

Journal articles



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Journal 1 (Quiz 5)

The looming crisis that Michael Clare predicts in the new “ Thirty Years of War” concerns the competition for natural resources among the world’s nations. Clare foresees a situation whereby the world’s biggest consumers of energy and multinational corporations will be embroiled in a tussle of war to control the diminishing energy reserves. Under the present circumstances, the author says that competition will grow because there is no way the current energy supply is ever going to satisfy global future demand.

There are striking similarities between the developing competition for energy resources and the Thirty Years of War of 1618-1648. The early 17th century war was fueled by internal politics within the European Empire. Kingdoms went into war with the aim of achieving regional supremacy. The present energy crisis is also a manifestation of a desire on the part of the world’s super powers to attain hegemony. There is a strong connection between oil and politics, considering that oil producing countries like Saudi Arabia are able to use it as leverage in international relations. States players in international politics recognize the power that oil producing countries wield. Consequently, energy will be the future weapon for exerting regional and global influence.

However, the two conflicts differ in terms of ideology. The emergency of China as a rival to the U. S. in international politics is also likely to fuel the conflict along the same lines in which Europe’s powers fought. The difference in this case is that the war will not be military, but economic in nature.

Similarly, the Thirty Years of War in Europe was partly fought over religion,

pitying Catholics against Protestants in the Roman Empire. Although it later evolved into a war for political dominance between the great powers of the time, religion was its root cause. In contrast, the present conflict is based on competition over resources.

Journal 2 (quiz 10)

The aftermath of every conflict in which the U. S. has been involved shows that force and coercion do not realize the desired goals. More often than not, military intervention and economic coercion through trade sanctions create animosity between the aggressor and the victim. Machiavelli's argument that the Prince should be parsimonious in dealing with underlings promotes the realist idea of using any means to achieve self interests. However, history shows that this approach often backfires in the U. S.'s efforts to influence international policies. Two of the most recent involvements of the U. S in international conflicts involved the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. The outcome of both excursions undermines Machiavelli's argument in two ways. First, the U. S.'s use of military force reflects the response of a parsimonious prince; a desire to instill fear in those perceived as enemies of the U. S. The effect of this approach to both conflicts was the rise of anti-American sentiments in the Muslim world. As a result, the U. S. failed to get allies from the Arab community, which could have boosted her chances of pacifying the Middle East. Instead, the U. S. created more enemies for herself in the form of Arab countries who interpreted the invasions as an attack against Islam.

In this regard, I disagree with the U. S.'s foreign policy towards Iran because it is informed by the same ideology that led to Afghanistan and Iraq. It is time the U. S. transformed its war against terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons by employing dialogue and cooperation. I think that America's aggressive approach will in the long run increase tensions between the west and the Arab world, with the latter regarding itself as a victim of western imperialism. Therefore, it is necessary at this point in time for the U. S. to become a generous Prince, a move that is likely to endear it to the international community. Playing the role of the heavy-handed Big Brother has only caused more damage than finding solutions.

Journal 3 (quiz 8)

To an extent, I agree with Keohane's use of the phrase "informal violence" to refer to terrorism. This is because terrorism is often propagated by groups or organizations rather than governments. Therefore, informal violence in this case would refer to illegally operating terrorist cells, groups and organizations that are not affiliated to any country. In addition, informal violence suggests that the groups that commit terrorism are amorphous- they lack clear structures of leadership. This is the case with groups like Al Shabaab which operate out of different countries.

However, the use of the phrase informal violence does not fully capture the nature of terrorism. This is because some governments like Iran and Iraq during Saddam's time were known to support terrorist groups. The opposite of informal violence is "formal violence," which will suggest the use of state instruments of power to commit acts of terror. This relationship between

terrorist groups and governments means that terrorism is not always a form of informal violence.

In this regard, I think that the terrorism has become too politicized to be used in a meaningful analytical sense. For instance, the Bush administration's fight against terrorism extended the reference to governments that host terrorists. In his famous coinage, "the axis of evil," President George Bush asserted that the U. S will treat terrorists and their sympathizers alike. Consequently, usage of the term terrorism has become a propaganda tool for justifying foreign policies that support aggression and military interventions in other countries. In addition, the fight against terrorism has become a political game through which powerful countries enforce their foreign policies. The Bush administration's declaration that there is no neutrality in the war against terrorism suggests how the term has been used to wield political influence. This tactic was useful in either winning even unwilling allies or preventing those sympathetic with the terrorist's cause from voicing their support openly.

Journal 4 (Quiz 4).

Lenin's explanation of the rise of imperialism from capitalism focuses on market forces, which transforms a free market into a monopoly. He viewed the merging of the financial capital controlled by banks and industries as a form of financial oligarchy. When this capital rather than commodities was exported abroad in terms of foreign investment, it helped capitalists to achieve international importance and influence. The next stage was the emergence of monopoly in the form of capitalist multinationals that shared

the world resources amongst themselves. Finally, the capitalist powers divided the world amongst themselves, which in effect set the stage for imperialism.

According to Lenin, imperialism succeeded capitalism by taking control over the periphery (foreign territories) and using it as a source of cheap labor and raw materials to satisfy the demands of the core. Secondly, capitalism created a class of a “ peripheral elite” to consume high-end products imported from the core. Finally, capitalism sought to undermine local industries in the foreign markets they had invaded. This turned the affected countries into dependants of foreign capital for investment.

In the film documentary Blood and Oil, Michael Klare portrays the nature of contemporary imperialism. The scramble for oil resources shows capitalism’s continued invasion of foreign territories to satisfy its demand. The U. S.’s military involvement in the Middle East is viewed as a form of modern-day imperialism, with the sole purpose of acquiring scarce resources for its industries. It is a manifestation of imperialism in the form of the U. S.’s desire to become a monopoly over the control of the world’s energy resources.

Journal 5 (Quiz 5)

According to Tickner, feminist perspectives have failed to make inroads into International Relations Theory mainly because feminism does not draw from the same realities that influence international relations. He states that “ feminists and IR scholars are drawing on very different realities using different epistemologies when they engage in theorizing about international relations” (Tickner, 1997, p. 613). For instance, feminists view gender in

terms of power inequality. Consequently, they analyze international relations in terms of social constructivism. The goal of this approach is to overcome gender discrimination and promote social justice. However, non-feminist IR thinkers argue that gender has nothing to do with the problems that affect the world such as insecurity. They further argue that IR is a “gender-neutral discipline” focused with understanding the behavior of state players on the international scene.

On the question of terrorism, a feminist will argue in relation to the distribution of resources and power. Consequently, a feminist will argue that terrorism is a response to social and economic inequalities. From a feminist perspective, terrorism, like any other criminal activity, is a consequence of the ways in which wealth is distributed between the haves and the have-nots. In this light, terrorism will cease to exist if there was equal sharing of resources in all societies. The goal of international relations, therefore, is to create an equal society where every individual will have an equal opportunity to access resources.

From a gender point of view, men are the chief perpetrators and negotiators of war and peace in contemporary conflicts, but women are among those who suffer most and are ill-represented at peace mediation and settlement. On the other hand, a realist will argue terrorism is informed by self-interests on the part of terrorists. Terrorists have their own agenda that they want to achieve, such as to discourage the intervention of the international community in certain regions. A good example is al Qaeda’s opposition to U.S. involvement in the Middle East. Therefore, terrorism will continue as long

as terrorists have an agenda they want to achieve regardless whether or not there is fair distribution of resources.

Journal 6 (Quiz 6)

I disagree with Fukuyama's contention that " radical Islam does not constitute a serious alternative to Western liberal democracy." This is because the two ideologies have been at loggerheads with each other for many centuries, and yet Islam has survived western onslaught throughout. From the time of the Holy Crusades in the 11th century onwards, Islam has had to resist western attempts to " Christianize" and " Democratize" the Arab world. In my view, a successful take-over of another culture should not be forced upon the conquered by force. Rather, the ideology to be introduced should be assimilated into the target society over time.

Accordingly, the target society should be accommodative to the new ideology. In this regard, the only two regions of the world where western liberalism could be said to have triumphed, is in Africa and Latin America.

These two regions have embraced western religion (Christianity) and democracy. In contrast, western liberalism has never been welcome in the Middle East. Part of the reason may be the historical antagonism between the west and the Arab world over the years. As a result, any attempts to export western liberalism there has is often viewed with skepticism. The situation is not made easier by the continued animosity between the two cultures. The Arab world accuses the west of having an imperialist agenda in the Middle East, obviously in reference to western interests in oil resources.

Therefore, any claim that western liberalism has triumphed over radical Islam fails to take into account the cultural differences between the two regions. The Arab world is yet to adopt western democracy to its government system. One of the reasons this may not happen soon is because of the close relationship between religion and government in the Muslim world. This contrasts with western democracy, where there is a clear separation between church and state.

Journal 7 (Quiz 9)

Previously scientists had relied mostly on the traditional theory of human behavior, at the moment the theory has failed many tests. Human behavior has advanced and replicates many attributes that resembles of other animals. In the cognitive theory animals are studied to give a clear picture on the human nature. The previous criteria of studying humans only resulted in understanding human behavior only. In the argument for the use of animals it was agreed that the only difference between animals and humans is that the humans only have an advanced ability to process information than animals.

In the cognitive theory, learning is also considered as a little factor in people's behaviors change. Even though learning has been considered to have no effect on peoples, it is nevertheless a factor unlike other behaviorist theories which considers that no learning takes place without change of behavior. This theory argues that we can read books, observe others, and listen to information which we store for the use in the future but not in the present day. This situation is referred to as observational learning. As it has

been previously stated we may not perform the activities learned in the present time but it is proven that we internalize about their future outcomes. The documentary *Soldiers of Conscience* by Gary Weimberg and Catherine Ryan undermine the cognitive thinking by suggesting that consciousness enables individuals to act against cognitive learning. The knowledge that they are fighting against enemies does not prevent them from questioning the act of killing.

Journal 8 (Quiz 5)

Author Robin J. Crews uses the phrase “images of truth” to refer to the conceptions that people have about what is right or wrong. Crews suggests that not everything that we learn is true or right. It is our responsibility to do self-interrogation and examine the truth of the ideas we hold to be true as well as morality of our actions. The film documentary *Soldiers of Conscience* illustrates situations under which individuals question their actions. The film portrays a moral crisis the soldiers faced in Iraq in their unwillingness to kill fellow human beings. Peter Coyote, the documentary’s narrator, says that “Their country asked them to kill; their hearts asked them to stop” (*Soldiers of Conscience*, 2007). In this regard, images of truth constitute an individual’s ability to overcome propaganda, social sanction and training to do what is morally right.

According to Robin Crews, peace studies involve the fundamental values of education, conscience, and action. The author observes that both violence and nonviolence are learned. Therefore, education plays an important role in promoting social change and nonviolent approaches in conflict resolution.

Education enables an individual envision a future free from violence (Crews, p. 33). Conscience plays a role in enabling individuals to question the moral soundness of their actions. For instance, it helps people to resist violent actions or desist from making decision that will lead to violence. This is exemplified by the reluctance of the soldiers in *Soldiers of Violence* to pull the trigger against their targets. Finally, action is a necessary step in promoting nonviolence. Taking action means that individuals will oppose the status quo and take steps to end violence. Conscience and education alone cannot bring change unless the values of peace they promote are practiced.