general to specific: I do not separate volumes from files, since these are different (or extraneous) in different archives; personal papers all begin with their proper name; specific pages, items or folios are only identified for precisely ordered collections. 'King/

J4/H1517/323, f.277,517' therefore refers to the King Papers, accession J4, reel H1517, volume 323 (meaningless), folio 277,517. Readers should note a few idiosyncrasies. In Australia, the tripartite registry (e.g. 43/735/1) has sometimes been modified in later years by the addition of a 19 (1943/735/1), but not consistently. Researchers must therefore search for both, and I account for this by bracketing the 19. In New Zealand, accessions have been preserved by chronological order of accession, without culling or integrating material. The result has been duplication and inconsistency; it is difficult to dispel a sense of speculation pertaining to material from this archive.

While writing this book, I have incurred very many debts of gratitude to the people and organisations that helped make it possible. My research expenses were borne by the Beit Fund and the Cyril Foster Fund. My studies at Oxford University were made possible by generous grants: the British Government awarded me an Overseas Research Studentship; Oxford University awarded me a Clarendon Fund Bursary, and Christ Church generously provided me an American Friends' Scholarship.

I have completed my research and writing while working for a variety of institutions: Christ Church, the University of Buckingham and the University of Hertfordshire. Helen Boak, John Clarke, Owen Davies, Martin Grossel, Sarah Lloyd, Mike McCrostie, Malcolm Rees, Jane Ridley, Ronald Truman and Linda Waterman were all especially welcoming, supportive and stimulating. I also owe a debt to my undergraduates, who listened to my arguments and identified many (but not, I am sure, all) of the prejudices and stupidities contained therein.

As for research itself, I relied heavily upon the cheerful, ungrudging assistance of library staff and archivists at the Bodleian Library, the (British) National Archive, Churchill College, Cambridge, the University of Birmingham, the University of Durham, the National Archives of Canada, Queen's University, Kingston, the University of Toronto, the National Archives of South Africa, the National Archives of Australia and Archives New Zealand. I would like to specially thank Mr. David Mole, of the Public Record Office, who helped me to correct a series of file endorsements; and Mr. John Mills, of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who advised me

on files retained by the MFAT and those moved into Archives New Zealand.

Many people provided friendly assistance to me along the way. Toni Putter graciously shared his house in Pretoria with me and, along with Clive Stannard, endured my appalling Afrikaans. Rebecca Ploeger put me up in Kingston and introduced me to the uniquely Canadian phenomenon of Tim Hortons. Brian Ball prevented me from wandering unprepared into the Canadian winter. British Airways very kindly permitted me to use the cover image, and I am especially grateful to Mr. Paul Jarvis of the Heritage Centre there.

Many academics have provided valuable advice and criticism on my work. I would particularly like to thank John Dunbabin, Wm. Roger Louis and Adam Roberts, who have read part or all of my work. Chris Bickerton, Barry Buzan, Tim Dunne, Lee Jones, Richard Little, Emily Paddon, Robbie Shilliam and Hew Strachan have all listened to ideas and papers, and provided valuable insights and criticism. My editors at I.B.Tauris, Maria Marsh and Joanna Godfrey, have been a welcome font of advice. Jonathan Wright has been a constant source of warmth, support and wisdom. I owe an especially large debt of gratitude to John Darwin, who has helped shape this project from its conception. Last but not least, I owe a tremendous debt to Rachel for her patience, support and understanding, from beginning to end.

All responsibility for this work is my own.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

ANZ	Archives New Zealand
BNA	British National Archive
BOAC	British Overseas Airways Corporation
COS	Chiefs of Staff
CRP	Committee on Reconstruction Problems (UK)
DAFP	Documents on Australian Foreign Policy
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DCER	Documents on Canadian External Relations
DO	Dominions Office (UK)
ECOSOC	Economic & Social Council (UN)
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
FO	Foreign Office (UK)
FRPS	Foreign Research & Press Service (Balliol)
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GIO	General International Organisation
JPS	Joint Planning Staff (UK)
MSC	Military Staff Committee (for the UN)
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
PHP	Post-Hostilities Planning (Problems, in Canada)
SEC	Social & Economic Council (South Africa)

SSRC South Seas Regional Commission

UN United Nations

UNRRA UN Relief & Rehabilitation Administration

USAAF United States Army Air Force

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# INTRODUCTION

Just as Englishmen had safeguarded themselves against the power of the Crown, not by denying it, but by 'tying the instruments it was to act by'; so now the Canadians set out, not to destroy, but – a subtler task – to harness the sovereign parliament. They led their captivity captive. They so bound imperial sovereignty – a dangerous monster once, but now an amiable, complaisant creature – that it could move, in their business, only at their bidding.<sup>1</sup>

– W.K. Hancock, 1937

This is a book about the origins of post-war order and the expansion of international society. The 'expansion of international society' means the long-term transformation of the global landscape, as a world of empires gave way to a world of states; 'post-war order' explains why the global landscape changed, addressing the political, technological and social advances which describe the political economy of international relations. The structure of post-war order explains America's rise to globalism, the decline of European empires, and the origins of the Cold War. 'Hegemony' broadly defines the role of American power in this new order, a power mediated by and through institutions which protected the position of independent, sovereign states in world affairs.

This argument falls broadly within the revisionist school of post-war historiography, though it must be pointed out immediately that this is not a Marxist history. We may summarise relevant elements of the revisionist position as follows. The United States, like other states, was territorially expansionist and aggressive in the pursuit of

commercial interest. Prior to the Second World War, many American relations were of an imperial character. The United States controlled important networks of territories and bases, including the Philippines, Midway Island, Hawaii, the Panama Canal Zone, and parts of Cuba; it was able to project force with impunity, for instance in Mexico in 1917 or in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933; and it was able to structure affairs in the western hemisphere to suit its global interests, as it did when it created an informal 'dollar bloc' after 1933. Much American 'anti-imperialism' was self-serving, manifesting when other empires impeded American interests. Finally, during the Second World War, the United States sought a post-war order which would give the United States further scope for expansion and development after the war, especially in Europe and the territories comprising the British Empire.

Here is where this book diverges from the core arguments of revisionism. The United States was expansionist, true, but the world was substantially different from the one that Europeans had colonised centuries ago. As America's global presence expanded – especially in the British Empire – and as the United States attempted to develop post-war institutions which would facilitate the pursuit of American interests, they encountered resistance which forced them to alter course in crucial ways. The resistance they encountered was not *military*, which would have been fruitless; rather, it was *normative*, and it was pushed by small, developing states keen to defend a newfound sovereignty.

Broadly speaking, 'norms' are ideas about how things *ought* to be in the world: it may be true that the crooked timber of man never made any straight thing, nevertheless ideals of straightness, of order, justice, reason, continue to serve for many as guiding lights. People generally prefer to act in ways that confirm their beliefs about themselves and the world; normative principles are thus important. How important, especially in international politics, is hotly debated. This is not the place to engage with that theoretical debate, though interested readers might refer to the excellent work by Simon Caney, *Justice Beyond Borders*.<sup>2</sup> What will be discussed here is the way in which material interests and normative principles intersected in particular negotiations and particular outcomes.



A question that naturally follows this discussion of normative principles is how the world's preeminent power was bullied by smaller states; it is hardly the greatest of the ironies of global politics, but it does demand investigation and explanation. For the moment, it suffices to observe that Americans adapted their strategy in global politics to the situation they found. Consequently, Americans moved away from an empire-building strategy on the model of the British Empire, and towards a state-building strategy more closely resembling the British Commonwealth. This is a 'pericentric thesis.' post-war order did not simply emanate from the capitals of a few great powers like London or Washington; rather, post-war order was a process of compromise which developed on the frontiers of power, and particularly in the interaction between great powers and small states like Canada or Australia. Small powers adapted to great power realities, but they also sought to restrain or manipulate or socialise great powers, very often successfully.

This concept of 'socialisation,' of structuring a social relationship defined by certain kinds of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, constitutes a difference with the well-known 'empire by invitation' thesis advanced by Geir Lundestad. In Lundestad's view, the extraordinary post-war expansion of American power may be explained by the invitation extended by small states to the United States to include them in a new American empire.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, Americans were neither isolationist nor reluctant to extend their power in global affairs; nor were small states eager to be incorporated into *any* empire, American, Soviet or British. Small states willingly cooperated with and participated in the expansion of American power precisely because Americans *foreswore* empire, developing relationships on the basis of sovereign equality and respect for international institutions. In this sense, the most important aspect of America's expanding power was not its material character but its normative content; this content, it will be argued, developed out of America's interaction with new states during the war.

In short and quite irrespective of whether Americans were nice people, the power wielded by the United States was always going to be a problem unless relations with America could be ordered in such a way