Lecture:

This lecture deals with some of the theories which are associated with the causes and prevention of war.Political scientists define war as consisting of a conflict in which there are a minimum of 1000 battlefield deaths, involved in sustained combat, according to the Correlates of War project devised by J. David Singer.Although it should be pointed out that this definition, which was originally devised to exclude such events as massacres, only refers to militarized interstate warfare,and has been criticized because it does not pay enough attention to civil and extra-state conflicts(conflicts involving sovereign states and entities which are not recognized as sovereign by the international community.

According to the realist vision of world order, war is a normal method(usually after all other options have been exhausted)used by states to resolve differences between them, if efforts at the peaceful adjustment of disputes have failed.According to the famous British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, in his book Why Men Fight, "War is a conflict between two groups, each of which attempts to kill and maim as many as possible of the other group in order to achieve some object which it desires.The object is generally either power or wealth."

The beginning and the end of great wars(hegemonic wars or wars for global supremacy)also mark a watershed as far as the history of international systemsare concerned, because they can serve as benchmarks marking the end of one international system and the beginning of another.

War is a method of conflict resolution which has been institutionalized over the centuries,according to the classic realist view of international relations, as states seek to maximize their power.Furthermore, realists reject the argument of democratic peace theorists an argument which is based on the notion that liberal democracies have less of a tendency to go to war with other liberal democracies, although generally speaking, liberal democracies are no less war prone than non-democracies. The democratic peace theorist argues that it is the internal make-up of a state that matters, and therefore challenges the realist paradigm of international politics.According to the democratic peace theorist,liberal democracies have less of a tendency to got to war with other liberal democracies because they are constrained from doing so by institutional or structural factors peculiar to a democracy, as well as cultural factors, such as the commonality of democratic values which are shared by all genuine democracies.

As James Ray points out in his book,Democracy and International Conflict,so-called exceptions to the rule that democracies don't wage war against other democracies,such as democratic Athens waging war against democratic Sparta during the "golden age" of Greek democracy, the war of 1812 between the democratic US and democratic Britain, the US civil war between the democratic North and the democratic South,and the Spanish-American War of 1898, can be explained by the fact that one ofthe states in each of these conflict-ridden dyayds was not a democracy at all, since it did not meet the criteria that defined a liberal democracy.Athens, for example, was characterized by a political system which was based on slavery and the exclusion of women from the political process.

One of the major elements of democratic peace theory is that liberal democracies have more of a tendency to wage war on non-democracies(authoritarian or totalitarian regimes),are more inclined to win them,but democratic leaders are also more concerned about how a war affects their position in power.

WAR AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Neorealists such as Kenneth Waltz, who take somewaht of a different view of the relationship between the onset of war and the power drive of states , argue that states do not seek to maximize their power, but rather only seek to survive in an anarchic world.neorealists, however, also make the argument that war is structurally determined, as hegemonic states try to preserve the status quo and thus their position in the international system from challengers who are interested in revising the existing distribution of power in the system.To the neorealist, there is a relationship between the structure of power in the international system and the war-proneness of that system.Kenneth Waltz has argued that the bipolar system that existed during the Cold War, for instance, was more peaceful than the multipolar system which existed before the onset of the First World War, because as he writes, "rigidity of alignment in a two-power world results in more flexibility of strategy and greater freedom of decision."Furthermore,Waltz argues in a piece entitled "The Origins of War in Neorealist theory,"that multipolar systems are more dangerous because, "In a multipolar world, dangers are diffused ,responsibilities unclear,and definitions of vital interests easily obscured."Another prominent realist political scientist,John Mearsheimer also tends to argue that the most war-prone international system is what he terms a loose multipolar system.

Political scientists have also studied the incidence of wars (mostly interstate wars)over the centuries in an effort to determine whether or not the amount of war in the international system has been increasing or decreasing.According to a recent study entitled, "Inter-State,Intra-State,and Extra-State Wars:A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution Over Time,1816-1997" that appeared in the March 2003 issue of the International Studies Quarterly, "There have been more wars in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth century,and about half these wars can be designated "international", by which wemean they are either inter-state or extra-state wars."

The internal make-up of states is also not a factor in the world order perspective of the neorealist.Marxists, however, like neoliberals, argue that it is indeed the internal attributes of states that result in war, according to classic Marxist theory, as capitalist states engage in imperialist wars, seeking outlets for their markets, raw materials, and cheap labor.

There may be no single factor which satisfactorily explains the human proclivity to engage in war,human beings being one of the very few species that engage in intra-specific aggression(that is, killing members of its own kind,and in that respect having a common trait which it shares with the brown rat.)

If one engages in the level of analysis approach to war,it becomes clear that war may be the result of multiple factors, even though one might be able to identify a single proximate cause of war, like World War I, such as the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914.This was the proximate cause of the war,although obviously, to this day,historians continue to write books about

World War I,as they attempt to make sense of the tangled skein of events that led to the Great War(as World War I was called).

Just as World War I has been viewed by some historians as the accidental war, so it has also been argued that wars result from misperceptions and miscalculations of the opposing sides.For example, the work by Robert Jervis, focuses on the misperceptions on the part of elites that can tragically lead to war.In an article entitled "War and Misperception", Jervis writes that misperception"...includes inaccurate inferences, miscalculations of consequences, and misjudgements about how others will react to one's policies." For example, leaders may underestimate or overestimate the intentions and threats of their rivals. In a crisis situation, elites may be overloaded with information, have difficulty screening it,and also may be subjected to the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance.Cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual is overwhelmed with so much information, that he/she reverts to perceived stereotypes that reinforce preexisting beliefs.

There is no single cause of World War 1.As your text points out, wars generally have multiple causes.The causes of war can also be found at different levels of analysis, ranging from the individual to the international system.In the case of World War I, misperceptions by individual leaders such as Kaiser Wilhelm may have contributed to the outbreak of the conflict.At the level of the international system, the emergence of two rival alliance systems may have been another factor that contributed to the outbreak of the war,

One of the factors that contributed to World War I was the breakdown of the international system which existed from 1815-1914.Following the dismisal of Otto Von Bismarck as the Chancellor of Prussia by the German Emperor Wilhelm in 1890, Europe witnessed the disintegration of the Bismarckian alliance system that had been based on the Three Emperor's League, which consisted of Germany, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.The formation of an alliance between France and Russia in 1894 meant that Germany would have to invade France and defeat it quickly in order to avoid a two-front war.This meant that Germany would have to invade Belgium in order to invade France,according to a plan concocted by the German General Von Schliefen.Belgian neutrality had been guarantueed by the British since 1839, and the United Kingdom declared war against Germany once it had invaded Belgium.

British Policy

It should be pointed out, however, that British involvement in the war was not a foregone conclusion,since British policy for centuries had focused on avoiding permanent alliances on the Continent.There was considerable opposition in the British government in 1914 to becoming involved in a land war in Europe. But as Winston Churchill, who was one of the leading advocates of war pointed out,Britain could not tolerate the idea that Belgium and the Atlantic coast of France would fall into the hands of a hostile power like Germany.This would have brought Germany, which had engaged in a naval building program which was designed to challenge British hegemony on the high seas , to the shores of the North Atlantic opposite Britain.

In anticipation of the impending conflict, the British had brought a number of their naval vessals back from various parts of the Empire.This move had been made possible by the construction of an alliance with Japan, and a reduction in tension between the colliding British and Russian empires in Central Asia.The British were also concerned that the Germans might launch a

surprise naval attack against their home fleet, and therefore moved their fleet to the naval base at Scapa Flow for safekeeping..

The Balance of Power

The British had pursued a policy toward the Continent which was based on maintaining a balance of power in Europe that was favorable to their interests.It was a British statesman who had remarked that a country has no permanent friends, only permanent interests.Historically, British foreign policy of "splendid isolation" had been devised to prevent a single country or alliance system from dominating the Continent and being in a position to threaten the national security of the Home Islands.The invasion of Belgium by Germany in 1914 provided the war party in the British government with the opportunity that they needed to declare war against Germany.

Two Rival Alliance Systems

One could argue that World War I was caused by the division of Europe into two rival alliances-the Central powers led by Germany, and the Entente grouped around Britain and France, keeping in mind the fact that Russia and France had previously entered into an alliance in 1894.The entente between Britain and France did not exactly represent a formal alliance, but might better be described as a diplomatic arrangement.The entente was made possible because these two powers had resolved their differences over competition for colonial possessions prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

The committments of the members of each alliance to each other left little room for maneuver or flexibility , when the war clouds gathered in the summer of 1914.Germany, for example, gave a "blank check" to its Austro-Hungarian ally in dealing with Serbia, following the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914.The Archduke was the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and was assassinated by a Serbian terrorist who was supported by the Serbian intelligence service.

The Blank Check

The Austro-Hungarian empire, given a "blank check" by the German emperor, who then subsequently went on vacation, issued an ultimatum to Serbia which was impossible to meet.World War I started as a regional conflict, when the Austro-Hungarian empire attacked Serbia. Serbia then appealed to Russia for help, and in response, Russia began to mobilize its troops.

Consequently, it could be argued that World War I was also caused by the fact that the countries involved in it were locked into rigid and inflexible mobilization plans, as the iron dice of history had been cast.The German Emperor tried to stop the mobilization of his troops in response to Russia's partial mobilization, but was told by his generals that it was impossible to do so.

Misperceptions

The war may also have been caused by a number of misperceptions.There was an underestimation of how long the war would last,and the feeling that it would be over quickly.Germany had fought a series of wars earlier which were over quickly through the use of new technology such as the telegraph and the railways.The last war-between France and

Prussia- had been fought in 1871, so that a sense of complacency had set in Europe by 1914.Also, the mood in Europe was one of Social Darwinism, based on the notion that only the fittest should survive, and that a war would also clear the air, settling the differences which had emerged between the rival blocs.

The United States

The United States originally tried to stay out of the war,and pursued a policy of neutrality. President Woodrow Wilson was at first suspicious that the British motives in fighting the war were to preserve the Empire.After all, the U.S. had fought the British in the Revolution, and again during the War of 1812.On the other hand, the British navy had actually in a sense enforced the Monroe Doctrine for the United States. By 1895 the British had conceded that the Western Hemisphere lay within the American sphere of influence,as London had become more concerned with the threat posed by rising German power on the Continent.

But, U.S. investments in Britain, Britiish propaganda which effectively exploited alleged atrocities committed by Germany when it invaded Belgium in 1914,and the clumsy efforts of Germany to embroil the United States in a war with Mexico pushed the United States in the direction of joining the Allied powers.

Most important of all was the American insistence on maintaining freedom of the seas in the Atlantic.The Germans gambled that unrestricted submarine warfare, which resulted in the sinking of American ships and loss of life, would result in victory before the U.S. could bring its power to bear across the Atlantic.The U.S. entry into the war in 1917 effectively tipped the balance of power in favor of the allies.The Versailles Treaty which ended the war imposed a Draconian peace on Germany and set the stage for World War II.This is why some historians combine World War I and II together as the 30 years war.

Idealists focus onthe necessity to construct an effective war prevention system in the first place,and also to hold those guilty of war crimes(genocide, crimes against humanity, vilation of the Geneva Convention) accountable for their actions.From an idealist point of view, the international community generally views war as a crime. According to this perspective, war represents a legitimized form of organized murder, which is committed by individuals within a society, would be punished as a crime.Idealists take the view that war indeed is hell, in terms of the human lives that are lost forever and its economic destruction and consequences.It has been said that war opens up the gates of hell.

Idealists have also tended to draw a distinction between just and unjust wars, a distinction that has been drawn since the Middle Ages.Just and unjust wars could also be categorized according to whether the reasons for going to war are just(Jus ad bellum) and whether or not the war is waged in a just fashion(Jus in bello).A just war is usually supposed to be undertaken only for purposes of self-defence.

Offensive wars are considered to be acts of aggression, and as such, crimes according to the dictates of international law.Since idealists consider war to be an "instrument of evil", war should only be employed by the proper or legitimate authorities of a state as a last resort, after all other efforts to resolve the conflict have been exhausted.

A just war should also be a conflict in which the international rules of war are observed , where the rights of combatants and civilians are protected.Most important of all, civilians should not be the subject of deliberate attacks by military forces, although the rules of law do allow collateral damage to occur as a result of an attack on a military target.Military forces and weapons should not be deliberately placed in areas populated by civiliansObviously, once a war begins, then the focus is on the manner in which it is conducted, as each belligerent in the conflict tries to place its actions in the most favorable light possible.A sense of proportion must also characterize the conduct of a war.this applies to the types of weapons that are employed, and the use of such weapons as well.

The question of a just war arose in connection with the decision of the Bush administration to go to war with Iraq in march of 2003.This decision supposedly fit in with the new National Security Strategy devised by the Bush administration in September 2003, the centerpiece of which was the "war against terror."A key premise of the new security strategy was that the United States no longer faced conventional threats to its security by state actors,but rather unconventional threats by non-state actors such as terrorists as well as rogue states.

The notion of threat was an overiding factor,where the fear was that terrorists and rogue states would be able to deploy weapons of mass destruction   and use then against the US homeland, which had lost its sense of vulnerability since 9/11.Consequently, the doctrine of anticipatory self-defense and preemptive war was raised by the US administration, although actually it could be argued that the US was pursuing a preventive rather than a preemptive war in Iraq.

The Charter of the United nations prohibits the use of force by states to resolve disputes with other states(but the UN Charter does not say anything about nonstate actors in this connection.According to article 51 of the Charter, a state can act in self-defense after an "armed attack", but then also has to go to the Security Council to resolve the dispute in question.Some critics of the war have argued that the US did not face an imminent attack from Iraq in 2003,in the sense of a time frame in which an attack was about to occur immediately.A precedent could be found in the explanation by US Secretary of State Daniel Webster in the Caroline case that occurred in 1837.In 1837, British forces destroyed a US ship, the Caroline, which they claimed was being used to help Canadian rebels.But Daniel Webster argued that the Caroline was not an immediate threat to the British,and so the British military action was not justified.

In a sense, the Bush administration had revised the doctrine of deterrence and containment which had been followed as part and parcel of the grand strategy that was pursued by Washington in the international postwar system.The Bush administration argued that its action against Iraq was legal and justified by prior UN Security Council Resolutions which were still in effect,such as Security Council Resolutions 678, 687, and 1441.