

Is the western
international order in
decline?



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The Western International Order is in decline. Critically assess this statement.

Introduction -

After world war 2 there were several consequences, changes in operation of world order i. e. American led based system. America were the key of building liberal order, however, after cold war America's order wasn't international but was mainly accepted by western aristocrats and Japanese, nevertheless after soviet union's formation (post-cold war period), order was recognised internationally. This order had typical U. S strategies which was extremely beneficial to them like rules-based free trade system, widening democracy, building strong alliances to expand their military reach. Also, President Donald Trump during his election campaign (2016), gave immense importance to liberal order and where it was headed. (Mearsheimer, 2018). However, British decided to leave EU, this had a negative impact on the institution of liberal order. Furthermore, analysis by G. John Ikenberry highlighted that leader of western international order is in crises, not the order as it's not unavoidable by Asian elites- China and Russia. There are different orders which could be considered (explained further in essay), expertise believes China could emerge as new world superpower who would redefine meaning of liberal order as they socialists.

The main aim of essay is to determine reasons why western international order is on the verge of extinction and is it end of American order.

Furthermore, focusing on empirical studies of China which could be next supreme.

Literature review-

(Xuetong, 2019) argues that China would be next leader of international order as they have all the sources and technology with them to achieve its target. However, studies from (Tan, 2019) shows that if China overcomes its personal issues with rest of the world then they are perfect contenders.

Fall of America happened after Bush's administration, until then everything was under control and America wasn't unipolar by that time, but catastrophic changes in economy forced America to think about themselves then about others. These studies were argued by (Ikenberry, 2017). Liberal order however seems to bring balance throughout the world as there should be institution like UN to take control but not involving views of member of states would result in anarchism.

Liberal international order-

An order includes clump of different institutions like SEATO, NATO, world bank which set rules and these rules help them to power over interactions between member of states (rise and fall of order, John J Mearsheimer), for that to be international it should have world super powers, not all but in order to take command at least few. The international order is liberal as it contains norms, values- peace in rest of the world, free trade agreement, political liberalism such as human rights and other liberal aspects (Brands, 2016) . One of the key pillars of liberalism is international relations which helps to tackle international affairs. However, due to economic impacts orders can be anarchy and polarity, first controlled and commanded by one nation and other nations has to simply follow it to achieve peace, latter says <https://assignbuster.com/is-the-western-international-order-in-decline/>

equal distribution of power wherein everyone has right to say before any formation of like alliances, rules, treaties. The system can be bipolar or multipolar, i. e. two great superpowers and more than two powers, they both are realist in nature as they have competition which could question their rules, likely opposite in anarchy.

International institutions (like UN...) are here to help and provide solutions to problems like global crises, exploitation of human and society welfare by setting rules which are performed by other countries and this leads to expansion of power of western order. They ideologically legalise the norms/rules set by leaders, also provide membership to member as well as non-member states. They challenge neoliberal globalisation (Langridge, 2013) as were formed during wars when anarchy, anti-democratic, anti-socialist environment ruled, whose leaders were West-force (U. S. A and Britain) which were in favour of human rights, peace, also were main drivers in promoting different races, ethnicity as it was based on universalistic principles. Liberal internationalism is also known as Wilsonianism- named after U. S. led president Wilson, which was different from Marxism, realism and was recognised as free movement of trade, people, after WW1 (Parmar, 2018).

Cold war and post-cold war period-

International order all started during cold wars (1945 to 1989) was seen as an opportunity to handle problems and making sure every country's stanned out, but before cold war there was disruption all over the world because of civil war which wasn't considered good because it led to destruction, killings,

clashes in civilisations and changes in orders. Civil war effects differed from nation to nation, no rules were followed, nations often intervened as they were tempted to make peace all over the world, balance of powers was ripped. Globalisation was responsible for this kind-of destruction as some countries were winners and other were losers, poverty rose, and income distribution was even leading to distress in the economy. However, post-cold war's ultimate success was end of civil war, resulted in more peace but all the super-powers failed to reach to an agreement due to damage created by civil war, power, military and politically remained with United States (unipolar). Civil was ended but it struck back when Russia intervened in the matters of Middle East, typical Russian way of working, nevertheless it did no harm to international orders (Jones & Stedman, 2017). Moreover, western success wasn't digested by Russia like expansion of EU, Soviet Union which furthermore extended to Ukraine, a country which is ruled and run by Russians. This raised a question where Russia stands in terms of power against western force as Europe clarified that Russia wasn't part of it, also, Putin's reactions are always dangerous, and it reflected as if he wasn't happy with this global order as he Russia refused to back down on Ukraine's issue this resulted penalty against Russia. However, they overcame that problem by interfering in Syria and their wars highlighted by (Tao , 2016).

Furthermore, as United States invaded areas under Russia with the help of old Soviet Union allies this clearly caused differences and rivalry between the two. However, dissolution of Soviet Union bifurcated powers between different states during post-cold war period which led to fall of communist states. Post-cold war period experienced severe dominance by West side insured by formation of European Union and NATO e. g. Gulf crises, invasion

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in Iraq by USA and attacks in Afghanistan in order to suppress terrorism which was a threat to peace. Liberal order's main motive was to ensure peace all over the world, but terrorism insured this motive to be turned down in dust. Formation of militant groups like ISIS led mostly by Islamic people, tend to use violence to get what they want from rest of the world, this questioned the leadership (by non-member states). Scale of migrants, refugees from poor countries increased because of fear of religious militancy, under-developed countries witnessed discrimination based on ethnicity, cast and religion. Moreover, Muslim people were mostly dominated by West-side as people of their religion were involved in terrorism activities and were physically and mentally tortured by west people. "Such mushy internationalism is admirable form of crusading wild throwback to Wilsonism" quoted by (Dunne, et al., 2011). Although, Asian countries didn't face too much problem as they didn't follow rules and order set by West force against religions. However, Religious militants continued to abuse their power like Germany observed serious killing of Jews, Catholic people being massacred and lately bombings in United States, sept 11. Post-Cold war period witnessed North-South war too which led to decline in principles, ideologies, rules, values as highlighted by (Yilmaz, 2008). Intra-states disagreements noticed rise in globalisation and political as well as economic values. However, post-cold war looked at total advantages of west-side in the departments of military, technology, spheres, economic growth.

Moreover, rise of nationalist-populist policies in core nations of western international order (United states and Britain) and fall of public support for international rules, economic and values triggered the post-cold war order,

Trump's election win, Britain's decision to leave European Union (BREXIT) resulted in deep crises of international order. This led to rise of China as new supreme authority of international order and other countries felt insecure and were desperate to prevent their powers so they could influence international order. Transition of powers from bipolar to multipolar came in first place because of formation of union like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China). The last ten years, America's dominance seemed to disappear due to tensions in Iraq, still mentally every country is aware of United States' power (Jones & Stedman, 2017). There seemed lack of commitment between US and rest of the members which ultimately led to downfall of liberal order.

Dawn of American Era-

It all started when Bush became States' 43rd president in post-cold war era, his rule was more-of conservative by admiring Wilsonism. However, American foreign policy was challenged to make Iraq a democratic nation and ensure peace all around. But it backfired them as Iraq didn't liked America interfering in their personal matters, this triggered war between the two. During that period world saw sudden rise in unilateralism i. e. making rules and manipulating international order according to their will. Everyone knows about September 11 attack in America by terrorist groups, it happened during Bush's administration, they used military to stop terrorism activities all over the world. This was a bold step as without considering opinions from other members of international order US decided to go in and finish terrorism. US slowly was becoming unipolar and redefined global order as international order was supported by America's influencing nature as stated by (Ikenberry, 2009).

During Obama's presidency rule, America's foreign policy was challenged again when School girls were kidnapped in Nigeria as US was a dominant force since 1945 and all the other countries followed footsteps. Over here, it was their duty was to uphold the human rights (globally) of women, America ended the era since 2001 and they stopped intervening in the matters of other countries, and this left the question - who the main driver of international order is as Britain was more like supporting cast in a movie. (Simpson , 2014) From here the message was clear- America tend to becoming typical capitalist nation.

There was. a promise between USA and Britain to rule the world with their order, after cold war for at least 70 years or more, this promised continued till Obama's reign but soon after Trump was elected as US's president, his vision of seeing America as super-power was different than all the other past presidents. His reaction towards Britain's exit from EU, which was supposedly pillar of western international order was a step towards dawn of America as leader of order. By making deals with other allies so that Britain could exit EU and then US would rule EU as well. Trump's reactions and policies against trade movement, alliances, not more than party's competing elections in USA, the law and its legitimacy, human rights would definitely bring end to the order as Trump does not want US to be interdependent i. e. considering every member's point of view on international affairs, because if anything happens around the globe countries look at the USA as their supremacy and decision making abilities in past decades have been proven successful but considering more-of anarchy way increases threats and leaves the world with no peace. US's support for multilateral rules and regulations

from being people's favourite to Anti-Americanism, as Trump's vision was clear- 'First America and the Rest of the world' leads to complete end to liberal order and democratic environment. Moreover, liberal order is sensitive to happenings like disrespecting all norms, rules and values and questioning old-constitution, which was followed since decades, prime judges and all the other elements related to political life were mostly hampered and ripped-off. Trade has always played vital role in forming of US's foreign policy, with open and free trade movement has strengthened their economy since. With WTO on their side protecting them against having conflicts with countries like China until Trump came in and redefined trade system by imposing tariffs on imports as well as on exports making it difficult for traders to survive especially for EU countries after renegotiating trade agreement. Earlier we saw wars between Russia and US, as US was on brighter side to maintain peace all over but Russia was involved in killing and acquiring lands, but sooner after Trump got elected he shook hands with Putin (Russian president) knowing his hands are red with all the blood. This clearly shows US wants to end liberal order and rule the world according to the way they want, in recent years western public are not in much favour of liberal international order as it indicates cushion for rich people than justice for poor or suffered people, as stated by (Ikenberry, 2017).

Rise of China-

In 1990s China decided to join international system until it preferred to work alone and were considered junior superpower. Chinese Foreign Policy of ensuring peacefulness, global rights, security, cultural activism is boosting their economic growth and credibility of becoming new leader would change <https://assignbuster.com/is-the-western-international-order-in-decline/>

the context of new order as highlighted by (Xuetong, 2019). China always questions the current order as there is no security for public goods, poor trade movement and increase in international affairs as there is no concrete form of rules. All the other countries after seeing America's hegemony are turning towards their own orders but China is the one who is move explicitly fast. When international order was set China and India weren't involved but soon later as western order is declining China's initiative like AIIB (Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank), NDB and other projects would hamper but also reform current order but US is not letting it happen. China now is supposed to play constructive role in forming and generating new international order and Beijing being called for voting rights globally at institutions. UN was always supposed to be driver of international order but time and again its decision were challenged and manipulated by US, but China always looked at UN as ultimate leader of world and thus keeps on disapproving all the attempts of US to hamper UN's decision/rule making policies, security basis (as its inappropriate to form alliances without considering UN's permission). China redefined its views on security by supporting new forms of securities for rest of the world, which are- common security (keeping countries safe and secure from external activities), Comprehensive (securing them in traditional and non-traditional way), Cooperative (jointly protecting nations and with their acceptance interfering in their matters), sustainable (making sure security is feasible with long lasting norms) by (Xinbo, 2018) . After global crises in 2008-09 countries started to boycott globalisation but China promoted globalisation as it brought new opportunities with expanding and diversifying country's growth and they believed that imposing their claims and policies is through

punishment and exemption with their growing military and economic growth as stated by (Mazarr, et al., 2018). For China equality, sovereignty and UN's working process matters at most and they always thrive for partnership order unlikely US wants hegemonic order, this portrays composed image of China to other countries. According to China every country is equal member of international committee. Sovereignty means protecting nations territory from threats and China's supreme authority is to maintain CCP (Communist party rule), which is especially designed for ensuing peace (Mazarr, et al., 2018). However, China tried to acquire sea of Philippines under UNCLOS, a UN law, but China has refused all the acquisitions and violating UN rule would go against Beijing's strategy to control order as stated by (Zhao, 2016). China could rise as they have top-end technology and as former US ambassador said- " we need new rules" to EU and following his view China interpreted that instead of fighting with EU they should work covertly and solve issues regarding trade with WTO and security with UN in order to end US's hegemony highlighted by (Tan, 2019). However, China has mixed-reaction towards current order i. e. on one hand China appreciates UN as they maintain peace but on other hand, they don't want western order to be part anymore.

Conclusion-

During Cold war we saw proper functioning of liberal international order, but post-cold war era overlooked several changes in the order, which was necessary as time goes. But when America and Europe struggled with global and financial crises, terrorism activities, fall in globalisation and rise in anarchy ensured that global order was about to end stated by (Ikenberry, <https://assignbuster.com/is-the-western-international-order-in-decline/>

2018). Moreover, US's economy fell from 30% in 2001 to 25% in 2016 because of American hegemony and changes in rule and values, also due to withdrawal of agreements like TPP, climate change treatment in Paris, tariff barriers, Britain's exit from EU and dissolution of Soviet Union during post-cold-war era. This is becoming more and more interesting as history has rarely seen downfall of Western countries and their leadership and command on situations by (Xinbo, 2018). This century is all about America's domestic policy rather than liberal democracy leading to more developing domestic order but fall in internationalism. If US wants to once again regain their power they should focus more liberal order than their capitalist thinking as they would gain public support, also, they should rebuild their alliances which in first place gave them immense power to command and control, reforming of institutions like UN and IMF would reflect strong international order as highlighted by (Ikenberry, 2018). However, there are some states rising like China because they are not supporting current order and it is said China will take more time in order to accomplish their reign as it is difficult for any powerful state to remove existing state highlighted by (Ikenberry, 2018).

Western international order declined due to many political, social and economic reasons and these all linked to one country- United States of America as they were key in this order. Other members faced problems as well like chaos in Germany, from refugee and migrants' problems to terrorism. International order has been tested ever since it was formed, UN plays a major role in maintaining supremacy of global order and keep ensuring that justice is served to everyone.

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