

theory and practice are to found because here is to be found the minimalist 'art of the possible' associated with post-Westphalian realism which effectively excludes certain questions, themes and issues from serious analytical and strategic consideration to the present day.

More immediately I seek here to indicate the dangers of a post-Westphalian consensus which, from its very beginnings, left out of its analysis some of the crucial ambiguities and complexities of the late Mediaeval/early modern period in favour of a particularly narrow representation of the modern inter-state system. This reductionist process, I suggest, is a major legacy of the Westphalian model in the current era, one which continues to influence the new foreign policy debate in Australia.

Framing The Westphalian Model and its Contemporary Legacy

The end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 and the treaty signed at Westphalia in that year is commonly represented as a historical point of origin for the modern state system. It represents in this sense the moment when *Res Publica Christiana*, the world of the Holy Roman Empire, of Papal decree and the moral and legal unity of the Mediaeval age, gives way to a recognisably modern age of state sovereignty, moral and legal independence and religious tolerance and diversity. It saw the universalist conception of political and moral community established under Church and Emperor displaced by a new world order centred on autonomy, fragmentation and the rule of sovereign princes established in territorial and secular-legal terms. More precisely, the shift from ancient to modern associated with the Treaty of Westphalia saw the political religious and cultural architecture of the Mediaeval era superseded by a new framework of principles ideas and structural norms representative of an emerging world of states.

The point, however, is that this model of Westphalia is hardly an accurate representation of the empirical complexity of the emerging world of states in the 17th century. In historical terms, for example, the peace treaty signed at Westphalia represents the point at which a long-term systemic evolution was consolidated and formalised rather than an absolute point of modern origin marking the beginning of the state-system. Similarly, while sovereign statehood was accorded legitimacy after Westphalia, since the early 16th century, major powers such as Britain and France and relatively small powers such as Sweden were already effectively autonomous, independent modern state-actors. After Westphalia too the right and authority to wage war and seek alliances was formally invested in the sovereign ruler as an instrument of state policy, but this again was more the consolidation of already existing practice in many regions of Europe rather than a dramatic reformulation of