Halting genocide

in a post-liberal international order:

intervention, institutions and norms

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The liberal international order (LIO) faces deep uncertainties. While many possible international orders could emerge from the shifting power balance, it is likely that the global influence of the LIO will be markedly decreased. As competitors seek to provide credible alternative forms of global governance, such as a Chinese-led 'authoritarian–capitalist international order' (ACIO),[1] scholars speculate that international order will increasingly come to be governed by a realist logic instead of a liberal one. This is to say that in a realist international order (RIO), the United States and fellow core constituent members of the liberal order will increasingly find themselves compelled to prioritize security competition over ideological concerns for common goods such as global human rights and democracy promotion.

The international human rights regime relies upon liberal order, and the foundations of principled multilateralism made possible by the LIO. The prevention of genocide is an important feature of this regime. So, as the global hegemony of the LIO continues to erode, many items in the genocide prevention toolkit will be blunted. Core elements of the international human rights regime, including UN peacekeeping, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and the International Criminal Court (ICC), are increasingly contested by both western and non-western societies.[2] All this is the cause of great concern among human rights advocates and scholars. The external challenge coming from authoritarian states, combined with a rising tide of 'racist and xenophobic sentiments' originating inside the order,[3] threatens to wash away decades of uneven progress in furthering basic human rights and establishing reliable mechanisms for fulfilling repeated promises of

[1] John M. Owen, 'Two emerging international orders? China and the United States', *International Affairs* 97: 5, 2021, p. 1416.
[2] David A. Lake, Lisa Martin and Thomas Risse, 'Challenges to the liberal order: reflections on international organization', *International Organization* 75: 2, 2021, p. 230.
[3] Marcos Tourinho, 'The co-constitution of order', *International Organization* 75: 2, 2021, p. 258.

'never again'. And in so far as the genocide prevention regime includes practices at the very furthest end of the 'liberal intrusiveness' spectrum,[4] it is likely to face the fiercest contestation from challenges internal and external to the established order.

Yet against a generally pessimistic scholarly consensus on the future prospects for genocide prevention in a post-liberal international order, this article identifies mechanisms internal to an emerging RIO which themselves tend towards halting genocide. Drawing on history and International Relations (IR) scholarship, it outlines a framework to interpret how states might respond to genocide within an emergent RIO, based on principles of regional and international stability and within an environment that demands greater amounts of self-help. What's more, in such a 'self-help' environment,[5] current problems of agent–resource allocation and prioritization might be somewhat mitigated.[6] By arguing that humanitarian intervention—the most effective mechanism for halting ongoing genocidal violence—might increase within an RIO, the article suggests reasons to suppose that impunity for genocide will not necessarily observe a marked increase in a post-liberal international order.

The LIO erected an impressive normative and institutional architecture designed to halt and prevent genocide. Despite this, it has more often than not been criticized for failing in its duty of protection. Bellamy and McLoughlin have found that, once begun, genocides typically end in one of two ways: the perpetrators achieve their objective, or are prevented from doing so by military defeat.[7] That is to say that, tragically, while they might be effective in other contexts, the accepted range of non-military means are generally not very effective at halting genocide and other identity-based episodes of mass violence.[8] And only very rarely are these military defeats brought about by external humanitarian interventions.[9] More often, the military defeat of genocide perpetrators comes at the hands of local actors, or as a result of conflicts not directly related to the genocidal violence in question. Second, historically speaking, many critical scholars and non-western states have typically not seen the LIO as benign. The assumption that liberal order, particularly through application of ideas such as just war theory, acts to restrain

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[4] Tanja A. Börzel and Michael Zürn, 'Contestations of the liberal international order: from liberal multilateralism to postnational liberalism', *International Organization* 75: 2, 2021, p. 294.

[5] An environment in which cooperative norms and multilateral institutions will be weakened and hence states will be increasingly compelled to provide for their own security.

[6] This is contrary to Pattison's view that problems of prioritization will intensify in a post-liberal order. While I agree with Pattison that there will probably be fewer actors and resources available for purely 'norm-driven' intervention, Pattison does not consider the 'objective' threat to international (and, more to the point, regional) peace and security that unchecked genocides can often pose. Regional and local actors compelled to provide for their own security to a greater degree might arguably be better placed to effectively direct resources (political, economic and military) towards halting genocide. See James Pattison, 'The international Responsibility to Protect in a post-liberal order', *International Studies Quarterly* 65: 4, 2021, p. 899; Luke Glanville and James Pattison, 'Where to protect? Prioritization and the Responsibility to Protect', *Ethics and International Affairs* 35: 2, 2021, pp. 213–25.

[7] Alex J. Bellamy and Stephen McLoughlin, 'Genocide and military intervention', in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, eds, *Genocide: key themes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[8] Michael P. Broache and Kate Cronin-Furman, 'Does type of violence matter for interventions to mitigate mass atrocities?', *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6: 1, 2021, pp. 1–9.

[9] For discussion on the parameters of legitimate humanitarian intervention, see Thomas Peak, *Westphalia from below: humanitarian intervention and the myth of 1648* (London: Hurst, 2021); Robert A. Pape, 'When duty calls: a pragmatic standard of humanitarian intervention', *International Security* 37: 1, 2012, pp. 41–80.

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the violent tendencies of states which would be given full reign by realist logics is increasingly contested.[10] Especially in the light of the largely failed and destructive liberal hegemony which has driven an ambitious effort to transform states in the global South into liberal democratic market economies,[11] and as a growing body of research addresses the racist and colonial discourses and practices embedded in the establishment of contemporary global order,[12] serious questions are asked about the benevolence of the United States and its core allies.

An RIO will most likely differ from the current international order in ways which hold direct implications for the prevention of genocide. IR theorists have speculated how it might approximate the Cold War system, as the United States and China lead competitive bounded orders.[13] Within this situation, negative expansionist impulses associated with liberal hegemony are likely to decline as the United States reorientates its foreign-policy thinking away from the LIO framing and more towards considerations of grand strategy, in a way that Charles Glaser has argued would be beneficial.[14] Given the retreat of the United States from its role as global policeman, states will no longer have the option of deferring crisis resolution to a far-off hegemon with an uncertain level of commitment. Yet even in an RIO, given what we know about the destabilizing effects of atrocity crimes across borders, impunity for genocide will still represent a grave threat to international peace and security. Due largely to spillover and broader destabilizing effects of genocide, local actors and regional organizations might be increasingly motivated to provide directly for their own security. It appears likely that they might be better placed than the 'traditional' intervenors not only to undertake upstream prevention efforts, but also to conduct military intervention when these fail. India's 1971 intervention in East Pakistan and Vietnam's 1979 intervention in Cambodia provide examples from the Cold War RIO context of such 'local' humanitarian interventions. Importantly, these were unilateral interventions which halted ongoing genocides, but which arose from a mixture of concerns about stability and self-defence.

[10] Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente, 'The liberal peace fallacy: violent neoliberalism and the temporal and spatial traps of state-based approaches to peace', *Territory, Politics, Governance* 8: 1, 2020, pp. 100–116; Valerie Morkevičius, *Realist ethics: just war traditions as power politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Valerie Morkevičius, 'Power and order: the shared logics of realism and just war theory', *International Studies Quarterly* 59: 1, 2015, pp. 11–22.

[11] John J. Mearsheimer, *The great delusion: liberal dreams and international realities*, Henry L. Stimson lecture series (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Maria-Louise Clausen and Peter Albrecht, 'Interventions since the Cold War: from statebuilding to stabilization', *International Affairs* 97: 4, 2021, p. 1206.

[12] Amitav Acharya, 'Race and racism in the founding of the modern world order', *International Affairs* 98: 1, 2022, pp. 23–43; Inderjeet Parmar, 'The US-led liberal order: imperialism by another name?', *International Affairs* 94: 1, 2018, pp. 151–72; Bianca Freeman, D. G. Kim and David A. Lake, 'Race in international relations: beyond the "norm against noticing"', *Annual Review of Political Science* 25: 1, 2022, pp. 175–96; Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Ayşe Zarakol, 'Struggles for recognition: the liberal international order and the merger of its discontents', *International Organization* 75: 2, 2021, pp. 611–34; Jasmine K. Gani and Jenna Marshall, 'The impact of colonialism on policy and knowledge production in International Relations', *International Affairs* 98: 1, 2022, pp. 5–22.

[13] Owen, 'Two emerging international orders?'; John J. Mearsheimer, 'Bound to fail: the rise and fall of the liberal international order', *International Security* 43: 4, 2019, pp. 7–50.

[14] Charles L. Glaser, 'A flawed framework: why the liberal international order concept is misguided', *International Security* 43: 4, 2019, pp. 51–87.

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These examples suggest that an RIO might contain its own internal dynamics for genocide prevention. And, given their more direct interests, local and regional actors will probably be no less effective than the principal actors of the 'international community', whom victims hope will be motivated by altruism to sustain a long-term commitment to abstract principles of human rights and democracy. If western publics ever were consistently motivated by altruism to expend the lives of their soldiers abroad on a sustained basis, this chapter seems to have closed—a development which is deeply shocking to liberal activists.[15] In addition, a post-LIO world order might also provide non-altruistic motivations for great powers to undertake humanitarian intervention. In circumstances where the costs are relatively low, great powers might want to provide such services for states *outside* their bounded order on a more-or-less transactional basis. While this possibility was (or is) also open to states within the LIO, the more fundamentally competitive nature of international order in the RIO might enhance these motivations. Again, the Cold War context demonstrates two blocs engaged in fierce—and frequently violent—competition to win the 'hearts and minds' of the peoples of the so-called Third World.[16]

Even if the international order does come to resemble that of the Cold War, history can only go so far. The world today is different, the world of tomorrow will be more different still, and so too will any possible RIO. One important distinction from past orders is that an imminent RIO will not totally eradicate the international human rights regime. R2P, UN peacekeeping and the ICC will be contested and reinterpreted,[17] but peremptory norms of international politics such as the prohibition on genocide are too deeply entrenched to be explicitly challenged. While violations will occur in practice, it seems highly likely that even the most hostile states will continue to frame their actions within a consensus on very basic norms such as the genocide prohibition. These sediments of liberal order will reinforce endogenous dynamics of an RIO which encourage the desire of states to halt and prevent genocide.

The remainder of this article elaborates on these dynamics by assessing how a more realist international order is emerging to replace the previously dominant liberal order, what such an RIO means for existing methods of genocide prevention, and how the internal dynamics of an emerging RIO might themselves create new space for genocide prevention.

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[15] Michael Ignatieff, 'The Responsibility to Protect in a changing world order: twenty years since its inception', *Ethics and International Affairs* 35: 2, 2021, p. 178.

[16] Jason C. Parker, *Hearts, minds, voices: US Cold War public diplomacy and the formation of the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[17] See, respectively, Pattison, 'The international Responsibility to Protect in a post-liberal order'; Katharina P. Coleman and Brian L. Job, 'How Africa and China may shape UN peacekeeping beyond the liberal international order', *International Affairs* 97: 5, 2021, pp. 1451–68; Adam Bower, 'Contesting the International Criminal Court: Bashir, Kenyatta, and the status of the nonimpunity norm in world politics', *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4: 1, 2019, pp. 88–104.

From LIO to RIO

The LIO is experiencing deep and broad challenges. These challenges are deep in so far as the LIO is threatened not only from the periphery, by emerging powers that seek to overturn its perceived western leadership, but also by 'populist, nationalist, and antiglobalist movements within its [liberal democratic] core'.[18] Indeed, observers worry that the basic idea of a political space that protects the rights of all persons equally, the rule of law and the freedom of the press can no longer be taken for granted.[19] The challenges are also broad, as they encompass the breadth of political, institutional and economic domains supported by the LIO. As a component of the LIO most intrusive upon 'traditional' interpretations of sovereignty,[20] the international human rights regime is especially vulnerable. The legitimacy of norms and institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights are being called into question, with venues such as the UN Human Rights Council having become 'a major diplomatic battleground',[21] organs such as the ICC coming under severe pressure,[22] and speculation that the R2P might be 'rendered defunct'.[23]

All this spells deep trouble for established international practices of genocide prevention. The prohibition on genocide, and the international human rights regime that has grown around it, have been a signal achievement of liberal order. Especially in its development since Francis Fukuyama announced the 'end of history', the genocide prevention architecture, as a normative core of the international human rights regime, relies upon international cooperation and support for multilateral institutions which are co-constituted with the LIO. As Hopgood notes, 'humanitarian space … is liberal space'.[24] Accordingly, the 'global expansion of authoritarian rule' observed by Freedom House appears likely to increase impunity and decrease space for effective genocide prevention.[25] Given that the liberal order is indispensable to mainstream approaches to genocide prevention, the fate and future development of the LIO is an important question.

According to Ikenberry, an international order refers to the 'explicit principles, rules, and institutions that define the core relationship between the states

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[18] Lake et al., 'Challenges to the liberal order', p. 225.

[19] Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2022: the global expansion of authoritarian rule* (Washington DC, 2022), https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 6 Jan. 2023.)

[20] Luke Glanville, *Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect: a new history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[21] Markus Kornprobst and T. V. Paul, 'Globalization, deglobalization and the liberal international order', *International Affairs* 97: 5, 2021, p. 8.

[22] The ICC has come under pressure both from emerging states, including many in Africa that see a 'neo-imperial' anti-African bias in the ICC's practice, and from great powers, including policy-makers in the United States, who fear biased, anti-American investigations and view the ICC as an assault on national sovereignty. See Yuna Han and Sophie T. Rosenberg, 'Claiming equality: the African Union's contestation of the anti-impunity norm', *International Studies Review* 23: 3, 2021, pp. 726–51; Daniel Krcmaric, 'Does the International Criminal Court target the American military?', *American Political Science Review*, publ. online 2022, pp. 1–7; Kelebogile Zvobgo, 'Human rights versus national interests: shifting US public attitudes on the International Criminal Court', *International Studies Quarterly* 63: 4, 2019, pp. 1065–78.

[23] Kornprobst and Paul, 'Globalization, deglobalization and the liberal international order', p. 8.

[24] Stephen Hopgood, 'When the music stops: humanitarianism in a post-liberal world order', *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 1: 1, 2019, p. 4.

[25] Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2022: the global expansion of authoritarian rule*.

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that are party to the order'.[26] International orders, as social orders, can be more or less purposive. For instance, neo-realists have conceptualized how balance of power orders impose very few social obligations upon parties to the order. These orders arise naturally from the desire of states to seek security and to prevent a hegemonic power emerging that can threaten that security.[27] English School theorists, on the other hand, emphasize how order is consciously constructed so as to support values and communal goals beyond mere survival.[28] Orders overlap and overlay one another, as reflected in the coexistence of the LIO with the 'Westphalian order', numerous regional orders and various suborders of the LIO, such as the international trade order and the international human rights regime.[29] There is a tension between aspects of these orders, especially between 'Westphalian' principles of sovereignty as authority, and aspects of the LIO which emphasize the responsibilities of sovereignty.

The LIO has always been a partial order, with important actors including Russia and China having only ever had, at best, one foot inside. Despite the universal aspirations of political liberalism, and its foundational commitment to the fundamental equality of all persons, the rules of liberal order have predominantly been set by the powerful western states that have dominated it since its inception. As a result, many less powerful states have felt almost entirely disenfranchised by its institutions. As they are perceived to impinge most directly upon ideas about state sovereignty, commitments to democracy and human rights have always been the order's most contentious aspects, with few states beyond the West fully embracing them. Contestation between liberal democratic and authoritarian regimes over these aspects of the LIO is nothing new. But in recent years these features have become increasingly contested also by core members of the LIO themselves. The populist forces that have come to increased prominence within certain of these states often appeal to existential insecurities arising from global economic and power shifts in order to mobilize 'civilisational and ethno-nationalist claims'.[30] As an ordering system, the universalizing tendencies of the LIO clash with the 'local, discriminating, and spatial' rootedness of human attachments exhibited by conceptions of Westphalian order.[31] Authoritarian leaders or 'illiberal democrats' can exploit fears over the erosion of such localized identities to 'reshape or manipulate political systems'.[32] And so, in the face of varieties of 'new authoritarianism',[33] the commitment to fundamental human rights and basic principles of equality embedded in the LIO appears greatly weakened.

[26] G. John Ikenberry, *After victory: institutions, strategic restraint, and the rebuilding of order after major wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 23.

[27] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of international politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[28] Hedley Bull, *The anarchical society: a study of order in world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[29] Lake et al., 'Challenges to the liberal order', p. 227.

[30] Börzel and Zürn, 'Contestations of the liberal international order', p. 283.

[31] Beth A. Simmons and Hein E. Goemans, 'Built on borders: tensions with the institution liberalism (thought it) left behind', *International Organization* 75: 2, 2021, p. 387.

[32] Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2022: the global expansion of authoritarian rule*, p. 7.

[33] G. John Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', *International Affairs* 94: 1, 2018, p. 7.

It is a cliché that history is shaped by events. At the time of writing, the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is fresh. It is not yet possible to say what effect the unleashing of war on the European continent will have. But IR has identified certain broad trends in the transformation of the order that are likely to be enduring. Given the substantial improvement in the quality of life experienced in many countries as a result of the LIO, the extensive challenges it faces are puzzling.[34] And there are undoubtedly sources of resilience in the order, especially the legitimacy and dense webbing of 'rules of appropriate or exemplary behaviour' which have been inculcated over time.[35] This said, 'the global power shift is for real and here to stay'.[36] The presumed beneficiaries of this shift are not a cohesive actor, and do not share united ambitions for the kind of order they wish to see.[37] Yet it is clear that the challenge of authoritarian states, spearheaded by a Sino-Russian axis,[38] seek to rewrite the international rule book in fundamental ways.

Owen outlines four possible outcomes. The first is a return to the 'relatively closed norm of the late nineteenth century', where great powers compete and often fight for territory and natural resources; the second, a 'muddling through', whereby elements of the LIO persist in reduced or stagnant form; the third, a 'rejuvenated globalization', driven economically by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and politically by renewed stability in the West.[39] Owen's fourth option, and one widely envisioned by IR theorists, is the emergence of two competitive orders, led respectively by the United States and China, in a manner approximating the Cold War.[40] Indeed, some have argued that the Cold War never really ended, and contemporary challenges to the order reflect long-term historical continuities only briefly interrupted by the post-1989 moment of liberal triumph.[41] Although Owen envisions that the norms and institutions of the LIO will be preserved or reproduced in diminished form inside the US-led order, a rival 'authoritarian-capitalist international order' led by China will repudiate inherited aspects of this which conflict with its emphasis on state sovereignty and state-led development.[42] Within an RIO these rival bounded orders will prioritize security compe-

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[34] Lake et al., 'Challenges to the liberal order', p. 227; Umut Aydin, 'Emerging middle powers and the liberal international order', *International Affairs* 97: 5, 2021, pp. 1377–8.

[35] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, 'The logic of appropriateness', in Robert E. Goodin, ed., *The Oxford handbook of political science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 478.

[36] Amitav Acharya, 'After liberal hegemony: the advent of a multiplex world order', *Ethics and International Affairs* 31: 3, 2017, p. 280.

[37] Michael J. Boyle, 'The coming illiberal order', *Survival* 58: 2, 2016, p. 37.

[38] 'Joint statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the international relations entering a new era and the global sustainable development', Office of the President of Russia, http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770.

[39] Owen, 'Two emerging international orders?', pp. 1415–16.

[40] Mearsheimer, 'Bound to fail', p. 8; David A. Lake, 'Whither the liberal international order? Authority, hierarchy, and institutional change', *Ethics and International Affairs* 34: 4, 2020, p. 462; Xiangfeng Yang, 'The great Chinese surprise: the rupture with the United States is real and is happening', *International Affairs* 96: 2, 2020, pp. 419–37; Börzel and Zürn, 'Contestations of the liberal international order', p. 302; Jozef Bátora, 'States, interstitial organizations and the prospects for liberal international order', *International Affairs* 97: 5, 2021, p. 1434; Pattison, 'The international Responsibility to Protect in a post-liberal order'.

[41] Stephen Kotkin, 'The Cold War never ended', *Foreign Affairs* 101: 2, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2022-04-06/cold-war-never-ended-russia-ukraine-war.

[42] Owen, 'Two emerging international orders?', p. 1416.

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tition. Ideological considerations, including the spread of global human rights and democracy, will find themselves relegated in importance behind more traditional and hard-nosed *raison d'état*. Processes of 're-bordering' will accelerate,[43] and even in the bounded, US-led LIO, 'interests' will be constructed primarily with reference to renewed great power competition. Between the populist challenge coming from within the LIO's historic core and a competitive ACIO, with only a thin international order between them,[44] the space for liberal genocide prevention will diminish.

Genocide prevention and the LIO

An extensive architecture for genocide prevention has been erected under the auspices of the LIO.[45] Despite this, genocides are too often carried out with impunity. International norms and legal regimes have been woefully inadequate at protecting the individuals and communities who most require protection. Worse still, the core states of the LIO have often contributed directly and indirectly to these very atrocities. The coming RIO will see the worst impulses of 'liberal hegemony' constrained by imperatives of great power competition, a competition which might even lead these core members of the LIO to live more faithfully by the norms and rules they claim to hold dear.

Genocide prevention is largely a product of political liberalism. Yet as an RIO emerges which unsettles liberal hegemony, there are reasons to be optimistic about the durability of the anti-genocide norm in world order. The prohibition on genocide is a peremptory norm which has become deeply embedded in the international system. Benefiting from an 'overlapping consensus',[46] whereby the same conclusion is reached from a plurality of ethical and normative starting-points,[47] from a purely normative perspective states are likely to retain at least a superficial concern to uphold the prohibition on genocide. This is likely to be the case even when the multilateral institutional mechanisms for protecting people from massive human rights violations, up to and including genocide, have been considerably weakened. The often subtle forms of contestation of norms designed to enforce the prohibition on genocide demonstrate that authoritarian states will seek to limit the universality of human rights norms, and restrict the scope of the (liberal) international human rights regime, but without explicitly questioning the validity of the prohibition on genocide *per se*.[48] This tactic was demonstrated

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[43] Simmons and Goemans, 'Built on borders', p. 388.

[44] Mearsheimer, 'Bound to fail', p. 44.

[45] While not a purely 'western' project, with much norm entrepreneurship coming from the global South, especially within the UN, this was all within a broadly global space conditioned by presumptions of liberal ordering.

[46] Adrian Gallagher, 'To name and shame or not, and if so, how? A pragmatic analysis of naming and shaming the Chinese government over mass atrocity crimes against the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang', *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6: 4, 2021, p. 6.

[47] Jack Donnelly, *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 251–2; John Rawls, 'The idea of an overlapping consensus', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7: 1, 1987, pp. 1–25.

[48] Rana Siu Inboden, *China and the international human rights regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 246; Zheng Chen and Hang Yin, 'China and Russia in R2P debates at the UN Security Council',

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in the concerted Chinese and Russian strategy to obstruct any remedial action at the UN Security Council over atrocity crimes committed in the Syrian civil war, whereby objections to how NATO implemented its UN mandate in Libya were cynically misused to position China and Russia as 'responsible stakeholders' in international society.[49] So even as China faces increasingly credible accusations of perpetrating genocide in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR),[50] it is likely still to deny these accusations rather than claim that it is no longer bound by the anti-genocide norm.[51]

Given how consistently LIO genocide prevention fails, an RIO does not necessarily mean a drastic deterioration in protections for vulnerable people, for two primary reasons. First, while it is true that the LIO has supported a number of important advances, this order has more often been criticized for *failing* to prevent genocide. Second, the LIO has also been criticized for creating structural conditions which permit genocide and actually impede its effective prevention. The international human rights regime has established a comprehensive institutional and normative infrastructure for identifying crisis situations which have the potential to descend into genocide. These include the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, an open-access tool for systematically assessing the risk of genocide and other atrocity crimes, produced by the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect.[52] This office also houses two high-level special advisers (one each for genocide prevention and R2P), who advocate prevention measures and seek to mobilize the UN system and member states when atrocities are imminent or ongoing. More than 60 states and regional organizations have appointed senior civil servants as 'R2P focal points', who propagate the norm through their respective governments and cooperate internationally, and international NGOs including the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum monitor and publicize atrocity situations on an ongoing basis.[53] Within this architecture, a wide array of non-military tools have been developed for addressing genocide and other mass atrocities. These include economic sanctions, arms embargoes, various diplomatic measures, 'including diplomatic criticism (naming and shaming), dialogue

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International Affairs 96: 3, 2020, pp. 785–805; Mikelli Marzzini, L. A. Ribeiro, Marcelo de Almeida Medeiros and Alexandre Cesar Cunha Leite, 'China's engagement with R2P: pluralist shaper?', *Global Responsibility to Protect* 12: 3, 2020, pp. 271–98; Aidan Hehir, '"Words lying on the table"? Norm contestation and the diminution of the Responsibility to Protect', in C. A. J. Coady, N. Dobos, and S. Sanyal, eds, *Challenges for humanitarian intervention: ethical demand and political reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[49] Justin Morris, 'Libya and Syria: R2P and the spectre of the swinging pendulum', *International Affairs* 89: 5, 2013, pp. 1265–83.

[50] Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, *R2P Monitor*, no. 60 (New York: Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, 1 March 2022); '"Break their lineage, break their roots": China's crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims', Human Rights Watch, 19 April 2021, https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting.

[51] 'Uighurs: Chinese foreign minister says genocide claims "absurd"', BBC News, 7 March 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56311759.

[52] UN Joint Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide and Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework of analysis for atrocity crimes: a tool for prevention* (New York, 2014).

[53] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, *Populations at risk*, n.d., https://www.globalr2p.org/populations-at-risk/; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Early warning project*, https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org.

and mediation, the cutting of diplomatic ties, and the denial of membership of an international body',[54] and numerous positive incentives for compliance with fundamental human rights norms, which 'include economic incentives, such as aid and investment in a state, political incentives, such as recognition, and legal incentives, such as amnesties or exile for leaders'.[55] Finally, a number of complementary practices and agendas have been established at the UN, including a Protection of Civilians (PoC) innovation in UN peacekeeping and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which promote specific efforts to combat violence against civilians, including genocidal violence.

Such non-coercive measures have occasionally been successful in preventing imminent ethnic conflicts which seem likely to degenerate into genocidal-type violence, including when a broad range of non-coercive measures were used in Guinea in 2009 to halt the spread of violence following a coup,[56] and Kofi Annan's use of 'R2P diplomacy' in Kenya to resolve a violent political crisis which followed disputed presidential elections.[57] It is also true that the effectiveness of many genocide prevention mechanisms is difficult to quantify, especially upstream prevention measures which seek to influence the presumed structural causes of genocide. However, the persistent failure of international society reliably to predict and prevent genocide is glaring. (Preventable) tragedies in China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere can be joined to earlier outrages in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Darfur. And in a mapping exercise of genocidal episodes since 1900, Bellamy and McLoughlin have shown that—with the partial exceptions of the Nuba Mountains and Bosnian cases—'once begun, genocidal killing ends in only one of two ways—by perpetrators deciding that they have successfully completed their objectives, or their military defeat'.[58] The historical data lead Bellamy and McLoughlin to conclude that, ultimately, many of the non-military mechanisms to halt genocide promoted by the LIO are simply not effective.

Worse still, the 'ineffectiveness' of international efforts to prevent genocide are not entirely accidental. As Samantha Power has argued, rather than a political 'failure', the US approach has by and large been a rather successful policy of indifference to genocide, with presidents of all stripes weighing the high potential costs

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[54] James Pattison, *Alternatives to war: from sanctions to nonviolence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 5.

[55] Pattison, *Alternatives to war*, p. 135.

[56] Naomi Kikoler, 'Guinea: an overlooked case of the Responsibility to Prevent in practice', in Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer M. Welsh, eds, *The responsibility to prevent: overcoming the challenges of atrocity prevention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[57] It is important to note, however, that while the type of violence observed during the Kenyan crisis of 2007–2008 was described as 'genocide' or 'ethnic cleansing' by influential actors (and hence, identity-based) it might equally be interpreted more broadly as political violence. In this sense, the success of non-military measures would be consistent with Broache and Cronin-Furman's findings, and therefore would not count as successful non-military 'genocide prevention'. See Serena K. Sharma, 'Kenya', in Alex J. Bellamy and Timothy Dunne, eds. *The Oxford handbook of the Responsibility to Protect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); C. Bryson Hull and Andrew Cawthorne, 'Kenya govt denounces "genocide" as toll hits 300', Reuters, 2 Jan. 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-election-idUSL277107920080102; Broache and Cronin-Furman, 'Does type of violence matter for interventions to mitigate mass atrocities?'

[58] Bellamy and McLoughlin, 'Genocide and military intervention', p. 281.

of action against the minimal costs of inaction.[59] Many non-western states resent this hypocrisy, as western powers seemingly pick and choose which victims and which global injustices matter, largely on the basis of considerations of political and economic gain.[60] The acutely subjective political nature of allegedly universal doctrines such as the R2P is likewise resented. Even supposed non-western 'R2P champions', such as Egypt,[61] reject key human rights documents on grounds of their 'political' nature, including the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, a core tool of liberal genocide prevention.[62] The United States and its allies, core proponents of the liberal order, have also been known to go even further in the wrong direction than indifference, by providing direct or indirect support to regimes committing genocide.[63] As a product of the LIO, international genocide prevention mechanisms are constructed against a backdrop which assumes the international community to be a 'benign actor that can provide assistance',[64] and which ignores the active, systematic role of the international community in perpetuating structural conditions which can lead to genocide. Yet the 'crusader impulse' which has guided the foreign policy of liberal elites since 1989 has led to aggressive wars which destabilized the order itself and ultimately contributed to its very unravelling.[65] Importantly, this impulse, while giving rise to aggressive interventionist policies such as the 'global war on terror', failed to provide adequate motivation for responding to atrocities on a predictable and reliable basis.

In sum, it is true that an extensive architecture of institutions and norms for preventing and halting genocide has been built on the back of the LIO. But it is also true that these have not been as effective as the architects might have desired. Compounding the widely lamented 'failure' of these mechanisms is a recognition that the core states of the liberal order—even before they began turning sour and outright rejecting more of their international responsibilities—were not entirely benign. The aggressive and highly militarized practices of the United States and its allies during the 'global war on terror' provides only the starkest illustration of liberal hegemony's destructive potential. Scholars have pushed back against the view that, in challenging the status quo, emerging powers are disrupting a uniformly harmonious and mutually beneficial enterprise which has effectively ushered in a golden age of world peace.[66] Acharya, for instance, points out that

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[59] Samantha Power, *'A problem from hell': America and the age of genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), p. xxi.

[60] Steven A. Cook, 'Loving dictators is as American as apple pie', *Foreign Policy*, 26 April 2019, https://foreign-policy.com/2019/04/26/loving-dictators-is-as-american-as-apple-pie/. See indicative statements at the formal UN debates on the R2P going back over a number of years: Iran, 'UN Doc A/75/PV.65', UN General Assembly, 17 May 2021; Pakistan, 'UN Doc A/73/PV.93', UN General Assembly, 27 June 2019; Egypt, 'UN Doc A/73/PV.96', UN General Assembly, 28 June 2019; Cuba, 'UN Doc A/72/PV.100', UN General Assembly, 25 June 2018.

[61] Cristina G. Stefan, 'The Responsibility to Protect: locating norm entrepreneurship', *Ethics and International Affairs* 35: 2, 2021, p. 198.

[62] 'UN Doc A/72/PV.100' (United Nations General Assembly, 25 June 2018).

[63] Power, *'A problem from hell'*, p. 504.

[64] Alexandra Bohm and Garrett Wallace Brown, 'R2P and prevention: the international community and its role in the determinants of mass atrocity', *Global Responsibility to Protect* 13: 1, 2021, p. 65.

[65] Peter Trubowitz and Brian Burgoon, 'The retreat of the West', *Perspectives on Politics* 20: 1, 2020, pp. 116–17.

[66] Michael Mousseau, 'The end of war: how a robust marketplace and liberal hegemony are leading to perpetual world peace', *International Security* 44: 1, 2019, pp. 160–96.

'many of the signs of "anarchy" today, including death tolls in the Middle East, are the result of failed but avoidable policies pursued by the United States and its key Western allies'.[67] Within an emerging RIO, and in the absence of liberal hegemony, it is at least possible that these core western states will be restrained in their more hubristic—and damaging—aspirations to lead a fundamental transformation of human political orders. Faced with a more powerful rival such as the 'authoritarian-capitalist international order' led by China,[68] the bounded LIO will be under pressure to win the global beauty contest and to prioritize an appearance of global legitimacy in its actions.[69]

How will genocide end in the RIO?

Despite impressive developments in the international human rights regime, episodes of genocidal-type violence, once begun, more often than not end 'badly'.[70] Adding to Bellamy and McLoughlin's findings noted above (that genocides are usually only successfully terminated by military defeat), Broache and Cronin-Furman have found that different approaches are effective in addressing different types of mass atrocity. While 'politicide'[71] is most effectively dealt with through non-military means, these non-military measures are less effective at ending genocidal-type violence.[72] In cases of the latter, forcible military interventions have been much more successful. Yet, necessary as they may be, 'only very rarely are those military defeats affected by the intervention of external powers spurred primarily by the intention to put an end to genocide'.[73] A significant number of effective humanitarian interventions are largely motivated by realist concerns. This is important because realism is most usually considered to offer an explanation for the consistent *failure* of international society to halt genocide.[74]

   As we have seen, the future of the LIO is highly uncertain, and the emergence of a more realist order appears likely. The international system could well come to approximate features of the realist orders that constituted international politics in Europe during the nineteenth century or globally during the Cold War. Yet even at the height of the liberal order, humanitarian interventions were rare. This is due in part to a reluctant public opinion in powerful western states; for while

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[67] Acharya, 'After liberal hegemony', p. 281.

[68] Owen, 'Two emerging international orders?'

[69] The degree to which the Iraq War, for instance (to take the most glaring example), lacked widespread perceptions of legitimacy with contemporaries is striking here and should not be overlooked. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's account is instructive: Kofi Annan, *Interventions: a life in war and peace* (London: Penguin, 2013), ch. 8.

[70] Bridget Conley-Zilkic, *How mass atrocities end: studies from Guatemala, Burundi, Indonesia, the Sudans, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 1.

[71] Politicide describes forms of mass violence intended to destroy groups, 'defined primarily in terms of their political opposition' to the perpetrator: Barbara Harff, 'No lessons learned from the Holocaust? Assessing risks of genocide and political mass murder since 1955', *The American Political Science Review* 97: 1, 2003, p. 58.

[72] Broache and Cronin-Furman, 'Does type of violence matter for interventions to mitigate mass atrocities?'

[73] Bellamy and McLoughlin, 'Genocide and military intervention', p. 303.

[74] Hence Gallagher's comment that 'it is important to engage with realism for it helps explain why policy makers give such low political priority to the issue of genocide prevention': Adrian Gallagher, 'A system, society, and community perspective on genocide', *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 7: 2, 2012, p. 169.

these publics express support for humanitarian intervention in principle,[75] Menon shows that this commitment does not often hold in practice.[76] As the liberal internationalist script is further challenged by resurgent nationalism inside the core members of the LIO, and by 'authoritarian capitalist' regimes from without, this situation is unlikely to improve.

Despite the widely hypothesized evolution of the international order into one which more closely resembles the more realist, power-politics-oriented forms of the past, there are historical and theoretical reasons to expect that humanitarian interventions might continue to happen. First of all, despite the impression one might glean from the historiography, humanitarian intervention was not a construct of the liberal order, or even of the West. Humanitarian intervention was debated and practised long before the LIO, and in a plethora of contexts. In European history, at least as far back as the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, the anonymous pamphlet of 1579 presumably written by oppressed French Huguenots, a case has been made that the exercise of tyranny constitutes legitimate grounds for foreign intervention.[77] Such arguments were not merely theoretical; historians of early modern Europe have constructed a genealogy of humanitarian intervention in practice. Beginning with the regular interventions of Elizabethan England on behalf of co-religionists in Scotland, France and the Netherlands,[78] this encompasses the 1655 intervention of Oliver Cromwell's republican commonwealth in Savoy to protect the persecuted Protestant Vaudois minority.[79] Relatively frequent practices of intervention in central Europe have been identified on both sides of the 1648 'divide', some of them accompanied by occasional 'references to universalist notions of humanity that transcended confession and race'.[80] Practices of intervention continued across the long nineteenth century, regarded by some as 'the true century of humanitarian intervention'.[81] European great powers contemplated and carried out numerous interventions to protect Christian minorities in the Ottoman empire,[82] and significant efforts were dedicated to supressing both the transatlantic slave trade and the trade in Christian slaves practised by Barbary pirates.[83] As with history in general, there is a more complicated moral story to

[75] Jürgen Gerhards, Lukas Antoine and Rasmus Ollroge, 'The liberal script on military humanitarian intervention and how citizens around the world support it: results from a comparative survey in 24 countries', SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 22 (Berlin: Cluster of Excellence 'Contestations of the Liberal Script [SCRIPTS]', 2022).

[76] Rajan Menon, *The conceit of humanitarian intervention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 38.

[77] Hubert Languet and George Garnett, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos, or, concerning the legitimate power of a prince over the people, and of the people over a prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 [first publ. 1579]).

[78] David J. B. Trim, 'Intervention in European history, c.1520–1850', in Jennifer M. Welsh and Stefano Recchia, eds, *Just and unjust military intervention: European thinkers from Vitoria to Mill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[79] David J. B. Trim, '"If a prince use tyrannie towards his people": interventions on behalf of foreign populations in early-modern Europe', in Brendan Simms and David J. B. Trim, eds, *Humanitarian intervention: a history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 30.

[80] Patrick Milton, *Intervention and state sovereignty in central Europe, 1500–1780* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 2.

[81] Fabian Klose, *In the cause of humanity: a history of humanitarian intervention in the long nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), p. 4.

[82] Davide Rodogno, *Against massacre: humanitarian interventions in the Ottoman empire, 1815–1914: the emergence of a European concept and international practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Gary Jonathan Bass, *Freedom's battle: the origins of humanitarian intervention* (New York: Vintage, 2009).

[83] Klose, *In the cause of humanity*, pp. 47–132; Oded Löwenheim, '"Do ourselves credit and render a lasting service

be told about these episodes, shaped as they were by colonial discourses such as the 'standard of civilization' doctrine, undertaken by states which themselves committed colonial atrocities, and 'operated with an underlying and often invisible assumption of an international law of unequal sovereigns'.[84]

The historical example of interventions during the Cold War is more instructive still. For obvious reasons, multilateral interventions, especially those authorized by the UN Security Council, were not possible during the Cold War. The possibility of humanitarian intervention, in the sense of military intervention specifically—or even primarily—*motivated* by the desire to stop genocide or other mass atrocities, was forestalled by the overarching great power conflict.[85] Around the edges of international society, however, several exceptions have been identified in the literature as examples of humanitarian intervention which successfully halted genocide during the Cold War. First, India intervened in East Pakistan in December 1971, following the Pakistani government's brutal campaign of repression which led to widespread atrocities; second, in 1979, the government of Vietnam acted with overwhelming military force to overthrow the Khmer Rouge in neighbouring Cambodia, a regime which had systematically annihilated up to a third of its population.[86] Although they are widely characterized as examples of humanitarian intervention, it is telling that both of these interventions were justified to the international community in terms of self-defence and national security, and were strongly motivated by narrower political interests.[87] A third example stems from the Cuban intervention against South African forces in Angola in 1975, justified explicitly on the ground of preventing the government of South Africa from imposing an apartheid system on the Angolan people.[88] Interventions during the Cold War were not perfect. After successfully deposing the Khmer Rouge, for instance, the Vietnamese installed an 'authoritarian government that repressed opposition'.[89] So far as these interventions (with the exception of Cuba's intervention in Angola) were neither motivated nor justified primarily by humanitarian reasons, even if 'the security reasons that led [the state] to intervene and the means employed did not undermine the humanitarian benefits of the intervention',[90] then the interveners were not politically bound to advance a broader human rights agenda beyond the ending of genocidal violence.

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to mankind": British moral prestige, humanitarian intervention, and the Barbary pirates', *International Studies Quarterly* 47: 1, 2003, pp. 23–48.

[84] Mark Swatek-Evenstein, *A history of humanitarian intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 10.

[85] Klose, *In the cause of humanity*, p. 7.

[86] See Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving strangers: humanitarian intervention in international society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chs 2–3; Michael Walzer, *Just and unjust wars: a moral argument with historical illustrations* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), pp. 105–8.

[87] Swatek-Evenstein, *A history of humanitarian intervention*, pp. 230–2; Sonia Cordera, 'India's response to the 1971 East Pakistan crisis: hidden and open reasons for intervention', *Journal of Genocide Research* 17: 1, 2015, pp. 45–62; Sophie Quinn-Judge, 'Fraternal aid, self-defence, or self-interest? Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia, 1978–1989', in Simms and Trim, eds, *Humanitarian intervention*, pp. 343–62.

[88] Patrick Quinton-Brown, 'The South, the West, and the meanings of humanitarian intervention in history', *Review of International Studies* 46: 4, 2020, pp. 530–1.

[89] Conley-Zilkic, *How mass atrocities end*, p. 14.

[90] Wheeler, *Saving strangers*, p. 75.

The LIO has altered the shape of interventions since the end of the Cold War. As exemplified by then UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'doctrine of the international community', values and interests came to be seen as virtually synonymous by powerful states in the global North.[91] From the 1990s onwards, and arguably until the onset of major crisis in the LIO around 2016, the domains of conflict and development were no longer seen as separable, 'but were now increasingly integrated, and peace was seen as resulting from democratization and economic liberalization'.[92] In this way, the liberal peace thesis drove a massively increased demand for humanitarian intervention in the decades following the Cold War (although this demand was not always matched by political will), along with attempts to codify and institutionalize it, of which the R2P can be counted as one. While the rosy afterglow of the Cold War's end saw a number of interventions—often intended not merely to protect individuals but also to transform their societies into peaceable market democracies, in locations as diverse as northern Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, East Timor, Sierra Leone and Kosovo—this scenario was not without its own problems. Arguably the most pressing issue here is how this form of humanitarian interventionism is often closely associated with liberal hegemony. As an extreme example of the liberal intrusiveness which accompanied the 'postnational liberalism' of the unipolar moment,[93] faith in the transformative potential of liberal democratic principles not only gave rise to the very contestation of the order which currently threatens it, but also encouraged aggressive and destabilizing wars such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which have cost hundreds of thousands of lives and wrought untold damage upon international society.

This is not to suggest that a more realist form of international order will be ideal in terms of preventing genocide. Yet, given the extreme shortcomings of the international human rights regime in preventing and halting genocide, and given how important practices of humanitarian intervention have been, it is legitimate to ask what new (or old) space for intervention a more realist international order might open up. First, it is at least possible, as was seen during the Cold War period, that regional powers and other local states might be motivated to intervene to halt genocide more often, out of a concern for regional peace and security. Under the LIO, states were often encouraged to defer problem resolution to the United States and its powerful western allies. Interventions to halt genocide in Kosovo and a potential outbreak of mass violence in Libya, for instance, were delegated to NATO.[94] Scholars have debated whether a belief that, irrespective of national interests, the commission of genocidal violence by a state against rebel groups would generate outside military intervention, has given rise to a problem of 'moral hazard'. In order to elicit this intervention, which would assist them in attaining their political goals, rebels might have an incentive to escalate violence in

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[91] Lawrence Freedman, 'Force and the international community: Blair's Chicago speech and the criteria for intervention', *International Relations* 31: 2, June 2017, pp. 107–24.
[92] Clausen and Albrecht, 'Interventions since the Cold War', p. 1205.
[93] Börzel and Zürn, 'Contestations of the liberal international order'.
[94] Even in the case of Libya, where for various and largely *realpolitik* reasons, non-liberal states such as Russia and China abstained from casting a veto in UN Security Council, thus granting a formal UN mandate, it was NATO that was 'naturally' presupposed actually to execute the mandate.

order to provoke a genocidal response.[95] Local or regional actors might be better placed to avoid the pitfalls of such manipulation. Further, as the evidence of the Cold War suggests, the goals of such interventions are likely to be far more limited than they were in liberal interventions. Even in a more realist order, impunity for genocide will represent a clear threat to international peace and security. Regional organizations 'share normative concerns about peace and justice',[96] and will be well placed to assume the burden of intervention as the de facto world police withdraws to barracks.

It is of course true that within a more realist international order, great powers and their clients will be effectively immune from intervention. It will not be possible to halt genocide or other massive human rights abuses in these places. But this is also true in the LIO. There are only a limited number of feasible options to address the ongoing genocide being perpetrated in Xinjiang by the government of China, and even as credible genocide claims emerge from the armed conflict in Ukraine, direct military intervention against Russia from NATO or anybody else is not possible.[97] Likewise, non-western states have often complained that the western P3 use their privileged status in the international system to shield abusive regimes, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, even supplying weapons which they can reasonably suppose might be used to perpetrate atrocities. However, within an international order characterized by two competitive blocs, a world in which liberal order is but one option on a wider menu, more space might fall into the grey zone. It is highly likely that in addition to its continuing character as a threat to international peace and stability, genocide will still attract the opprobrium of states on normative grounds. Genocide will continue to 'shock the conscience of mankind'. And so, each seeking to increase the legitimacy of its own bounded order, great powers might cynically use this normative opposition to genocide by offering military support to execute humanitarian interventions to regional powers and other states who live in this grey zone. Indeed, there are reasons to suppose that great powers, especially liberal states, might be more willing to undertake humanitarian intervention when they need to do so to advertise their credentials as 'good partners' than when they were the only game in town.

In certain respects, a more realist international order might structurally resemble certain historical forms of world order, such as the Cold War. However, it will be different. Sediments of liberal order, for better or worse, will remain and will give it an altogether different character. In particular, there will not be a total eclipse of norms and institutions established or developed within the LIO to prevent and halt genocide. Although western 'normative powers' will be

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[95] See e.g. Alan J. Kuperman, 'The moral hazard of humanitarian intervention: lessons from the Balkans', *International Studies Quarterly* 52: 1, 2008, pp. 49–80; Alan J. Kuperman, 'Moral hazard in Sudan's "two areas"—humanitarianism that perpetuates civil war', *Conflict, Security and Development* 22: 1, 2022, pp. 47–77; Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, 'On the limits of moral hazard: the "Responsibility to Protect", armed conflict and mass atrocities', *European Journal of International Relations* 18: 3, 2012, pp. 539–71.

[96] Acharya, 'After liberal hegemony', p. 282.

[97] Kristina Hook, 'Why Russia's war in Ukraine is a genocide', *Foreign Affairs* 101: 4, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/why-russias-war-ukraine-genocide

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increasingly constrained in their efforts to promote R2P,[98] scholars are generally optimistic that it will persist in some form, as states are committed to preserving its core elements at least as an abstract normative standard.[99] In thematic debates on R2P at the UN General Assembly, for instance, no states reject the fundamental premise that sovereignty is not a licence to commit genocide and other atrocity crimes, and the majority of states assent to the notion that in some circumstances such crimes become an international issue. It is a common misunderstanding to see R2P as fundamentally 'western',[100] and some scholars view the norm as an 'invention of sub-Saharan Africa'.[101] Similar points can be made about the future of UN peacekeeping—which, although it originated in the Cold War period, has since become a 'flagship LIO activity',[102] whose operations are disproportionately influenced by western leadership.[103] Rather than seeking to end UN peacekeeping entirely, external challenges seek to change how it works.[104] If successful, what impact this attempt at 'deliberalization and dewesternization' would have on the life-saving effectiveness of UN peacekeeping is an open question, given the mixed record of the LIO variety.[105] The persistence of these institutions—albeit in an evolved form—is likely to add additional weight to the realist trajectories of intervention discussed here.

Conclusion

This article has examined what spaces, new or old, might be opened for halting genocide in a post-liberal international order. The nature and extent of challenges to the predominant liberal order are highly contested. I do not assume that the imminent demise of the LIO is certain, and as illustrated above, examination of historical forms of ordering can provide only very general insights into what any future RIO might be like. My purpose here is rather to assess *if* the LIO is approaching its demise, how this might shape efforts to halt genocide. The liberal order has constructed an intricate normative, political and legal architecture for genocide prevention. Given that much of this architecture reflects most strongly the very 'liberal intrusiveness' that is being rejected both by authoritarian, statist regimes and by nationalist populism within the core of the LIO, the emergence of a more realist international order is greeted with extreme pessimism among

[98] Edward Newman and Cristina G. Stefan, 'Normative power Europe? The EU's embrace of the Responsibility to Protect in a transitional international order', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58: 2, 2020, pp. 472–90.

[99] Stefan, 'The Responsibility to Protect'; Jennifer M. Welsh, 'Norm robustness and the Responsibility to Protect', *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4: 1, 2019, pp. 53–72.

[100] Jennifer M. Welsh, 'The Responsibility to Protect after Libya and Syria', *Daedalus* 145: 4, 2016, p. 76.

[101] Lake et al., 'Challenges to the liberal order', p. 234.

[102] Coleman and Job, 'How Africa and China may shape UN peacekeeping beyond the liberal international order', p. 1451.

[103] Kseniya Oksamytna, Vincenzo Bove and Magnus Lundgren, 'Leadership selection in UN peacekeeping', *International Studies Quarterly* 65: 1, 2021, pp. 16–28.

[104] Katharina P. Coleman and Paul D. Williams, 'Peace operations are what states make of them: why future evolution is more likely than extinction', *Contemporary Security Policy* 42: 2, 2021, pp. 241–55.

[105] Séverine Autesserre, 'The crisis of peacekeeping', *Foreign Affairs* 98: 1, 2019, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/crisis-peacekeeping; Hanne Fjelde, Lisa Hultman and Desirée Nilsson, 'Protection through presence: UN peacekeeping and the costs of targeting civilians', *International Organization* 73: 1, 2019, pp. 103–31.

scholars and human rights advocates. Yet against this largely pessimistic scholarly consensus, we can see that the liberal order was itself highly problematic in a number of ways. Aside from its more general structural issues, many of which can be traced to the order's colonial foundations, the liberal order has routinely failed effectively to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities. Indeed, within this order, even core liberal states have actively provided material and political support to regimes that are committing atrocities. And once begun, genocides are typically halted only by the use of military force.

This article has developed these insights by arguing that although an RIO is likely to benefit from fewer multilateral non-coercive measures to prevent genocide, its self-help environment provides the conditions for *more* self-interested military interventions which can effectively halt destabilizing genocides. Within a possible RIO, unchecked genocide will still pose a significant threat to international peace and security. And when genocide inevitably occurs, the United States and its allies—the traditional states to whom appeals for humanitarian intervention were typically delegated under liberal order—will be even less willing to intervene. Under such conditions, local and regional actors will find themselves increasingly compelled to act themselves to halt genocidal violence occurring within their own neighbourhoods. Approximate versions of this dynamic can be observed within historical forms of international ordering, most recently under Cold War bipolarity. This dynamic will be further strengthened in an emergent RIO by the continuing normative prohibition on genocide. As a peremptory norm of international politics, it seems unlikely that the prohibition on genocide will be subject to serious *justificatory* challenge in the near future. While it might be subject to increased *applicatory* contestation,[106] the baseline prohibition on genocide will provide additional moral and discursive resources for states seeking to terminate genocide for predominantly self-interested *realpolitik* security reasons.

Historical examples of successful humanitarian interventions during this period, including by India in East Pakistan and Vietnam in Cambodia, display a clear mixture of motives beyond their humanitarian intent.[107] And, strengthened by anti-genocidal norms, states might feel even more inclined to act when egregious human rights abuses threaten their security. Yet this situation will be highly non-ideal. Great powers will be able to shield their own friendly tyrants from scrutiny, and there may anyway be fewer actors willing to scrutinize in the name of an abstract international community. Where genocidal violence occurs in relatively isolated settings, when the effects of the violence are largely contained within the borders and political universe of a sovereign state and do not significantly threaten regional security, victims might have fewer hopes of relief. But then, those hopes were already few and far between within the liberal order.

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[106] On this distinction, see Nicole Deitelhoff and Lisbeth Zimmermann, *Things we lost in the fire: how different types of contestation affect the validity of international norms*, working paper (Frankfurt am Main: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, 2013).

[107] The distinction between motives and intent in humanitarian intervention is discussed by Pattison: see James Pattison, *Humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: who should intervene?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 184.

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