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## The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis

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on Italy. Italian export control laws are currently in the process of being completely rewritten by the Italian legislature. The approach taken in the writing of the new laws is almost opposite to the spirit behind the old 1956 laws. The best example of this radical change lies in the principle of freedom of commerce (i.e., of export) passed in a law of 1988 after 30 years of a 1956 law based on the denial of freedom of commerce (every export had to be approved by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Commerce). The article describes the old rules but carefully includes the new ones as well, thus providing a comprehensive look at the Italian export control legal system.

Another national report, written by Oskar Weiss-Tessbach and Franz J. Heidinger about Austria is especially interesting. Austria's main concern in export control legislation lies in the export of technology to certain nations and the export of its cultural heritage. Because the 1918 law covering these areas continues to function well, the authors decided to focus on the new 1988 laws forbidding the export of technology to certain nations. The Austrian system appears both free and responsible, allowing for no restrictions in exports of technology except for certain goods listed in the 1988 Act passed by the Austrian legislature.

One of the major critiques of the book is that the reports mainly concern Europe and the United States. Neither Asia, a major business partner of both the U.S. and Europe, nor South America (except for Argentina) or the African continent, are the subjects of reports. Although, as its Foreword made clear, this book never intended to represent a comprehensive study of international export control laws, the limited geographical area covered by its reports renders the book of limited interest.

*Geraldine Cummins*

WATSON, ADAM, *THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS*; Routledge, New York, NY (1992); ISBN 0415 06998 X; 337 pp. (softcover).

Adam Watson has been a British Ambassador and Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Chairman of the British Committee for the theory of International Politics and, since 1978, Professor of International Relations at the University of Virginia. In order to appreciate the system of international order present today, Watson believes in the importance of understanding previous systems in history. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* attempts to further this understanding through a methodical historical analysis of international societies. The book begins with a discussion of the systems of ancient states, and then moves to the two distinct Asian systems in India and China. After developing a historical understanding of these systems, Watson explains the European systems and concludes with a discussion of contemporary systems of international society. At the outset, the author does poses two important questions, which he discusses throughout the text: one is the idea of cultural unity in each of the systems, and the other

of hegemonical and imperial authority.

The discussion of the ancient systems begins with the Kingdom of Sumer, the nation with the earliest written records. An analysis of Assyria, Persia, Classical Greece, and the Macedonian systems continues the discussion of the ancient systems. Watson creates the cultural and political framework to analyze each of these societies. The book then shifts to the Indian system of societies that developed as multiple, independent unities with a diversity of peoples, and a variety of languages present even today. The Indian systems are contrasted with the Chinese system, which developed in isolation, but later became multiple independent systems. The author easily shifts his discussion of Asia globally by next analyzing the Roman and Byzantine systems. He concludes his discussion of the ancient systems with a look at Islam.

The author's discussion of European systems is limited to those which have influenced our present system. Beginning with Medieval society, where later European states are rooted, the book expands into the Renaissance. He discusses the spread of the Italian Renaissance throughout Europe in the sixteenth century and its influence on the evolution of contemporary systems.

The next section explores three aspects of sixteenth century struggles to replace the Renaissance and Reformation with a new organization in Europe. The first struggle is the Reformation, the second is the consolidation of the independent states, and the final struggle is the establishment of the hegemonical authority and a move towards the imperial end of the spectrum. Watson proceeds into the seventeenth century, which featured the settlement in Westphalia after the Thirty Years War. The settlement, according to the author, began "the age of reason and balance," leading into European expansion prior to the nineteenth century.

This propels the reader into the final leg of Watson's journey with a look at the contemporary system of states. In the last few pages of the book, the author provides a brief account of two major phases in the emergence of the global international society: first, the two decades between the wars and the collapse of European domination, and second, the four decades following the Second World War — the age of the superpowers and decolonization. Watson covers this extensive amount of material in a methodical and informative manner, giving the reader a firm background in the history of international state systems. His historical accounts are detail specific, and his method of comparisons enlightening.

*Manisha Davé*