

# Liberal peace

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Essay Topic: “ The global reach of liberalism will inevitably lead to peace and security for all” what are the grounds for this argument? Answer: Liberalism is a theory of international relations with a view point that human is born good and free. In this question will require a discussion on the Democratic Peace Theory which was emphasised after the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. The main argument was that democratic states tend not to fight other democratic states. This theory has been associated largely with writings of Michael Doyle and Bruce Russett.

Early authors like Immanuel Kant also foreshadowed the theory of peace between liberal democracies in his essay “ Perpetual Peace” written in 1795. The idea that Liberalism will inevitably lead to peace and security was based on the ground that Liberal democracies naturally seek for peace, the spirit of free commerce, the interdependence among states and the principle of Human rights. Liberalism by definition sees human beings as non- violent, born good and seeking to develop ties and as such naturally they are not interested in waging wars. In Kant’s words, peace can be perpetual. War is therefore both unnatural and irrational.

According to Doyle wars were created by militaristic and undemocratic government for their own interests. Paine also in his work “ The right of Man” said the war system was contrived to preserve the power. War provides governments with the excuses to raise taxes and expand bureaucratic apparatus and increase their control over the citizens. However according to Liberals Democracy will create a zone of peace. If we defined democracy as the government of the people for the people by the people then it will be

impossible for citizens who bear the burdens of war to elect a government who will take them to war (Doyle 1967: 1151).

Nations like France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and Austria are less likely to fight any war among them since they have memories of the damages and massive destructions of the world war one and world war two. Democratic states have much respect for civil rights. If it is wrong for an individual within a state to commit a crime against another individual so does it apply to democratic nations. It is wrong for one democratic nation to wage war against another democratic nation. This idea was also developed in Kant's argument about the league of peace or pacific federation (Foedus Pacificum) This idea of peace is based on all human beings which stand in an ethical relationship to one another. For Kant's "this league of does not seek any power of sort possessed by any nation, but only the maintenance and security of each nation's own freedom ". Doyle will later expand on this proposition that liberal states have a unique ability and willingness to establish peaceful relations among themselves. The second key assumption of liberalism on which peace and security can be achieved is the practice of free trade among nations.

The mercantilist period of history is linked to the rise of the modern nations in Europe. This period could be described as the time which nations were focused narrowly on gaining wealth and discouraging imports. The mercantilist policies included restrictions on import and development of colonial empires. Mercantilist view was that of the Louis XIV's finance Minister, Jean Baptist Colbert who said "trade is a source of finance and finance is the vital nerve of war" According Carr "the aim of mercantilism was not to

promote the welfare of the community and its members but to augment the power of the state”.

In process of promoting export mercantile nations setup barriers to discourage import and conflicts were often caused. However Kant said unhindered commerce between the people of the world unite them in a common and peaceful enterprise. Later view by Joseph Schumpeter also supports the claim of Kant. According to Schumpeter, capitalism produces an unwarlike disposition; its populace is “ democratised individualised and rationalised” therefore democratic capitalism leads to peace.

Over the last 15 years regional trade agreements have become defining features of the modern economy and a powerful force for globalisation. As of July 2007 more than 380 regional trade agreements had been notified to the World Trade Organisation (Crawford and Fiorentino). As the French philosopher Baron of Montesquieu said in 1748 “ peace is a natural effect of commerce” (Humphery’s 2004) increasingly many countries are realising that their interest may best be served by integration with like-minded countries that have similar economies.

Regional trade integration can support peace. The believe that trade can foster peace among nations have been seen it real world practice when in December 2004 Israel and Egypt signed a trade protocol with the US designed to accelerate the rapprochement between the two countries. This deal allowed the Egyptian to export freely the US. Another examples of this agreement which seeks promote peace through trade is the regional agreement signed by the Tunisian and the Morocco Governments with the

EU this in order to curtail the rise and spread fundamentalism in these two countries.

These examples justify the claim by the American radical democrat Paine when he announced that “ if commerce were permitted to act to the universal extent it is capable, it would extirpate the system of war. Closely linked to the idea of Free Trade and commerce as means of achieving peace and security among Liberal nations is the notion of interdependence and liberal institutionalism, no nation in the world can claim absolute independence or dependence. All nations are closely linked to each other and have become interdependent on each other.

The evolution of communication, transportation, the invention of deadly weapons such as the nuclear bomb, the contagious nature of economy and the growing demographic pressure on the planets are just few of the factors that explain this interdependence. The formation of regional economic groups such as the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement in the Latin America, the ASEAN, in Asia and the African Union were inspired the belief that the likelihood of conflict between states would be reduced by creating a common interest in trade and economic collaboration.

Liberal Institutionalism also agrees the interdependence of nations can create a zone of peace which Kant called the Pacific Federation of which is made of more than sixty countries. War according to Kant is less probable to occur between any two nations of this federation this does not mean that pacific nations do not go to war. In the nineteenth century countries like the United States and the Great Britain have continually had misunderstanding

and wars but after the reformation of the British Parliament in 1832, Britain and the United States were able to negotiate their disputes without resorting to conflict.

Britain and France who were rivals in colonial front were able to form an entente against the illiberal Germany before the World War I. President Woodrow Wilson will later proclaim the reigning peace in message of April 2, 1917: “ Our object now as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed people of the world such a concert of purpose and as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles. ”