



## Lecture:

### Introduction

Every day, seemingly random events, situations, and incidents occur around the globe as states interact with one another. Countries threaten to or actually launch missiles at other states, triggering instability and arms races. Aircraft engaged in surveillance activities stray over the territory of rivals and enemies, and are shot down or accused of violating the national sovereignty of the state or states concerned. Accidents occur, as in the case of the Peruvian Air Force shooting down a plane carrying missionaries in April 2001, mistaking them for drug dealers.

States actually launch missiles attacking other states, or use them in a threatening manner. For example, the U.S. launched cruise missile attacks against the terrorist training camps of [Osama bin Laden](#) in Afghanistan in 1998, as well as at a pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan which was supposed to be manufacturing biological weapons. The attacks were launched in retaliation for the terrorist bombings of two American embassies in East Africa.

North Korean missile tests have also been viewed as a threat by the United States, and cited as a reason justifying the creation of a national missile defense system. In his State of the Union message in 2002, President Bush referred to North Korea as part of an "axis of evil", along with the "rogue" states of Iraq and Iran. Of course, the United States has now eliminated [Iraq](#) as a rogue state. In the year 2003, both North Korea and Iran were wondering whether or not they were next.

China has increased the number of missiles it has deployed opposite Taiwan, as a means of threatening and intimidating the government there. Other states mass troops on their borders or engage in military maneuvers, which are seen as threatening by their neighbors. In 2001, the U.S. engaged in military maneuvers in Thailand near the Chinese border to deal with drug traffickers, an action which could be interpreted by the Chinese government as threatening in conjunction with U.S. surveillance flights close to the Chinese coast. By 2002, India and Pakistan had each massed approximately one million troops on the contested Line of Control in Kashmir, as tensions between the two countries escalated following an upsurge of Islamic Fundamentalist activity in the region. Fortunately, tensions eased between these two countries in 2003, but the danger of a nuclear war between them is still very real.

.In 1998, Iran massed troops on its borders with [Afghanistan](#), threatening to retaliate against the Islamic fundamentalist regime of the Taliban in response to the murder of several Iranian diplomats there. However, since the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2002, Iran has aligned itself with some Afghan warlords in an effort to extend its influence in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

And on September 11, 2001, a national tragedy occurred in the United States when terrorists crashed commercial jetliners into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon, striking a devastating blow at the heart of America's financial and military power, and unleashing the war against terror.



Global instability in the international system seems to be endemic as revolutions, military coups, and political assassinations (such as the assassination of President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2001) are a daily occurrence. In the post Cold War period, states are being torn apart by civil wars, marked by a horrific orgy of ethnic cleansing and genocide. For example, it is estimated that anywhere between 800,000 to 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in Rwanda in 1994.

In some instances, states disintegrate and even disappear from the map of the world, such as the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, states like Poland, which had been partitioned and divided by its more powerful neighbors in the latter part of the 18th century, survive and miraculously reappear over a century and a quarter later.

### **International Order and Anarchy**

What is the beginning student of international relations to make of this complex mosaic of seemingly unrelated events that appear to unfold in a somewhat chaotic fashion? Is there any sense of order at all to the thousands of international interactions and events that take place in the world arena? With the end of the [Cold War](#), the world seems to be even more anarchic than before. Instead of a world society enjoying a peace dividend, the international system in the post Cold War era, has turned out to be a far more disorderly and dangerous place than anyone ever imagined that it would be, as the Americans were shocked into realizing how vulnerable they were after the events of 9/11. The traditional realist concept of the defensive borders of the country as a hard shell protecting its citizens from attack was shattered, one of the effects of 9/11 on the international system.

### **Underlying Principles of International Relations**

Therefore, are there any underlying principles or factors of international relations that can satisfactorily explain the arcane intricacies of world affairs to the uninitiated? What has been the effect of 9/11 on the international system, and will the world never be the same again as was argued in the immediate shock in the aftermath of the attack? As a matter of fact, the condition or state of international relations may not be quite as disorderly as a superficial impression of it would lead us to believe. The international system may not be quite as chaotic or anarchic as it seems to be at first glance, even following the horrific events of 9/11. It could be said that the international system, such as it is, may exist in a state of semi-anarchy, rather than total chaos, even if it lacks a strong world government. The logic of semi-anarchy in turn has an effect upon the behavior of states in the international system.

#### **Realism**

The first step in unraveling the mysteries of world politics consists of looking at the several different theoretical approaches to the field of international relations. Of course, how one analyzes world politics has an effect upon the results of the analysis. For example, one could use the theoretical approach of realism or power politics. (also note Goldstein's triangular depiction of conservative, liberal and revolutionary world views in the text) Realism for example, represents a fairly conservative approach to international relations.

#### **Idealism**



On the other hand, the idealist or liberal approach to international relations tends to focus more on the possibilities of promoting peaceful change in world society through the codification of norms of state behavior by the development of international law and international institutions. For example, idealists are very closely linked to neo-liberal institutionalists who believe that the solution to controlling the basic problem of international relations-war-lies in the promotion of cooperative behavior between states within the framework of international organizations like the United Nations.

### Revolutionaries

On the other hand, revolutionaries such as classic Marxists, believe that the only way to create the good society is to completely restructure and change the distribution of power in the international system.

### The Level of Analysis Problem

The extent to which you can understand the complexities of world politics also depends on the level of analysis which you use in analyzing what is happening on a world scale. This is known as the level of analysis problem. Traditionally, political scientists have tended to look at international relations through the prism of three levels of analysis: the individual level, the domestic level, and the interstate level. Your text adds a fourth or global level.

### Individual Leaders

Among other things, the individual level of analysis deals with the role of world leaders, and focuses on their psychological characteristics and perceptions of the world. For instance, the personality of a President of the United States may affect his ability to function as an effective world leader. Woodrow Wilson, according to psychological studies of his personality, was seen as inflexible and unwilling to compromise, a factor which may have contributed to his inability to persuade the Senate to approve of American entry into the League of Nations.

The ability of a leader to function effectively may also be influenced by the extent to which he or she correctly perceives events which are taking place, especially in a crisis situation when he/she may be overloaded with conflicting images and signals. Studies have shown that in such a situation (for example, the onset of World War I) the individual leader may be subject to cognitive dissonance and tend to adhere to information that reinforces preexisting beliefs rather than make a rational decision which is based on objective facts.

### The Domestic Level

The domestic level of analysis usually focuses on the type of political regime and system which exists in a state. Contrary to what classic realists believe, the type of domestic political system which exists in a state may have an important bearing on the kind of foreign policy which it pursues. For example, democratic peace theorists argue that liberal democracies are more peaceful and less war prone than authoritarian or totalitarian states. However, an important caveat to this proposition is that liberal democracies have less of a tendency to make war on other liberal democracies, but are more frequently involved in conflicts with non-democratic states.



A liberal democracy is a society that is characterized by a highly competitive political party system, with free, fair, and periodic elections, a free media, and is a rule of law state which is based upon an independent judiciary and an effective rather than nominal constitution.

Moreover, the internal attributes of a pluralistic society that play an important role in the formulation and execution of foreign policy are political parties, interest groups, and large bureaucracies. For example, in the United States, giant bureaucracies like the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Treasury Department, may each pursue their own "foreign policy". In such a situation, the overall foreign policy which finally emerges usually is the lowest common denominator which "satisfies" all of the bureaucracies involved.

### **Substate Actors**

Furthermore, in a pluralistic society, sub-state actors such as cities and state governments in the U.S. may also function in the world arena, particularly in an era of growing globalization. For example, Boston considers itself to be a world class city, which is the home of internationally renowned universities and medical centers. It has an international airport which connects the city to all of the points on the globe, which unfortunately was the starting point of two of the hijacked aircraft on the fateful day of 9/11. Boston has an international visitor's center, and is involved in sister cities programs with such cities as Kyoto, Japan. Furthermore, Boston, which has the character and charm of an old world city, is a major tourist attraction for visitors from all across the globe, who come to walk the freedom trail and visit the sites where the American Revolution began. The state of Massachusetts itself also functions as an actor in the international arena, with a special focus on promoting its exports abroad, as do a number of other states. For example, Massachusetts maintains a trade office at the Headquarters of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium to drum up business for its exports. Governors of Massachusetts recently have frequently travelled abroad on a number of trade missions.

### **Interstate Level**

Finally, as we shall see later, the third or interstate level of analysis (which I consider to be the most important) focuses on such issues as the power relationships which exist between states, and such concepts as balance of power, alliances, and collective security.

### **Global Level**

The last point is that your text has added a fourth or global level of analysis, which revolves around common world order problems, patterns, and trends, such as protecting the environment. An online lecture later discusses some of the problems that are connected to the growing scarcity of freshwater and sustainable economic development, with suggestions of what you can do to help and improve the situation.

Your text also pays a great deal of attention to the economic gap which separates the rich North from the poorer South, as representative of a global trend or pattern. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack which took place on 9/11, there has been a movement to increase the level of economic aid provided by the rich developed countries of the North, to the poorer, developing countries located in the South.

### **International Systems: Mixed Actor Systems**



In a further effort to introduce some sense of order to the study of international relations, political scientists use the notion of international systems. Of course, the idea of an international system is a logical construction which has been invented by political scientists. However, we can then say that the international system has a structure, which consists of different types of actors, and therefore the international system is a mixed actor system. These consist of states and non-state actors such as international organizations like the UN, international pressure groups known as NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) multinational corporations, and terrorist organizations like the one (al Qaeda) headed by Osama Bin Laden, which may be linked to a network of other organizations scattered across the globe. The attack of 9/11 underscored the importance of international networks of transnational non-state actors like terrorist organizations in the international system. So this also was one of the effects of 9/11 on the international system.

### **The State as Primary actor in the International System**

In spite of the phenomenon of globalization, (which means many different things, and may not be entirely a new phenomena) which is supposed to be eroding the traditional notion of sovereignty, the state is still considered to be the primary actor in the international system. by realists and neo-realists. That is to say, the state or country (which some political scientists refer to as nation-state) is still the most powerful unit or actor in the international system.

If we use membership in the United Nations as a measure to figure out how many states there currently are in the international system, we find that there are at last count in 2003, about 191 states operating in the international organization, with East Timor and Switzerland as the latest members. (for a number of years Switzerland stayed out of the UN in order to preserve its neutrality)

.The durability of the state as an actor in the international system has been underscored by the fact that there has been a significant increase in the number of states since 1945, when the United Nations only had 51 members. However, at the same time, the phenomenon of the failed state which serves as a breeding ground for terror has been recognized as an important problem in the Post-Cold War international system. In addition, many of the new states which have emerged in the international system are very small states which are quite weak and vulnerable. in danger of becoming failing or failed states.

Furthermore, as we shall see later when we look at power relationships between states, there are also enormous disparities which exist in the size of territory and population, resources, and economic wealth of states. These tangible elements of national power are very important to realists. This means that the idea of state sovereignty which is based upon the assumption that every state, no matter how large or small, is equal to every other state, is a legal fiction.

Moreover, some political scientists have argued that in the post Cold war world, the traditional concept of state sovereignty is being eroded by the forces of globalization, as states become more interdependent economically on each other.

Furthermore, the idea that the international community can intervene in the domestic affairs of a state (such as NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999) to protect the human rights of an oppressed minority is also contributing to the erosion of the traditional concept of state sovereignty, which has served as the foundation of international order, since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.



### **Non-State Actors**

Finally, the international system is a mixed actor system, because different types of actors other than states, with varying degrees of power and influence, interact with one another in the system. These transnational actors include international organizations like the UN (over 400 international governmental organizations or IGOs are active in the world political system), thousands of NGOs or nongovernmental organizations, which roughly can be compared to international pressure groups representing international civil society, as well as multinational corporations, and even [terrorist](#) groups.