Sovereignty, intervention, and social order in revolutionary times

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Abstract. This article explores how sovereignty and (non-)intervention are implicated in the (re)production of specific social orders. Sovereignty and the non-interference principle circumscribe 'domestic' politics from 'the international', defining who is legitimately included or excluded from the struggles that determine political and social orders. State managers seek to admit forces and resources favourable to the order they are seeking to create, whilst excluding those deleterious to it. In revolutionary periods, however, these attempts to 'cage' social relations often crumble as transnational forces engage in fierce, multifaceted conflicts overlapping territorial borders. In such circumstances, both norms of non-interference and practices of intervention may be used by dominant forces to help contain the spread of sociopolitical conflict and to strengthen their hand in the struggle to (re)define social order. Sovereignty regimes are thus shaped by the strategies and ideologies of the various social groups locked in conflict at a particular historical moment. This argument is illustrated through the case of Cold War Southeast Asia, where sovereignty and intervention were both used to stabilise capitalist social order and curtail transnational, radical threats from below.

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Introduction

This article advances the central claim of this Special Issue – that intervention coercively mediates contradictions between territorial state sovereignty and transnational social forces – by examining the way sovereignty and intervention are used to manage sociopolitical order during revolutionary historical periods. It concurs that intervention is used to uphold or change order in target states, but also makes two additional arguments. First, sovereignty itself, not merely intervention, is part of the modern 'will to order'. Establishing territorial state sovereignty is not neutral or automatic. By defining an 'inside' and an 'outside', it defines the legitimate scope of sociopolitical conflict, limiting it to a fixed population, excluding other forces as 'external', and demanding that politics be mediated solely through the institutions of the 'nation-state'. Sovereignty is directly implicated in fashioning certain orders whilst disabling others with local or 'transnational' social bases not corresponding to territorial borders. Those pursuing such alternatives have often been violently suppressed, whilst state managers

insist on their sovereign right to 'non-interference'. *Pace* R. J. Vincent, this right protects not merely state sovereignty, and by extension the international states system, but also the *domestic* order that sovereignty enables and defends.[1]

Secondly, intervention is not simply used to manage international order, or domestic order in the *target* state, but also to manage order within the *intervening* state, or elsewhere. Despite state managers' coercive efforts to 'cage' and 'contain' social relations within a 'national' context, transnational social relations persist; consequently, no social order is an island. Political, social, and economic linkages between 'national' orders mean that what happens in one territory may be profoundly influenced by struggles elsewhere. This article focuses on revolutionary periods because they emblematise this societal interdependence. Where state managers perceive that the domestic order they are seeking to create or maintain is threatened by forces transnationally linked to conflicts elsewhere, they may seek to intervene in these conflicts abroad in order to bolster their chances of success at home, and/or to assist allied elites elsewhere. Thus, in the European Concert period, the Holy Alliance intervened to crush liberal-nationalist revolutions in order to prevent them spreading to their own multinational empires; US Cold War interventions, inspired by the 'domino theory', defended capitalist social order globally; and Saudi Arabia's contemporary intervention in Bahrain seeks to neuter the transnational Shia threat to Saudis' despotic regime. Thus, rather than simply being seen as an exception to sovereignty, intervention may actually be used to *complement* it, by containing transnational threats to domestic order.

The article uses a historical-sociological approach, tracing patterns of sovereignty and intervention to struggles between social forces over what sort of political and economic order should prevail. The first section develops the claims above, theorising the strategic functions of sovereignty and intervention for state managers in defining the scope of sociopolitical conflict. The second section illustrates the argument through a study of Cold War Southeast Asia, focusing on the practices of capitalist states. Here, elites struggling to (re)produce national-capitalist orders developed a strong norm of state sovereignty in an effort to dampen inter-elite tensions and strengthen their state-making efforts against radical challenges from below. Moreover, by insisting on 'non-interference' by 'external' forces, elites sought to sever the transnational linkages between their leftist opponents and their fellow travellers abroad, and thereby tilt the balance against them. However, given the transnational strength of communism in the region, elites also felt it necessary to intervene against radical forces beyond their borders to constrain transnational assistance to their domestic enemies. Hence, sovereignty and intervention were combined to defend capitalist social order.

Sovereignty, intervention, and social ordering

This section argues that the creation and maintenance of sovereign statehood and its violation through intervention are never neutral but always advance the interests, agendas, and preferred orders of some social forces over others. Claiming sovereignty and its corollary norm of non-intervention is to define who is included in or

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[1] R. John Vincent, *Non-Intervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 14. See also the introduction to this Special Issue.

excluded from the struggles that determine order within a given space. Sovereignty thereby enables certain political orders – notably, those based upon a fixed territory and population – whilst disabling others – including those based on solidarities over-lapping territorial borders, such as class, ethnicity, and religion. Thus, demands for non-intervention aim not simply to defend state sovereignty, but also the sociopolitical order it enables and upholds. Interventions are similarly partisan because they change the balance of forces struggling for power within a political community. Regimes of sovereignty and intervention should thus be traced to – and their consequences evaluated for – social forces contesting political order in specific historical periods. When social conflict is low in intensity or has limited transnational repercussions, sovereignty claims often suffice to contain the scope of political conflict and maintain orders that might otherwise be swept away. However, during revolutionary periods, transnational social conflicts tend to trump sovereignty, generating frequent interven-tions to manage social order within target states and beyond.

The ordering functions of sovereignty and intervention

International Relations (IR) scholars' concern with interstate dynamics leads most to take sovereign states as their starting 'units' and then seek to explain interac-tions amongst them. They have thus asked, for example, when and why states inter-vene into others' domestic affairs, but more rarely asked what is at stake in defining these affairs as 'domestic' in the first place. Historians and others interested in state-formation processes conversely show how sovereign states emerged via conflict-ridden, violent processes whereby some forces and projects defeated others. In these processes, sovereignty is fundamentally about enabling certain social orders to emerge, whilst disabling others, by defining who is to be included or excluded from struggles to determine what order should prevail. Conversely, by admitting addi-tional forces and resources, intervention changes the balance of forces, again in an effort to manipulate political outcomes.

In Europe, state sovereignty first emerged as monarchs struggled to assert and consolidate their domains against feudal lords, whose interpersonal obligations cut across monarchic domains, the Catholic church, with claims to universal authority across Christendom, and city-states founded on 'transnational' mercantile networks.[2] Sovereign statehood emerged only gradually, through violent contestation, as mon-archs carved out coherent domains from a medieval 'patchwork', forcibly unifying geographical space, society and economic flows into increasingly 'national' spatial formations under their hegemony.[3] Sovereignty claims were thus used to create a historically-specific social order and defeat 'transnational' alternatives.

Following the French Revolution, national-popular sovereignty became the main ideological basis of sovereignty claims. Demands for national self-determination posit the pre-existence of a unified national community that deserves recognition as a sovereign unit. Historically, however, the national unity used to justify sovereignty

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[2] Henri LeFebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 279.
[3] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 900–1990* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1990); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

rarely, if ever, preceded it. Instead nations were largely 'created *after* borders … by ethnic cleansing or expulsions, forced assimilation, and other planned and spontaneous efforts at cultural homogenisation'.[4] State power confronts disparate populations within its territory, many of whom may belong to transboundary ethnic, religious, or class formations, and seeks to unify them, often forcibly. Sovereignty does not *express* national unity but is asserted to create political conditions enabling its coercive *production*.

By seeking to 'cage' social forces, severing their transnational linkages and forcibly orienting populations towards new state institutions, modern sovereignty deliberately delegitimises and disrupts alternative orders based on transnational social formations and solidarities. These include socialism and transnational class solidarity, 'the Islamic *umma*, pan-racial movements, various regional formations … anti-colonial internationalism including the Tricontinental movement, transnational diasporic communities, international women's movements, indigenous groupings, and, of course, liberal cosmopolitanism'.[5] Such alternatives have often been violently suppressed in the name of 'state security'. Meanwhile, state managers, having defined the 'inside' and 'outside' of a political community,[6] insist that forces now defined as 'external', including those transnationally linked to groups within the state's territory, do not 'intervene' in what are now identified as solely 'domestic' political conflicts.[7]

Thus, at stake in whether this demand is respected, or violated through intervention, is not simply a legal principle, or international order, but which forces and resources should be permitted to contribute to struggles to determine order within a given territory. A regime facing insurgent resistance to a nation-making project will insist on 'non-intervention' by others if it calculates that the prevailing balance of forces within a strictly 'national' context favours itself. Conversely, its opponents will seek intervention to draw in allies and resources to strengthen their hand, often by rejecting state elites' inside/outside distinction and mobilising transnational solidarities. If the regime becomes sufficiently embattled, it may invite intervention from its own transnational allies,[8] whilst still insisting on 'non-intervention' by its opponents. Such struggles to define the limits of sovereignty and intervention is never neutral, but always intrinsically partisan:

The presumption in favour of security, i.e., of those already in power, entails one conception of world order; the presumption against security entails the other – solidarity with the oppressed, and, where apposite, non-interference by counter-revolution … What appears as a normative debate about international relations, and the pros and cons of intervention, conceals another, *anterior*, debate about the rights and wrongs of states themselves.[9]

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[4] John Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), pp. 60–1.

[5] George Lawson and Robbie Shilliam, 'Beyond Hypocrisy? Debating the ''Fact'' and ''Value'' of Sovereignty in Contemporary World Politics', *International Politics*, 46:6 (2010), p. 664.

[6] R.B.J. Walker, *Inside|Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[7] See Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

[8] For an argument that, consequently, intervention *produces* sovereignty, see Ja Ian Chong, *External Intervention and the Politics of State Formation: China, Indonesia, and Thailand, 189–1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[9] Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 16.

Intervention and revolution

Who prevails in these struggles over sovereignty and intervention depends heavily upon prevailing international constellations of power, interests, and ideology. Here, non-revolutionary and revolutionary historical periods differ considerably. In the former, because the intensity of social conflict is low, 'domestic' conflicts may carry few repercussions for external forces. Consequently, established procedures of diplomatic recognition may prevail, bolstering the 'caging' of social conflict within state borders.[10] However, in revolutionary periods, the transnational nature and repercussions of social conflict are heightened, making intervention likelier as parties to domestic struggles activate transnational solidarities. Revolution carries these consequences because states have never truly 'caged' social relations. The very formation of national societies and economies generated new transnational relations, notably the social, economic, and ideological forces of industrial capitalism: international working and capitalist classes; liberalism and socialism.[11] Other transnational formations, including religions and ethnicities, were never truly caged but continued to overlap state boundaries. Consequently, social, political, and economic order in one state is never entirely divorced from order elsewhere. If state managers believe that order within their territory depends on the outcome of struggles elsewhere, they may feel impelled to intervene and manage these struggles in a direction favourable to dominant societal interests at home.

This imperative is apparent even in non-revolutionary periods. Contemporary state-building interventions, for example, are arguably driven by a perceived need to contain and manage transnational flows and risks arising from 'weak' states.[12] Current EU/IMF interventions in Greece and Cyprus seek to contain financial chaos there in order to stabilise the wider Eurozone. During revolutionary periods, however, transnational social relations acquire even greater importance. Local forces and conflicts become articulated within regional or even global struggles, turning them into transnational struggles between contending sociopolitical blocs located in multiple territories.[13] Transnational identities and conflicts may unite contending forces across borders, increasing the opportunities for local forces to draw allied 'outsiders' into their conflicts. 'Outsiders' also face increased incentives to intervene, since the outcome of political struggle in one territory is increasingly perceived to carry direct consequences for transnationally related conflicts elsewhere. Frequently, in cases like the Spanish Civil War and Vietnam War, sovereignty norms are discarded as both sides are backed by their transnational allies, generating 'internationalised civil war'.[14]

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[10] This has enabled the fragile social orders of many 'quasi-states' to prevail. See Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[11] Hannes Lacher, 'Putting the State in its Place: The Critique of State-Centrism and its Limits', *Review of International Studies*, 29:4 (2003), p. 529.

[12] Shahar Hameiri, *Regulating Statehood: Statebuilding and the Transformation of the Global Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[13] For examples, see, *inter alia*, William I. Robinson, *Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change and Globalization* (London: Verso, 2003); Paul T. Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Lien-Hang Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[14] Halliday, *Revolution*, p. 209.

In revolutionary periods, then, intervention is not merely used to stabilise or transform social order in *target* states, but also *elsewhere*, including perhaps the intervening state itself, by limiting the 'contagion' of (counter-)revolution to other, transnationally-linked societies. As Rosenberg observes, 'a counter-revolutionary foreign policy is rarely just a foreign policy ... it is also directed inwards, a nationalist identification of certain programmes of political change with a foreign threat'.[15] Whether such contagion is objectively likely or whether intervention is effective is besides the point. Elite paranoia may often exaggerate the linkages between internal opposition and external 'subversion', and intervention is a blunt, frequently counter-productive instrument.[16] Nonetheless, it suffices to *explain* intervention that decision-makers *perceive* it to be necessary to manage social order elsewhere.

Thus, for example, in the 'Concert' period of nineteenth-century Europe, conflict between aristocratic-monarchic forces and bourgeois and middle-class revolutionaries had important transnational dimensions. Fearing the spread of liberal, nationalist revolution to their own multinational empires, the Holy Alliance policed European-wide social order by intervening whenever monarchic regimes were threatened by revolution.[17] Cold War sovereignty regimes reflected the transnational struggle between the organised left and its opponents. The Western 'domino theory' that communist victory in one territory would spark more elsewhere by assisting leftists and demoral-ising *status quo* forces generated explicit 'containment' interventions. The US sup-ported sovereign states insofar as they upheld capitalist social relations, but inter-vened when they were threatened.[18] Inversely, whilst the Soviet Union and China intervened to support some allied communist and left-nationalist movements else-where, the Brezhnev doctrine of 'limited sovereignty' threatened military intervention in Eastern Europe in the event of non-communist forces seizing control. Following the Arab Spring, Saudi Arabia intervened to suppress pro-democracy protests in Bahrain and covertly arm the Syrian opposition, while simultaneously asserting the Gulf monarchies' inviolable sovereignty. These practices partly reflect attempts to manage transnational struggles between pro- and anti-democratic and Sunni and Shia social forces. In Bahrain, intervention bolstered a Sunni monarchy against a Shia-led uprising, to contain the spread of unrest to Saudi Arabia's own Shia popu-lation. In Syria, the Saudis hope to unseat forces allied to Iran, seen as the 'snake's head' of Shia unrest and revolution and their main competitor for Arab loyalties.[19]

In revolutionary times, then, struggles over whether sovereignty is to be respected or violated – and by whom – are particularly clearly undergirded by transnational struggles over the nature of social, economic, and political order in particular terri-tories. Defining who can participate in these struggles by wielding sovereignty or practicing intervention is one means by which contending forces pursue the stabilisa-tion or transformation of social order. Tracing sovereignty and intervention practices

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[15] Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Rela-tions* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 35.

[16] See Dodge, Woodward, and Williams, this Special Issue.

[17] See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Cardinal, 1973), pp. 127–79.

[18] Alejandro Colás, 'Open Doors and Closed Frontiers: The Limits of American Empire', *European Journal of International Relations*, 14:4 (2008).

[19] Silvia Colombo, 'The GCC Countries and the Arab Spring: Between Outreach, Patronage and Repres-sion', Instituto Affari Internazionali working paper 12/9 (March 2012), available at: {http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iaiwp1209.pdf} accessed 24 August 2012.

to these struggles is arguably more helpful than the IR literature's most widely cited treatment: Krasner's argument that sovereignty is 'organised hypocrisy', simply discarded whenever the 'utility' to rulers outweighs the costs.[20] First, it can identify historical patterns of sovereignty/intervention, rather than merely chronicling endless violations of sovereignty as proof that interests trump norms. Krasner's cost-benefit analysis approach creates a misleading impression of a free-for-all, where international norms and practices may fluctuate wildly depending on the immediate payoffs to rulers. Conversely, historical analysis suggests the existence of 'sovereignty regimes',[21] which, while variable and evolving, are relatively stable and patterned. Secondly, sociological analysis helps explain such patterns. Krasner argues that intervention occurs whenever it serves rulers' interests, but his realist, statist ontology provides no elaboration of what these are, beyond vague references to rulers' 'constituents'.[22] Conversely, the approach offered here traces interventions to the historically-specific societal groups which operate through states. Interventions are explained as partisan instruments of social conflict, not merely as rational-choice decisions by policymakers. This approach may also explain *why* sovereignty regimes are historically patterned: they relate to social structures, interests and ideologies that are relatively durable. This analysis can now be applied to a case study.

Non-interference and intervention in Cold War Southeast Asia

This section explores the practices of sovereignty and intervention by the capitalist member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) during the Cold War. To examine intervention by Third World states may appear counterintuitive, since they are typically understood as clinging fiercely to *non*-intervention. Mohammed Ayoob observes of the Westphalian norms of 'rigidly demarcated and sacrosanct boundaries, mutual recognition of sovereign political entities, and non-intervention in the affairs of other states' that 'third-world elites have internalised these values to an astonishing degree'.[23] Asian states are particularly thought to remain 'at the forefront of resistance to post-Westphalianism'; indeed, it is often suggested that a 'naked pursuit of Westphalian sovereignty epitomise[s] the essence of Asian security [practices]'.[24] ASEAN is particularly renowned for its regional norm of 'non-interference', which has been traced to principles first articulated at the Bandung conference and is typically said to rigidly guide member-states' conduct.[25]

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[20] Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 223, 24, 7, 64.

[21] Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty*.

[22] Krasner, *Sovereignty*, p. 7.

[23] Ayoob, *Security Predicament*, p. 71.

[24] Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 74; Chung-in Moon and Chaesung Chun, 'Sovereignty: Dominance of the Westphalian Concept and Implications for Regional Security', in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 107. For a welcome revisionist treatment of China's record, see Lawson and Tardelli, this Special Issue.

[25] See, for example, Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter*; Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (2nd edn, London: Routledge, 2009). Cf. Lee Jones, *ASEAN, Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

However, historical-sociological analysis suggests a rather different story, centred on the interests of counter-revolutionary forces and their capitalist state-making projects. Subregional elites' emphasis of sovereignty was designed to dampen inter-elite tensions and assist them in combating the left by excluding its transnational allies from participating in struggles over social order within their territories. However, insisting on state sovereignty was insufficient to serve these counter-revolutionary purposes. Consequently, state managers also intervened abroad to bolster their allies and weaken their opponents', with the ultimate goal of stabilising their own domestic social orders. The first subsection briefly outlines the transnational contestation of postwar order in Southeast Asia to provide a sense of the historical and social context. The second shows how sovereignty norms were invoked to try to bolster capitalist and nationalist state-formation by severing transnational solidarities and excluding 'external' forces. The third illustrates how intervention in Indochina sought to complement these efforts.

Contested capitalist state-making

As elsewhere, postcolonial state-formation in Southeast Asia involved assembling national societies and economies from myriad local and transnational relations. Establishing new territorial states with supposedly homogenous populations was particularly difficult here because centuries of trade, migration, cultural transfers, war, and imperialism had produced enormous diversity in ethnicity, language, and religion that did not correspond to the borders established by departing colonial powers. Particularly in uplands and borderlands, state authority was non-existent and popular loyalties were frequently local or transboundary, not national.[26] Except in rare cases where independence was won through armed revolution (Indonesia, Vietnam) ruling elites, often guided into position by colonial officials, were a mixture of royals, aristocrats, politico-businessmen and middle-class professionals who struggled to mobilise broad-based popular support for capitalist, nationalist state-formation.

Moreover, the legacy of widespread radicalisation under the Japanese wartime occupation was a strong current of left-nationalism and communism among many workers, peasants and intellectuals, subsequently strengthened by communist victory in China in 1949 and Vietnam's defeat of France in 1954. Importantly, this current had strong transnational dimensions. Vietnamese nationalists, for example, established a Southeast Asian League in 1947 to resist colonialism; headquartered in Bangkok, it included representatives from Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The Viet Minh's struggle was also partly financed by overseas Vietnamese trading networks in Thailand.[27] Moreover, as Cold War rivalries emerged, liberation struggles frequently became articulated within them, with nationalist movements tacking leftwards and identifying with the broader anti-imperialist bloc.[28]

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[26] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[27] Ang Cheng Guan, 'The Origins of the Cold War in Southeast Asia: The Case of Vietnam', in Malcolm H. Murfett (ed.), *Cold War Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2012), pp. 13–14.

[28] For detailed analyses of this process, see Ang, 'Origins'; Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948–1989: Was it Due to the Cold War?', in Murfett (ed.), *Cold War*, pp. 31–49; Phạm Hồng Tung, 'The Cold War and Vietnam, 1945–54: How Did a Nationalist Struggle Turn into a Class Struggle?', in Albert Lau (ed.), *Southeast Asia and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 153–73.

Communist insurgencies had also broken out by the early 1950s in Indochina, Burma, Malaya, and the Philippines, sparking elite fears of a Soviet-directed offensive. These were unfounded: leftist movements were firmly rooted in local political, economic, and social contradictions. Nonetheless, this perception reflected communism's genuinely transnational nature: communist parties enjoyed fraternal relations, were networked through the Communist International (Comintern), and their class-based ideology transcended territorial boundaries. Chinese military assistance to the Viet Minh was critical in its struggle against French imperialism. In turn, the Viet Minh was a front of the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP), which treated Indochina as a 'single battlefield', not as three distinct sovereign entities. Even when the ICP formally dissolved into national communist parties, intimate transnational ties remained and the Vietnamese Communist Party retained a vanguard role, coordinating the struggle of leftist forces in Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam.[29] The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) similarly described its struggle as 'one part of the world revolution of the working class', arguing that 'the working class must support one another … we strive for support from other countries, at the same time as we carry out our international duty to assist the revolutionary struggles of other countries'. The CPT later received material assistance from fellow travellers in China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Indonesia.[30] The Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which enjoyed widespread support from ethnic-Chinese peasants and workers by 1945, was initially established – apparently with Ho Chi Minh's involvement – as the Nanyang (South Sea) Communist Party, an overseas branch of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).[31] The MCP later received training and logistical support from China and North Vietnam.[32] The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had undertaken efforts to spread communism throughout the Malay world even before World War II. By 1965, it was the largest communist party outside the Soviet Union and China, with 3,000,000 members and 12,000,000 in affiliated organisations. It drew support from Beijing.[33]

Indeed, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was a central node in these transnational networks, establishing party-to-party ties that lasted until the early 1980s. Alongside this, the PRC had extended citizenship to all 'overseas Chinese' in 1949, encompassing Southeast Asia's large and economically dominant ethnic-Chinese residents. Many in the diaspora viewed China as their homeland, and had become politicised by and helped finance China's struggle against Japanese imperialism. Consequently, indigenous anti-communist elites perceived them – often incorrectly – as having dubious loyalties, even as potential 'fifth columns' of Chinese communism. This suspicion was heightened by the predominantly ethnic-Chinese membership of communist parties in Malaysia, Singapore, and initially Thailand. The ethnic-Chinese were integrated only gradually into the new nations, their loyalty doubted well after any objective threat from communism had receded.[34] The foreign minister

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[29] Bruce Lockhart, 'The Fate of Neutralism in Cambodia and Laos', in Murfett (ed.), *Cold War*, p. 222.
[30] Ang Chen Guan, *Southeast Asia and the Vietnam War* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 18–19.
[31] Danny Wong Tze Ken, 'View From the Other Side: The Early Cold War in Malaysia From the Memoirs and Writings of Former MCP Members', in Lau (ed.), *Southeast Asia*, p. 86.
[32] Cheah 'Communist Insurgency in Malaysia', p. 43.
[33] M. C. Ricklefs, Bruce Lockhart, Albert Lau, Portia Reyes, and Maitrii Aung-Thwin, *A New History of Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 375, 422.
[34] See, *inter alia*, Ching-Hwang Yen, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2008); Ricklefs et al., *New History*, pp. 327, 334, 401, 408, 418; Ang, *Vietnam War*, pp. 4, 17, 19, 64, 66; Ooi Keat Gin, 'The Cold War and British Borneo: Impact and Legacy 1945–63', in Lau (ed.), *Southeast Asia*, *passim*.

of Thailand, where ethnic-Chinese were comparatively *well* integrated, remarked as late as the mid-1960s that 'the three million Chinese in Thailand would turn to the communists at the drop of a hat'.[35] Despite these fears, party-to-party links were more important than diasporic links. Regardless of their ethnic membership, most Southeast Asian communist parties followed Beijing's line, particularly after the Sino-Soviet split, received modest Chinese aid, and some, like the Communist Party of the Philippines, were strongly influenced by Maoism and the upsurge in revolutionary internationalism associated with the Cultural Revolution.[36]

Unsurprisingly, therefore, postcolonial capitalist state-formation in Southeast Asia was centred on anti-communist struggle.[37] This involved efforts to sever transnational social relations endangering this process, homogenising societies and redirecting loyalties towards national state institutions. For Singapore's foreign minister this 'required that we perform some sort of collective lobotomy'.[38] The head of Thailand's Internal Security Operations Command described state-making thusly: 'we colonised our own people'.[39] Coercion was particularly directed at social groups traversing Thailand's borders, such as ethnic Laotians and Lao-speakers – who comprised a third of Thailand's population[40] – ethnic Meo and Vietnamese in the northeast, hill tribes in the north, and Malay Muslims in the south. Like the Chinese, these transnational groups were seen as potential 'fifth columns', conduits through which communism might 'infect' wider Thai society; indeed, they were early supporters of the CPT.[41] Throughout the Cold War, with extensive US assistance, Thai elites constructed the 'body politic' and Thai identity – centred on the monarchy – to effectively exclude the CPT, and indeed the republican left, from inclusion in Thai citizenship.[42]

The use of sovereignty to cut across transnational formations and create conditions favourable to a particular form of social order is also illustrated in the creation of Malaysia, which amalgamated Britain's colonies in Malaya, Singapore, and Borneo. Britain had launched a brutal colonial war, the Emergency (1948–60) to suppress the MCP. It handed power in Malaya to a government dominated by Malay aristocrats determined to suppress communism and maintain Malay political dominance against a very large ethnic-Chinese minority. However, the left's star was rising in neighbouring, predominantly ethnic-Chinese Singapore, British Borneo, and Indonesia, where the left-nationalist Sukarno government was increasingly dependent on the PKI. To disrupt the growing transboundary alliance between these left-populist forces, Britain sought to combine its territories into a 'Malaysian Federation', within which capitalist social order could be maintained. Without such incorporation, London feared, an independent Singapore and Borneo would be absorbed by either

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[35] Ang, *Vietnam War*, p. 19.

[36] See Robert J. Alexander, *International Maoism in the Developing World* (London: Praeger, 1999).

[37] Dan Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[38] S. Rajaratnam, 'ASEAN and the Indochina Refugee Problem', in Kwa Chong Guan, (ed.), *S. Rajaratnam on Singapore: From Ideas to Reality* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2006), p. 165.

[39] John L. S. Girling, *Thailand: Society and Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 263–4.

[40] Sutayut Osornprasop, 'Thailand and the Secret War in Laos: The Origins of Engagement', in Murfett (ed.), *Cold War*, pp. 168–70.

[41] Telegram from the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State (29 March 1963), in Edward C. Keefer (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, vol. XXIII (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1994), pp. 990–3.

[42] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

Indonesia or China. If Singapore became 'an outpost of China', Britain would lose its military base, endangering the defence of capitalism as far away as Australia.[43] Singapore's embattled anti-communist elites also favoured merger so that the Malaysian government could suppress their leftist enemies for them. Malayan elites initially demurred, fearing the incorporation of so many leftists and ethnic-Chinese, but eventually agreed that merger was essential to prevent the emergence of a Singaporean 'Cuba' that could help revive the ailing MCP. However, they also insisted on absorbing Britain's Borneo territories and their predominantly non-Chinese populations, in order to maintain Malays' numerical supremacy, and thus their own political dominance.[44]

This was, however, fiercely and transnationally contested. Singapore's Socialist Front, rightly fearing its annihilation, staunchly opposed the merger. In Borneo, the Federation proposal provoked an armed revolt by the left-nationalist People's Party of Brunei and the Sarawak Communist Organisation in 1962. Britain militarily intervened militarily to crush the uprising. The rebellion, and subsequent guerrilla resistance, gained transboundary support from Indonesian leftists, including the PKI, army units, and local government officials, who provided weapons, training, and sanctuary for a 'North Kalimantan People's Force' incorporating members from Borneo and Indonesia.[45] By 1964, the PKI's hostility to Malaysia had dragged the Indonesian state into armed 'Confrontation' against the federation, which Sukarno denounced as a 'neo-colonialist' plot. This was initially supported by some Indonesian rightists for fear that Malaysia could serve as a communist Chinese springboard adjacent to Indonesia.[46] However, as Confrontation wore on, Sukarno's administration lurched ever leftwards and the PKI's power grew dramatically, polarising Indonesian society. A takeover by the left or right seemed inevitable. The left blinked first: in September 1965, a small cabal of PKI members who were mid-level army officers, apparently operating largely independently, moved to pre-empt a rightist coup by arresting the army command. The plot, however, was poorly planned, badly botched, and swiftly suppressed by the rightist General Suharto. The army seized power, backed by anti-communist students, business elites, landlords, and Islamists. A vicious anti-PKI pogrom ensued: between 500,000 and 2,500,000 suspected communists were killed and many hundreds of thousands more imprisoned.[47] Suharto then terminated Confrontation. Only with this bloody transformation in the social complexion of the Indonesian state and the consequent curtailment of transnational contestation of Malaysian state-formation was the Federation's sovereignty established.

ASEAN, 'non-interference', and the containment of social conflict

Indonesia's shift to the anti-communist camp created a new conjuncture where regional elites could use sovereignty and non-intervention to curtail transnational

[43] Albert Lau, 'Decolonization and the Cold War in Singapore, 1955–9', in Lau (ed.), *Southeast Asia*, p. 46; Joseph M. Fernando, 'The Cold War, Malayan Decolonization and the Making of the Federation of Malaysia', in Lau (ed.), *Southeast Asia*, pp. 70–1, 78.
[44] Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 62–75, 102.
[45] Ooi, 'Cold War', pp. 102–1.
[46] Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation*, p. 116.
[47] John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

social conflict and thus ease the (re)production of capitalist social order. It was to this end that the governments of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia formed ASEAN in 1967. The Association's guiding principles of sovereignty and non-interference in states' domestic affairs aimed to dampen inter-elite tensions, isolate domestic opponents from transnational assistance, and thereby stabilise capitalist social order. However, reflecting the always partisan nature of sovereignty regimes, these regimes still admitted intervention from anti-communist Western states, in order to further tilt the balance of forces against the left.

Although anti-communist forces now controlled all of ASEAN's founding member-states, elite fear of the left persisted. In Indonesia, despite the PKI's evisceration, 'the emergency never ended', a constant anti-communist crusade providing the 'raison d'être of the Suharto regime'.[48] Singapore's anti-communist elites had finally unleashed state repression against the left, creating a *de facto* one-party state that was staunchly anti-communist.[49] The rump MCP insurgency continued along the Malaysia-Thailand border, whilst the Thai state, dominated by military, aristocratic and business elites, confronted the insurgent CPT, which had 'liberated' several pockets of Thai territory, mainly in the northeast. In the Philippines, the 30,000-strong communist New People's Army had seized control of central Luzon and urban student radicalism was rising, alarming the landlord-dominated government.

In line with the prevailing 'domino theory', elites believed that the continued suppression of leftist threats at home depended partly on events beyond their borders. The Chinese cultural revolution was renewing Chinese support for revolutionary forces in Asia. In Indochina, a transnational struggle was being waged between anti-communist regimes, backed by the US, and the communist forces of North Vietnam, the Viet Cong in South Vietnam, the Pathet Laos in Laos, and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, substantially directed by Hanoi and aided by China and the USSR. Thailand, as the 'frontline state', was a particularly vulnerable linchpin. Thai elites feared communist victory in Indochina 'would leave them boxed [in] . . . by borders under hostile Communist control . . . external support to the already troublesome . . . insurgency within Thailand would rise sharply . . . [creating] serious internal problems . . . [and] the whole political complexion of Thailand and her international posture would promptly change to a left-leaning neutralism'.[50] Thai territory would transform from 'a "buffer" . . . [to] a "conduit" for communist China and Indochina', a Singaporean official warned.[51] In turn, this would boost revolutionary forces and demoralise *status quo* elements in other ASEAN countries. Singapore's prime minister graphically suggested that, if Vietnam fell, 'there would be fighting in Thailand within one-and-a-half to two years, in Malaysia shortly thereafter, and within three years, "I would be hanging in the public square"'.[52]

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[48] Ibid., p. 12.

[49] This eliminated the main rationale for merger with Malaysia, resulting in Singapore's independence in 1965.

[50] Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence Helms to President Nixon (23 October 1970), in Daniel J. Lawler (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, vol. XX (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2006), p. 195.

[51] Ang, *Vietnam War*, p. 68.

[52] Memorandum from Vice-President Humphrey to President Johnson (19 October 1966), in Edward C. Keefer (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968*, vol. XXVI (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), p. 636.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the founding ASEAN Declaration expressed elites' commitment to 'strengthening the economic and social stability of the region'.[53] Singapore's prime minister explained:

The unspoken objective was to gain strength through solidarity ahead of the power vacuum that would come with an impending British and later a possible US withdrawal ... We had a common enemy – the communist threat in guerrilla insurgencies, backed by North Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union. We needed stability and growth to counter and deny the communists the social and economic conditions for revolutions ... We were banding together ... for political objectives, stability and security.[54]

The Declaration also founded ASEAN's 'non-interference principle', expressing member-states' commitment 'to ensure stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities'.[55] As with most sovereignty claims, this presented member-states' 'national identities' as already existing, as something to be conserved. Actually, as we have seen, they were being coercively manufactured as part of capitalist state-making, and this process was being hotly contested, including by transnational social forces. In reality, therefore, the Declaration sought to wield sovereignty to insulate the 'domestic' politics of state formation from disruptive 'external' influences in order to strengthen conservative groups' position in this struggle. This had both an internal and external application.

Within ASEAN, 'non-interference' sought to terminate destabilising intervention in each other's state-making projects. As Malaysia's prime minister observed, the only beneficiary of Confrontation was 'the communist party, both in Indonesia and Malaysia' which 'welcomed this dangerous situation to win power in these two countries, then finally to gain control of all politics throughout Southeast Asia' in pursuit of their 'common dream of a "Red Empire"'.[56] To avoid giving ground to the left, 'non-interference' encouraged anti-communist elites to shelve their disputes; this would encourage political stability, enabling the economic growth required to win people away from leftist politics. This restraining of intervention was driven by a self-interested elite belief that, because the region's social orders were 'interdependent', 'what happens in one ASEAN country can affect the fate of the rest'.[57]

Equally importantly, the demand for non-intervention was directed outwards, in an attempt to isolate ASEAN's leftists from their allies across territorial borders. This expressed elites' view of leftist movements as inherently 'alien' creatures of foreign powers seeking to 'subvert' their social orders. As Singapore's prime minister declared, 'Every ASEAN government is convinced that its own communists are threats only because of outside assistance and interference.'[58] Consequently, if they could only be insulated from this 'interference', they could be repressed successfully. This perspective self-servingly ignored the roots of communist insurgency in the social and economic inequalities that emerging capitalist states were being used to defend, whilst legitimising the violent exclusion of critical voices – even moderate

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[53] ASEAN, 'ASEAN Declaration', Bangkok (8 August 1967), available at {http://www.aseansec.org/1212.htm} accessed 27 March 2007.

[54] Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First – The Singapore Story: 1965–2000* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 2000), pp. 369–70.

[55] ASEAN, 'ASEAN Declaration'.

[56] Ang, *Vietnam War*, pp. 12–13.

[57] S. Rajaratnam, 'What is ASEAN About?', in Kwa (ed.), *Rajaratnam*, p. 93.

[58] William R. Heaton, 'China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements: The Decline of Dual Track Diplomacy', *Asian Survey*, 22:8 (1982), p. 798.

liberals – from state power. However, it also reflected communist parties' genuinely transnational relations, described earlier. Although the material assistance, training and moral support from China and North Vietnam to ASEAN communist parties was modest, it was extensive within Indochina, and the fear was that this transboundary assistance would only escalate with a communist victory there. Asserting state sovereignty and non-intervention aimed to sever these transnational linkages, thereby bolstering those struggling to maintain capitalist social order. For particularly paranoid anti-Chinese elites, this included disrupting diasporic ties seen as entwined with communism. As Suharto's deputy intelligence chief put it, since support for 'liberation movements which are trying to create communist governments' was transmitted via 'the international Chinese population split throughout [five areas of] Asia ... our strategy is to block unification of these five elements'.[59]

Underscoring the partisan nature of this assertion of sovereignty, while non-intervention was aimed at communist powers, intervention was still welcomed from anti-communist allies. ASEAN's 1971 Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality declaration proposed guaranteeing regional states' sovereignty through discouraging great-power interventionism. In the context of Washington's drawdown in Vietnam, this was obviously directed at communist China, the great power likeliest to expand its operations. It also sought to persuade Vietnam – recently unified under communist rule – to distance itself from China and the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, however, ASEAN regimes continued to host bases and US forces intervening in Indochina (and, as we shall see below, continued intervening there themselves). Similarly, ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation proposed region-wide non-intervention after Laos and Cambodia fell to communism in 1975, hoping that the new regimes would not increase their transboundary support for ASEAN communist parties. Whilst trying to exclude transnational assistance to leftist forces, however, ASEAN's sovereignty regime still admitted massive aid from external non-communist forces. The US in particular was deeply involved in the internal security and economic policies of regional states, providing extensive aid, training, and advice on counterinsurgency and development planning to undermine the grievances fuelling leftist politics. From 1950–83, over $72 billion was disbursed via the Colombo Plan, much of it to Southeast Asia.[60] The US military presence and bilateral aid also fuelled economic growth designed to curtail support for communism.[61] Thailand, for example, hosted tens of thousands of US personnel and from 1965–75 alone received over $2 billion-worth of US assistance.[62] The Suharto regime received $50 billion in Western aid during the Cold War.[63] This dwarfed the modest external assistance to ASEAN's communist forces.

ASEAN's Cold War sovereignty regime thus fits the general tendency described above, where state managers seek to restrict transnational influences that are deleterious to the (re)production of orders they favour, whilst admitting those that support

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[59] Memorandum of Conversation (29 October 1975), in Bradley L. Coleman, David Goldman, and David Nickles (eds), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2011), p. 6.

[60] Mark T. Berger, *The Battle for Asia: From Decolonization to Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 44.

[61] Richard Stubbs, *Rethinking Asia's Economic Miracle: The Political Economy of War, Prosperity, and Crisis* (London: Palgrave, 2005).

[62] Arne Kislenko, 'A Not So Silent Partner: Thailand's Role in Covert Operations, Counter-Insurgency, and the Wars in Indochina', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 24:1 (2004), p. 1.

[63] INFID, 'Profile of Indonesia's Foreign Debt', Working Paper (August 2007), available at: {http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=22291} accessed 9 September 2009, p. 21.

it. As we shall now see, intervention was also used to complement the ordering functions of sovereignty.

Intervention and containment in Indochina

The use of intervention to coercively mediate the contradiction between territorial sovereignty and transnational social forces is clearly apparent in the record of ASEAN states' interventions in Indochina. In addition to invoking non-interference to curtail transnational linkages between opposition forces, anti-communist elites also intervened to sever them by preventing the rise of communist regimes in Indochina that would provide cross-border assistance to ASEAN's leftists. This was again guided by the 'domino theory' that, if one society fell to communism, this would strategically advantage fellow travellers in neighbouring countries whilst demoralising defenders of the *status quo*, making communist victory more likely there also. ASEAN states' interventions thus sought to manage order not merely in the target states, but – more importantly – domestically.

Belief in the 'domino theory' made the region's non-communist states early supporters of US containment interventions in Indochina. Having earlier sent forces to Korea, in 1966 Thailand and the Philippines also despatched combat troops and support units respectively to fight the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Manila had despatched civil assistance as early as 1953 to 'contribute to the South Vietnamese fight against communism'.[64] The Malaysian government also transferred military equipment left over from the Emergency to Saigon, in addition to training and civil assistance.[65] Singapore, unable, like Malaysia, to despatch troops for fear of a domestic leftist backlash, offered bilateral aid to help resist communism in urban areas.[66] Thailand also intervened heavily in Laos and Cambodia. Fearing that their neutralist governments were not stemming the tide of communism, Bangkok sponsored rightist guerrilla movements and assassination plots against government leaders.[67] From 1960 onwards, Thailand also intervened militarily in Laos. By 1971–2, it had deployed over 23,000 clandestine troops, disguised as Laotians, to fight the Pathet Lao, stiffen anti-communist forces, and train ethnic minorities as anti-communist guerrillas.[68]

The animus of this intervention was not simply anti-communist ideology or solidarity but elites' belief that, due to societal interdependencies in Southeast Asia, allowing Indochina to turn communist would destabilise their own societies. A direct route would be opened up from China, enabling Indochinese communists to provide cross-border assistance to the CPT and other communist parties. Insurgent forces would be inspired to step up their activities, whilst establishment forces' will to resist would be drastically weakened. Intervention thus sought to contain communism in Indochina to curtail its transnational links to ASEAN communism. The Thai government described intervening in Vietnam as an attempt 'to extinguish a fire that has

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[64] Ang, *Vietnam War*, p. 17.
[65] Memorandum of Conversation (26 May 1970), in Lawler (ed.), *FRUS, 1969–76*, vol. XX, pp. 640–1.
[66] Ang, *Vietnam War*, pp. 42, 49, 97.
[67] Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy: The War After the War* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), p. 380; David P. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (3rd edn, Boulder: Westview, 2000), p. 192.
[68] Sutayut, 'Thailand and the Secret War', pp. 165–94.

already broken out [abroad] before it reaches our home'.[69] Likewise, Malaysia's prime minister explained that it supported Saigon because 'we both faced a common enemy'. If Indochina fell to communism, 'the communists would press on against the rest of Southeast Asia'. Vietnam 'was not simply a civil war', because order elsewhere in the region was at stake. Reflecting the interdependence of social orders, Malaysia's 'national security' involved not merely 'internal security but also the security of Southeast Asia'.[70] A similar logic applied to support for American military intervention. Singapore's prime minister candidly observed: 'millions of Vietnamese are dying … not for Vietnam, but to ensure that what is happening in Vietnam is not repeated in the other countries of Southeast Asia'.[71]

The faltering US war effort was, however, accompanied by growing social unrest in the ASEAN states. Following communal riots in 1969, which the Malaysian government blamed on Chinese communist subversion,[72] emergency rule was introduced, and anti-communist dictatorships were established in Thailand and the Philippines in 1971 and 1972. Correspondingly, ASEAN states' containment interventions escalated. Under Suharto, Indonesia now became involved. In 1970, Indonesian military intelligence encouraged a US-backed coup in Cambodia whereby General Lon Nol overthrew the neutralist Prince Sihanouk.[73] Suharto also covertly armed the new regime, provided counterinsurgency training, rallied foreign aid for Lon Nol, lobbied for the deployment of 'peacekeepers' in Cambodia, and offered its own 'peacekeepers' to South Vietnam to resist a communist takeover.[74] Meanwhile, in addition to its covert forces in Laos, Thailand trained Cambodians to fight for Lon Nol, and even contemplated invading Cambodia.[75] Again, this intervention aimed to maintain social order outside of Indochina. Suharto explained that 'if Cambodia falls into Communist hands, it will be an expanded base for guerrilla and infiltration activities' against neighbouring countries.[76] This was a concern for the ASEAN 'dominoes', but also ultimately Indonesia itself. The regime still feared, Suharto's intelligence chief reported, that there were 'one and a half million undeclared communists in Indonesia',[77] awaiting an opportunity to revive, and officials expected intensified Chinese subversion 'to erode the bulwark [of regional anti-communism] as early as possible'.[78] For Suharto, the collapse of Indochina's non-communist regimes in 1975 merely confirmed these fears. ASEAN's electrified leftists had 'stepped up their activities', Suharto warned US President Ford; 'insurgency has now reached the national capitals in Thailand and Malaysia', which could 'bring the Communists right to our threshold'.[79] It was merely a matter of time, he believed, before Vietnam intensified its 'communist missionary activities' towards ASEAN.[80]

[69] Ang, *Vietnam War*, p. 51.
[70] Fernando, 'Cold War', p. 79.
[71] Ang, *Vietnam War*, pp. 28–9.
[72] Ibid., p. 66.
[73] Michael Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 132.
[74] See documents in Keefer (ed.), *FRUS, 1964–68*, vol. XXVI, pp. 617, 619, 622, 634–5, 640–1; Lawler (ed.), *FRUS, 1969–76*, vol. XX, pp. 587, 640, 663–9, 673–4.
[75] See documents in Lawler (ed.), *FRUS, 1969–76*, vol. XX, pp. 39, 66, 114, 122–3, 132–9, 141–2, 183, 197, 376–7, 382–3.
[76] Memorandum of Conversation (26 May 1970), in ibid., p. 634.
[77] Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 15/2082/11, Letter from P.J.E. Male to Mr Wilford (16 April 1975).
[78] Ang, *Vietnam War*, p. 63.
[79] Telegram 14945 from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State (6 December 1975), in Coleman, Goldman, and Nickles (eds), *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12, doc. 141.
[80] 'President Suharto Cautions Against Communist Threat', *Antara* (20 July 1975).

Actually, however, revolutionary pressures eased after 1975 due to escalating intra-communist conflicts. China's cultural revolution had ebbed away and, under the increasingly rightist Deng Xiaoping regime, Beijing became less interested in revolutionary internationalism than its rivalry with Moscow. Backed by China, Cambodia's Khmer Rouge regime became increasingly hostile towards Soviet-aligned Vietnam, believing it sought to dominate a revived Indochinese Federation. ASEAN elites, courted by both sides, benefited as the Indochinese states pledged to practice non-interference, cut aid to the CPT and even collaborated in its suppression. Singapore's prime minister saw the Khmer Rouge as a potential replacement 'buffer' between ASEAN and Vietnam, their dispute 'buy[ing] us considerable time' to defeat domestic communism.[81]

However, in December 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, toppling Pol Pot and installing a friendly replacement. The forces of the region's vanguard revolutionary state were now directly adjacent to Thailand, raising the spectre of renewed transnational assistance to the CPT. Thailand's deputy prime minister stated that Hanoi's previous 'assurance . . . that the Vietnamese would not interfere in Thailand's internal affairs or support subversive movements . . . could no longer be credited'.[82] As Britain's ambassador in Hanoi observed, it was instead 'time to dust down the Domino Theory . . . [Vietnam's] leaders believe in revolution and will certainly continue their policy of aiding and abetting it in other countries . . . The next target of opportunity for Vietnam is Thailand. For that very reason the reaction of Thailand and other ASEAN countries to the invasion of Cambodia has been one of considerable alarm.'[83] Singapore's foreign minister concurred: 'the next step would be Thailand'.[84]

In order to contain this threat to capitalist social order, ASEAN intervened to restore a physical barrier between the CPT and Vietnam by perpetuating a Cambodian civil war.[85] As Thailand's supreme army commander explained, 'having lost Cambodia as a buffer, the best that Thailand could do was to sustain the fighting that in itself constituted a buffer'.[86] For over a decade, Thailand hosted and sheltered Khmer Rouge and anti-communist guerrillas, militarily supporting their cross-border raids. Bangkok was aided by China, which saw Vietnam's invasion as a Soviet proxy move and was determined to rescue its Cambodian allies. Thailand agreed to ship $100m of Chinese arms to the Khmer Rouge annually in exchange for China severing aid to the CPT and later ASEAN's other communist parties. Ironically, by slavishly supporting Beijing and opposing Hanoi's 'hegemonism', ASEAN's communists had set themselves up to be cut loose in this manner, and fell into disarray. Singapore, Malaysia and the US also materially assisted the non-communist guerrillas. Aid for Cambodian refugees was diverted to keep the civil war going, whilst ASEAN preserved Cambodia's UN seat for the Khmer Rouge. ASEAN later forced the Khmer Rouge to accept non-communists into a new coalition 'government in exile', to help

[81] Tim Huxley, *Indochina and Insurgency in the ASEAN States, 1975–1981* (Canberra: ANU, 1983), p. 26.
[82] FCO 15/2558/48, 'Call on the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand (Mr Sunthorn Hongladarom) by the Permanent Under-Secretary at Claridges on Friday 2 February 1979'.
[83] FCO 15/2473/20b, Telegram from J.W.D. Margaretson, British Embassy, Hanoi, to David Owen, British Foreign Secretary (9 February 1979).
[84] FCO 15/2474/38, Telegram from British High Commission, Singapore, to Mr Cortazzi, FCO (30 October 1979).
[85] The following draws on Jones, *ASEAN*, pp. 75–91.
[86] Chanda, *Brother Enemy*, p. 381.

lever these groups back to power in Phnom Penh. This eventually succeeded when the conflict was settled in 1991.

Cold War Southeast Asia thus exhibits the key features of sovereignty and intervention described in the earlier theoretical section. Sovereignty was not simply the expression of completed national self-determination; the extent and complexion of the region's postcolonial states were being hotly contested, including by transnational social forces. Sovereignty and 'non-interference' were instead deployed as part of the 'will to order'. Capitalist state-makers invoked them to sever transnational support for their leftist opponents, whilst admitting assistance to themselves. Simultaneously, intervention was used to coercively mediate the contradiction between territorial state formation and transnational social relations. ASEAN states intervened against communism in Indochina, not simply to manage social order there, but in order to weaken the left at home by minimising the 'contagion' of revolution.

Conclusion

This article argued that practices of sovereignty and intervention are both part of the modern 'will to order' and should be traced and evaluated in relation to struggles over what sort of order should prevail in a given territory. At stake in whether sovereignty should be respected or violated is what forces and resources should be admitted to these struggles. Asserting territorial sovereignty attempts to contain conflict to a national scale, delegitimising and severing transnational conflicts and linkages and thereby shifting the balance of forces against groups relying on transnational support. Conversely, intervention widens the scope of conflict to include new agents, altering the balance again. Forces contesting order seek patterns of sovereignty and intervention that admit their allies but exclude their enemies. The transnational dimensions of social conflict are highlighted during revolutionary periods, when local conflicts become articulated within and shaped by broader conflicts beyond state borders. This interdependence generates imperatives to intervene: revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries band together transnationally, bolstering their allies to stabilise or transform order not merely in the target society but also elsewhere, including their own.

Although a desire to maintain or transform social order can *explain* why some interventions occur, it is beyond this article's scope to assess properly whether interventions actually *succeed* in attaining this goal. The record is arguably poor: US intervention in Laos and Cambodia, for example, is often said to have undermined popular support for neutralist regimes and driven their governments leftward; and, of course, Indochina eventually fell to communism. However, as Sutayut observes of Thai involvement in Laos, intervention 'was not useless ... [it] prolonged the life of ... [a non-communist] regime, giving time for Thailand to improve its economy, to develop its remote areas ... to strengthen ... against communist threats'.[87] Similarly, it would be surprising if the vast quantities of military and economic assistance accompanying anti-communist intervention in Indochina did not bolster non-communist forces elsewhere in the region. US military spending amounted to 8.5 per cent of Thai GDP in the 1960s, generating an economic boom that was arguably critical in

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[87] Sutayut, 'Thailand', p. 194.

winning people away from communism.[88] The tacit ASEAN-China alliance over Cambodia in the 1980s also arguably stabilised domestic orders within ASEAN. Pro-Beijing communist parties were thrown into confusion, suffered serious splits, and were soon abandoned altogether by China, hastening their demise.[89] Conversely, the counter-revolutionary Thai government received $283m in Chinese aid from 1985–9, plus generous US assistance.[90] Certainly many ASEAN diplomats believe that containment interventions worked: as one boasts, the dominoes had been poised to topple, 'but we managed to stop it at Laos-Cambodia'.[91] Whether this is accurate is a complex question requiring further research. If it is, it is worth underscoring that the price of stabilising capitalist social order in one part of Southeast Asia was millions of deaths in another.

[88] Berger, *Battle for Asia*, p. 249.
[89] Heaton, 'China', pp. 785–98.
[90] Jones, *ASEAN*, pp. 89–90.
[91] Ibid., p. 89.