

A constant clash of ideologies or chase for power: international politics and whe...

[Politics](#)



An uncertain future: the future of international politics

History shows a tendency of the international setting being conflictive, whether the reason for these issues is the struggle to attain a balance of power between states or clashes in economic classes within each state. In today's world, there is evident struggle between ideals in the Middle East, a United State's pursuit of dominance over possible enemies of its capitalist system, in addition to the constant negotiations happening within international organizations, such as the UN and the WTO. Explaining current and future international issues with one point of view is impossible: "The world is always in flux, and change, as the old adage teaches us, is the only constant." (Bova 270), and not only this, but no approach perfectly explains the course of history and the future of states, this includes the acceptance from the West of the diverse cultures and ideologies existent, the consequences of a globalized economy and the need for the representation of women in politics.

Each period between wars, there has been a very distinct issue that has initiated each major conflict: struggle of power. The three main approaches in International Politics all recognize the balance of power as a valid cause for war, but differ in the way that conflict is resolved. Furthermore, the world being in constant pursuit of this power is a tangible explanation for world wars. The first world wars' causes are seen as more of a territorial issue, with an underlying presence of a state's economic size; the territory a state occupied gave it dominance, which then made way for more economic growth, which directly translated into military power. This, while being

mainly a Realist point of view, is very accurate in explaining how these first world wars happened and the way they ended: states with bigger military power overpowered the others and became the hegemon. However, the circumstances changed during the Cold War: alliances and anything regarding the concept of collective security was altered into the United Nations. Then the issue became of not only power and economic strength, but also of the realization of the power of ideals. One could argue that the consequences of the previous wars had prevented direct altercation between major states. On the other hand, these could have also been indications of conflicts transforming into more complex issues: the United States was trying to contain soviet communism, which hindered their capitalist system, and the Soviet Union was struggling for dominance in Eastern Europe and Asia. According to political scientist Francis Fukuyama, the “ the Cold War rivalry was ended not by military victory but through a change in the character of domestic politics within Russia” (Bova 271; Fukuyama), which is a more constructivist approach given the fact that it takes into account ideals and state leader’s decisions. On the other hand, the fact that the Soviet Union’s military and economic capability wasn’t able to compete with the propensity of the United States could also be a reason for the end of the Cold War. Regardless, the fact is that a plausible explanation for how the world is today doesn’t suffice with the understanding of only one view.

Currently, we’re experiencing a divergence from “ traditional” conflict: the fate of conflicts is resolved by other states, which could be interpreted as a violation of the right of sovereignty all states have. Looking at what is happening in the Middle East, there is a tangible influence from Western

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ideals; more specifically, the desire for a significant portion of the population of these countries for democracy. “ By the 1990s both the percentage of democratic the world’s countries and the percentage of the world’s population living under democratic rule were higher than they had ever been in human history” (Bova 271), meaning that the idea of democracy is related to the concept of peace. However, the ideological and geopolitical issues surrounding some countries, such as Israel and Palestine, make the international community forced to become involved. The Security Council issued resolution 1973 which entailed no-fly zones and the revoke of the current government in Lybia, which resulted in the effective liberation of the people from an oppressive government. However, there is still political turmoil and the 1973 resolution serves as preclusion of the ongoing violence in Libya; China and Russia stood for the prohibition of no-fly zones and the principle of non-intervention ideals in other conflicts, such as the conflict in Syria. Despite political turmoil in the attainment of democracy, evidence supports that the “ democratization of politics in Lebanon and in the Palestinian Territories has empowered the military anti-Israel Hezbollah and Hamas movements”, further hindering the presence of peace in the Middle East . The Middle East has made difficult to confirm the notion that democracy is the “ silver bullet that will vanquish power politics and war” (Bova 272). Despite this being true, there have been relatively functioning democracies in the Middle East such as Pakistan, Turkey, Israel and Afghanistan.

The existent political instability in the Middle East portrays issues for the United State’s allies, and therefore its overall power. A globalized economy,
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made possible through international agreements (i. e. NAFTA, 1994) and the existence of the WTO, made labor unions, unskilled workers and politicians lament the loss of “ sovereignty and control associated with globalization”. On the other hand, according to Nobel Prize Winner and journalist Normal Angell, “ war would be extremely costly, and the economies of Europe were integrated enough that no reasonable person would consider war a realistic option any longer” (Bova 275). One could argue that the fact that economies being so closely tied prevents super powers from going to war, which could be seen as a positive aspect. However, there is still conflict and the money spent on the security of a nation is still very high; one could even argue that the security dilemma that existed during the Cold War is still in place, only now that everything is connected (i. e. technology, information, economies) and makes even smaller countries become cautious of its possible enemies. This constant tension among states could be an issue for the future of international politics; in Security Council meetings the United States and Russia still aren’t able to agree on most things. Not to mention the fact that history shows the miscalculations and misperceptions states have in certain circumstances, that “ they... wish they had avoided” and result in casualties “ even more horrific [than] World War II” (Bova 280).

In conclusion, a very broad view of the future of world politics is exposed in Professor Sam P. Huntington’s article “ The Clash of Civilization?”:

Non-Western civilizations will continue to attempt to acquire the wealth, technology, skills, machines and weapons that are a part of being modern... and try to reconcile [it] with their traditional culture and values. Their

economic and military strength relative to the West will increase... [which will make the West] accommodate these non-Western modern civilizations. (Huntington 169)

The fact is, the world is always changing and these changes translate in every aspect of life: international politics, economy and geopolitics. The outcome of the current issues in international politics will have to be the maintenance of the military and economic power of the West in order to protect its interests, but at the same time the acceptance of new cultures and political structures. This ideal doesn't only translate into cultural changes, but also the role of women in politics. One cannot ignore the prominent under-representation of women in world politics and the need for this representation to exist. Not to say that women are the "quick fix" or the "silver bullet that will vanquish power politics and war", but the fact is that research shows that "women leaders were less prone to corruption and more inclined to peaceful, negotiated solutions than their male counterparts" (Hunt, "Let Women Rule").

There may be a positive outcome, where cultures are embraced and stereotypes are disregarded: a true globalized world for everyone. However, one cannot be too optimistic about how the West will protect its interests. Currently, each nation works in the United Nations in pursuit of common peace among states but is ready to attack ruthlessly in order to protect its civilians, even if it means harming other civilians. The divergent intentions behind the heads of state which constitutes an international organization

that is supposed to advocate and create security and peace is the driving force behind today's international issues.