Throughout this book, and particularly in Chapters Two and Five, reference has been made to the ways in which international factors shape and influence the nature of public administration and policy-making in developing countries. These international factors have included the activities of colonial powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the operations of international development agencies – such as the World Bank and UN agencies – and the current promotion of 'market forces' and privatization. This chapter explores the international environment in detail. Initially it describes the historical background of the colonial and post-war eras and identifies their administrative legacy. Subsequently it explores the contemporary scene and in particular the implications of the end of the Cold War and the increasing globalization of production, exchange, media and ideas. During the 1990s the choices open to the governments of developing countries about the reorientation of public sector activities have narrowed and an increasingly powerful orthodoxy, arguing that all countries should practice the 'new public management', has emerged.
The colonial era and its legacy

Colonial administrations have been caricatured as the ‘night watchman state’, focusing on law and order, the extraction of taxes and the export of primary commodities. Policy-making was a responsibility for authorities back in London, Paris, Brussels, Lisbon and Canberra. The social and economic needs and desires of the ‘native’ population attracted minimal concern (other than occasional demonstrations of paternalism and the oversight of church and charitable organizations); and power was vested in the hands of a small, and usually white, elite. The catharsis of independence was inevitably associated with hasty attempts at localization of positions in the state, with the establishment of administrative colleges and large-scale training initiatives supposedly supplying the qualified human resources. However, such activities rarely created the capacity for indigenes to take over the limited functions of the colonial administration effectively, let alone work out how to meet the escalating public expectations and demands associated with independence.

Although the colonial legacy varied from power to power, and from ex-colony to ex-colony, a common set of features can be identified in many countries:

- A tendency towards the centralization of power;
- Ambiguity about the roles and relationships of public administrators and politicians (as domestic politicians were latecomers);
- A tradition that senior civil service appointments should be allocated to generalist administrators, rather than to those with technical or specialist backgrounds;
- A reluctance to provide information to those outside of the administration;
- An emphasis on following statutes, rules and procedures (role not task);
- Limited consultation with the public and little recognition of a role for the media;
- An emphasis on written communication and the processing of paper;
- Relatively high levels of non-salary compensation for middle and senior level officers (for example free or highly subsidized housing).

While the colonial era ended more than 25 years ago in most developing countries – and almost 50 years ago for the Indian sub-