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CHAPTER 1

Approaches to International Relations

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. International Relations in Daily Life
   • Seemingly remote international events can quickly become both highly relevant and personally salient to any of us.
   • International activities have historically resulted from decisions taken by central governments and heads of state. Increasingly, these activities involve different actors, some of whom you influence directly.
   • The variety of actors in international relations today includes not only states, their leaders, and government bureaucracies, but for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and you.
   • **International relations** is the study of the interactions among the various actors that participate in international politics. It is the study of the behaviors of these actors as they participate individually and together in international political processes.

II. Thinking Theoretically
   • Prominent international relations theories developed in depth are liberalism and neoliberal institutionalism, realism and neorealism, radical perspectives whose origins lie in Marxism, and constructivism.
   • Liberalism: human nature is basically good. States generally cooperate and follow international norms and procedures that have been mutually agreed upon.
   • Realism: states exist in an anarchic international system. Each state bases its policies on an interpretation of national interest defined in terms of power.
Radicalism: actions of individuals are largely determined by economic class; the state is an agent of international capitalism; and the international system is dominated by the capitalist system.

Constructivism: the key structures in the state system are not material but instead are intersubjective and social. The interest of states is not fixed but is malleable and ever changing.

Different theoretical approaches help us see international relations from different viewpoints, and competition between theories helps reveal their strengths and weaknesses and spurs subsequent refinements.

III. Developing the Answers

History: history invites its students to acquire detailed knowledge of specific events, but it can also be used to test generalizations and explain the relationships among various events.

- Thucydides described the patterns leading up to war; he found that what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power.
- History may be a bad guide; the “lessons” of Munich and Allied appeasement of Germany before World War II or the “lessons” of the war in Vietnam are neither clear-cut nor agreed upon.
- Stephen Biddle argues that comparing Vietnam to the current war in Iraq is an oversimplification that misapplies a historical context. Such inaccurate application of the “lessons” of historical comparison occasionally leads to poor policy prescriptions, yet history cannot be ignored.

Philosophy: throughout history, scholars interested in international relations became grounded in diplomatic history as a substantive focus and also became thoroughly versed in philosophy, posing foundational questions.

- Much classical philosophizing focuses on the state and its leaders.
  1. Plato, in *The Republic*, concluded that in the “perfect state,” the people who should govern are those who are superior in the ways of philosophy. He introduced two seminal ideas to the discipline: class analysis and dialectical reasoning, both of which were bases for later Marxist analysis.
2. Aristotle, Plato’s student, looked at the similarities and differences among states, becoming the first writer to use the comparative method of analysis. He came to the conclusion that states rise and fall largely because of internal factors.

○ Philosophers after the classical era focused on the basic characteristics of man and how those characteristics might influence the character of international society.

1. Thomas Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, imagined a state of nature where men ruled by passions, living with the constant uncertainty of their own society. In the absence of international authority, society is in a “state of nature,” or *anarchy*.

2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau described the state of nature as an egocentric world, with man’s primary concern being self-preservation. Rousseau’s preference was for the creation of smaller communities in which the “general will” could be attained. Only the general will can direct the forces of the state.

3. Immanuel Kant, in both *Idea for a Universal History* and *Perpetual Peace*, envisioned a federation of states as a means to achieve peace. Sovereignties would remain intact, but the new federal order would be more effective and realistic than Rousseau’s small communities. Kant believed that man can learn new ways of cosmopolitanism and universalism.

○ The tradition laid by these philosophers has contributed to the development of international relations by calling attention to fundamental relationships: those between the individual and society, between individuals in society, and between societies.

○ History and philosophy permit us to delve into the foundational questions—the nature of man and the broad characteristics of the state and of international society. They allow us to speculate on the normative (or moral) element in political life:

1. What *should* be the role of the state?
2. What *ought* to be the norms in international society?
3. How *might* international society be structured to achieve order?
Chapter 1  Approaches to International Relations

• **Behavioralism:** behavioralism proposes that individuals, both alone and in groups, act in patterned ways. The task of the behavioral scientist is to suggest plausible hypotheses regarding those patterned actions and to test them. These scholars hope to predict future behavior.
  - The Correlates of War project was developed to collect data on international wars between 1865 and 1965 in which one thousand or more deaths had been reported.
  - The ultimate goal of the Correlates of War project is to connect all the relationships that are found into a coherent theory of why wars occur:
    1. Which groups of factors are *most* correlated with the outbreak of war over time?
    2. How are these factors related to one another?
  - If the project finds consistently high correlations between alliances and war, then it can explain why wars break out, and perhaps policymakers may be able to predict the characteristics of the actors and the location of future wars.
  - During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars seriously questioned the behavioral approach. The foundational questions—the nature of man and society—are neglected by behaviorists because they are not easily testable by empirical methods.

• **Alternative Approaches**
  - Postmodernists seek to deconstruct the basic concepts of the field by searching texts for hidden meanings in the subtext. Once these hidden meanings are revealed, postmodernists seek to replace a once-orderly picture with disorder, to replace dichotomies with multiple portraits.
  - Postmodern deconstruction of sovereignty has resulted in research that finds that conceptualizations of sovereignty are constantly shifting and are conditioned by time, place, and historical circumstances.
  - Postmodernists also seek to find voices of “the others,” those individuals who have been disenfranchised and marginalized in international relations.
  - Constructivists trace the impact of ideas on shaping identities; analyze culture, norms, procedures, and social practices; and show how social and cultural factors shape national security policy. They probe how identities are shaped and change over time.
IV. In Sum: Making Sense of International Relations

- The major theories of international relations, including liberal, realist, radical, and constructivist, provide frameworks for asking and answering core foundational questions.
- To answer these questions, international relations scholars turn to disciplines such as history, philosophy, behavioral psychology, and alternative approaches.

KEY TERMS

anarchy (p. 7): the absence of governmental authority.

behavioralism (p. 9): an approach to the study of social science and international relations that posits that individuals and units like states act in regularized ways; leads to a belief that behaviors can be described, explained, and predicted.

international relations (p. 3): the study of the interactions among various actors (states, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and subnational entities like bureaucracies, local governments, and individuals) that participate in international politics.

normative (p. 9): relating to ethical rules; in foreign policy and international affairs, standards suggesting what a policy should be.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Your father picked up this book and saw the word theory in the first chapter. He is skeptical about the value of theory. Explain to him the utility of developing a theoretical perspective.

2. Philosophy is your passion, but you find international relations moderately interesting. How can you integrate your passion with this pragmatic interest? What questions can you explore?

3. You are a history major skilled in researching the historical archives. Suggest two research projects that you might undertake to further your understanding of international relations.

4. How can the study of international relations be made more scientific? What are the problems with doing so?
TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

1. Try engaging your students in a discussion on what a theory is by giving them an example of a bad but entertaining theory and encouraging them to point out its weaknesses. For example, it seems that during the early years of the Cold War, an American textile manufacturer approached the U.S. Congress with a plan to export lingerie to the Soviet Union on the theory that Soviet “aggression” was the result of Soviet males’ sexual frustration. (Soviet state-controlled clothing design was famous for its ugliness.) This “frustrated sexuality theory of Soviet aggression” is a theory: it attempts to establish a generalization that male sexual frustration leads to aggression and war. It’s just not a very good theory, because it fails to take into account the other factors that might lead to male aggression, or the idea that male aggression might not be a sound general explanation for aggressive state policies or for war.

2. Emphasize the importance of arguments as foundations for understanding not just international relations, but anything. Use an argument outside international relations to show the importance of the fit between an argument’s logic and the soundness and appropriateness of the evidence adduced to support that logic. For example, you might use a controversial social issue such as gun control or abortion to show that often opposing sides may have sound logic, but be hobbled by a lack of sufficient or unbiased evidence. Explore the kinds of evidence that might be brought to bear (e.g., statistical, models, historical) and the kinds of bias that might be introduced by passionate advocates of one position or another.

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

1. Ask students to think creatively about the secondary and tertiary economic impact of the April 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Are its environmental effects limited to the United States? How about its economic impact?

2. In June of 2010, U.S. general Stanley McChrystal was fired for controversial comments he and aides made in an interview in Rolling Stone magazine. Was President Obama right to fire him? How would we know? What sorts of arguments might we make for or against the president’s decision to fire McChrystal? What might the impact of McChrystal’s firing have on the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan and on relations with U.S. allies?
PHOTO BANK AND POWERPOINTS

Find lecture PowerPoints, all images from the text, and six supplementary photo PowerPoints for this chapter on the Instructor’s Resource Disc and the instructor website (wwnorton.com/nrl).

TEST BANK

Find 60 multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions for this chapter on the computerized test bank as well as the instructor website.

VIDEO LIBRARY

See page 143 for a list of available videos arranged by topic.

READER SELECTIONS

For this chapter, the following readings are included in Essential Readings in World Politics, Fourth Edition:

- Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories”
- Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue”
- Immanuel Kant, “To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”
CHAPTER 2

The Historical Context of Contemporary International Relations

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction
   • The purpose of this historical overview is to trace important trends over time—the emergence of the state and the notion of sovereignty, the development of the international state system, and the changes in the distribution of power among states.
   • Contemporary international relations, in both theory and practice, is rooted in the European experience, for better or worse.

II. The Pre-Westphalian World
   • Many international relations theorists date the contemporary system from 1648, the year of the Treaty of Westphalia ending the Thirty Years War. This treaty marks the end of rule by religious authority in Europe. The Greek city-state system, the Roman Empire, and the Middle Ages were each key developments leading to the Westphalian order.
   • The Middle Ages: Centralization and Decentralization
     ◦ When the Roman Empire disintegrated in the fifth century CE, power and authority became decentralized in Europe.
     ◦ By 1000 CE, three civilizations had emerged from the rubble of Rome:
       1. Under the religious and political domination of the Islamic caliphate, advanced mathematical and technical accomplishments made Arabic civilization a potent force.
2. The Byzantine Empire was located near the core of the old Roman empire in Constantinople and united by Christianity.

3. In the rest of Europe, languages and cultures proliferated, and the networks of communication developed by the Romans were beginning to disintegrate.
   - Much of western Europe reverted to feudal principalities, controlled by lords and tied to fiefdoms that had the authority to raise taxes and exert legal authority. Feudalism was the response to the prevailing disorder.
   - The preeminent institution in the medieval period was the church; virtually all other institutions were local in origin and practice.
   - Carolus Magnus, or Charlemagne, the leader of the Franks (in what is today France), challenged the church's monopoly on power in the late eighth century.
   - Similar trends of centralization and decentralization, political integration and disintegration, were also occurring in Ghana, Mali, Latin America, and Japan.

- The Late Middle Ages: Developing Transnational Networks in Europe and Beyond
  - After 1000 CE, secular trends began to undermine both the decentralization of feudalism and the universalization of Christianity in Europe. Commercial activity expanded into larger geographic areas. All forms of communication improved and new technologies made daily life easier.
  - Economic and technological changes led to fundamental changes in social relations.
    1. A transnational business community, whose interests and livelihoods extended beyond its immediate locale, emerged.
    2. Writers and others rediscovered classical literature and history, finding intellectual sustenance in Greek and Roman thought.
       - Niccolò Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, elucidated the qualities that a leader needs to maintain the strength and security of the state. Realizing that the dream of unity in Christianity was unattainable, Machiavelli called on leaders to articulate their own political interests. Leaders must act in the state’s interest, answerable to no moral rules.
3. In the 1500s and 1600s, as European explorers and even settlers moved into the new world, the old Europe remained in flux. Feudalism was being replaced by an increasingly centralized monarchy.

4. The masses, angered by taxes imposed by the newly emerging states, rebelled and rioted.

III. The Emergence of the Westphalian System

- The formulation of sovereignty was one of the most important intellectual developments leading to the Westphalian revolution.
- Much of the development of sovereignty is found in the writings of French philosopher Jean Bodin. To Bodin, sovereignty was the “absolute and perpetual power vested in a commonwealth.” Absolute sovereignty, according to Bodin, is not without limits. Leaders are limited by natural law, the laws of God, the type of regime, and covenants and treaties.
- The Thirty Years War (1618–48) devastated Europe. But the treaty that ended the conflict, the Treaty of Westphalia, had a profound impact on the practice of international relations in three ways:
  - It embraced the notion of sovereignty—that the sovereign enjoyed exclusive rights within a given territory. It also established that states could determine their own domestic policies in their own geographic spaces.
  - Leaders sought to establish their own permanent national militaries. The state thus became more powerful since it had to collect taxes to pay for these militaries and leaders assumed absolute control over the troops.
  - It established a core group of states that dominated the world until the beginning of the nineteenth century: Austria, Russia, England, France, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands and Belgium.
- The most important theorist of the time was Scottish economist Adam Smith. In An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Smith argued that the notion of a market should apply to all social orders.
  - Individuals should be permitted to pursue their own interests and will act rationally to maximize them.
  - With groups of individuals pursuing their self-interests, economic efficiency is enhanced as well as the wealth of the state
and the international system. This theory has had a profound effect on states’ economic policies.

IV. Europe in the Nineteenth Century

- The American Revolution (1776) and the French Revolution (1789) were the products of Enlightenment thinking as well as social contract theory.
- The Aftermath of Revolution: Core Principles
  - **Legitimacy**: absolutist rule is subject to limits and imposed by man. In *Two Treatises on Government*, John Locke attacked absolute power and the divine right of kings. Locke's main argument is that political power ultimately rests with the people rather than with the leader or monarch.
  - **Nationalism**: the masses identify with their common past, language, customs, and practices. Individuals who share such characteristics are motivated to participate actively in the political process as a group.
- Peace at the Core of the European System
  - Following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the establishment of peace by the Congress of Vienna, the Concert of Europe—Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia—ushered in a period of relative peace.
  - The fact that general peace prevailed during this time is surprising, since major economic, technological, and political changes were radically altering the landscape.
  - At least three factors explain the peace:
    1. European states enjoyed solidarity among themselves, based on being European, Christian, “civilized,” and white.
    2. European elites were united in their fear of revolution from the masses. Elites envisioned grand alliances that would bring European leaders together to fight revolution from below. Leaders ensured that mass revolutions did not move from state to state.
    3. Two of the major issues confronting the core European states were internal: the unifications of Germany and Italy. Although both unifications were finally solidified through small local wars, a general war was averted since Germany and Italy were preoccupied with territorial unification.
Industrialization was a double-edged sword. It provided the European states with the military and economic capacity to engage in territorial expansion, either to spread the Christian faith and cultural beliefs to other civilizations or for political reasons.

**Imperialism and Colonialism in the European System before 1870**

- The major powers divvied up Africa during the 1885 Congress of Berlin. In Asia, only Japan and Siam (Thailand) were not under direct European or U.S. influence.
- The struggle for economic prowess led to heedless exploitation of the colonial areas, particularly in Africa and Asia.

**Balance of Power**

- The period of peace in Europe was managed and preserved for so long because of the concept of balance of power.
- The balance of power emerged because the independent European states feared the emergence of any predominant state (hegemon) among them. Thus, they formed alliances to counteract any potentially more powerful faction.

**The Breakdown: Solidification of Alliances**

- The balance-of-power system weakened during the waning years of the nineteenth century. Whereas previous alliances had been fluid and flexible, now alliances had solidified.
- Two camps emerged: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, and Italy) in 1882 and the Dual Alliance (France and Russia) in 1893.
- In 1902, Britain broke from the “balancer” role by joining in a naval alliance with Japan to prevent a Russo-Japanese rapprochement in China. For the first time, a European state turned to an Asian one in order to thwart a European ally.
- The end of the balance-of-power system came with World War I.
- Germany had not been satisfied with the solutions meted out at the Congress of Berlin. Being a “latecomer” to the core of European power, Germany did not receive the diplomatic recognition and status its leaders desired.
- With the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, Germany encouraged Austria to crush Serbia. Under the system of alliances, states honored their commitments to their allies, sinking the whole continent into warfare.
Between 1914 and 1918, more than 8.5 million soldiers and 1.5 million civilians lost their lives.

V. The Interwar Years and World War II

- The end of World War I saw critical changes in international relations:
  - First, three European empires (Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman) were strained and finally broke up during the war. With those empires went the conservative social order of Europe; in its place emerged a proliferation of nationalisms.
  - Second, Germany emerged out of World War I an even more dissatisfied power. The Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended the war, made Germany pay the cost of the war through reparations. This dissatisfaction provided the climate for the emergence of Adolf Hitler, who was dedicated to righting the “wrongs” imposed by the treaty.
  - Third, enforcement of the Versailles Treaty was given to the ultimately unsuccessful League of Nations, the intergovernmental organization designed to prevent all future wars. The League did not have the political weight to carry out its task because the United States refused to join.
  - Fourth, a vision of the post–World War I order had clearly been expounded, but it was a vision stillborn from the start. The world economy was in collapse and German fascism wreaked havoc on the plan for postwar peace.

- World War II
  - The power of fascism—German, Italian, and Japanese versions—led to the uneasy alliance between the communist Soviet Union and the liberal United States, Britain, and France. When World War II broke out, this alliance (the Allies) fought against the Axis powers in unison.
  - The Allies at the end of the war were successful. Both the German Reich and imperial Japan lay in ruins.
  - The end of World War II resulted in a major redistribution of power and changed political borders.

VI. The Cold War

- Origins of the Cold War
  - The most important outcome of World War II was the emergence of two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet
Union—as the primary actors in the international system and the decline of Europe as the epicenter of international politics.

- The second outcome of the war was the recognition of fundamental incompatibilities between these two superpowers in both national interests and ideology.
  - Russia used its newfound power to solidify its sphere of influence in the buffer states of Eastern Europe.
  - The United States's interests lay in containing the Soviet Union. The U.S. put the notion of containment into action in the Truman Doctrine of 1947. After the Soviets blocked Western transportation corridors to Berlin, containment became the fundamental doctrine of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.
  - The U.S. economic system was based on capitalism, which provided opportunities to individuals to pursue what was economically rational with little or no government interference.
  - The Soviet state embraced Marxist ideology, which holds that under capitalism one class (the bourgeoisie) controls the means of production. The solution to the problem of class rule is revolution, wherein the exploited proletariat takes control by using the state to seize the means of production. Thus, capitalism is replaced by socialism.
  - Differences between the two superpowers were exacerbated by mutual misperceptions. The Marshall Plan and establishment of NATO were taken as a campaign to deprive the Soviet Union of its influence in Germany. Likewise, the Berlin blockade was interpreted by the West as a hostile offensive action.
- The third outcome of World War II was the end of the colonial system, beginning with Britain's granting India independence in 1947. Indochina and African states became independent in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The fourth outcome was the realization that the differences between the two superpowers would be played out indirectly, on third-party stages, rather than through direct confrontation between the two protagonists. The superpowers vied for influence in newly independent states as a way to project power.
• The Cold War as a Series of Confrontations
  ◦ The Cold War itself (1945–89) can be characterized as forty-five years of high-level tension and competition between the superpowers but with no direct military conflict.
  ◦ More often than not, the allies of each superpower became involved, so the confrontations comprised two blocs of states: those in the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** in Western Europe and the United States, and the **Warsaw Pact** in Eastern Europe.
  ◦ One of these high-level, direct confrontations between the superpowers took place in Germany.
    ◦ Germany had been divided after World War II into zones of occupation. In the 1949 Berlin blockade, the Soviet Union blocked land access to Berlin, prompting the United States to airlift supplies for a year.
    ◦ In 1949, the separate states of West and East Germany were declared.
    ◦ East Germany erected the Berlin Wall in 1961 in order to stem the tide of East Germans trying to leave the troubled state.
  ◦ Korea, too, was divided geographically—between the north and south—and ideologically—between a communist and a noncommunist state.
  ◦ The 1962 Cuban missile crisis was another direct confrontation in yet another part of the world. The Soviet Union’s installation of missiles in Cuba was viewed by the United States as a direct threat to its territory.
  ◦ In Vietnam, the Cold War played out in an extended civil war, in which communist North Vietnam was pitted against South Vietnam.
  ◦ U.S. policymakers argued that communist influence must be stopped before it spread like a chain of falling dominoes throughout the rest of Southeast Asia (hence the term **domino effect**).
  ◦ It was not always the case that when once of the superpowers acted the other side responded.
    1. When the Soviet Union invaded Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the United States verbally condemned such actions, but the actions themselves went unchecked.

° The Middle East was a region of vital importance to both the United States and the Soviet Union, and thus the region served as a proxy battleground for many of the events of the Cold War.

1. Following the establishment of Israel in 1948, the region was the scene of a superpower confrontation by proxy: between a U.S.-supported Israel and the Soviet-backed Arab states of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Proxy “hot” wars, such as the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, were fought.

2. Confrontation through proxy also occurred in parts of the world of less strategic importance, such as the Congo, Angola, and the Horn of Africa.

° The Cold War was also fought and moderated in words, at **summits** (meetings between leaders) and in treaties.

1. Some of these summits were successful, such as the 1967 Glassboro Summit that began the loosening of tensions known as **détente**.

2. Treaties placed self-imposed limitations on nuclear arms.

• **The Cold War as a Long Peace**

° John Lewis Gaddis has referred to the Cold War as a “long peace” to dramatize the absence of war between the great powers. Several factors prevented a major interstate war:

1. Nuclear **deterrence**: once both the United States and the Soviet Union had acquired nuclear weapons, neither was willing to use them.

2. **Division of power**: the parity of power led to stability in the international system.

3. The stability imposed by the hegemonic economic power of the United States; being in a superior economic position for much of the Cold War, the United States willingly paid the price of maintaining stability throughout the world.

4. Economic liberalism: the liberal economic order solidified and became a dominant factor in international relations. Politics became **transnational** under liberalism—based on interests and coalitions across state boundaries—and thus great powers became obsolete.
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5. The long peace was predetermined: it was just one phase in a long historical cycle of peace and war.

VII. The Post–Cold War Era

- The fall of the Berlin Wall symbolized the end of the Cold War, but actually its end was gradual. Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev had set in motion two domestic processes—glasnost (political openness) and perestroika (economic restructuring)—as early as the mid-1980s.
- Gorbachev’s domestic reforms also led to changes in the orientation of Soviet foreign policy. He suggested that members of the UN Security Council become “guarantors of regional security.”
- The first post–Cold War test of the new so-called new world order came in response to Iraq’s invasion and annexation of Kuwait in 1990.
- A few have labeled the post–Cold War era the age of globalization. This era appears to be marked by U.S. primacy in international affairs to a degree not even matched by the Romans.
- However, U.S. primacy is still not able to prevent ethnic conflict, civil wars, and human rights abuses from occurring.
- The 1990s were a decade marked by dual realities (which sometimes converged and diverged), the first being U.S. primacy and the second being civil and ethnic strife.
  - Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration played itself out over the entire decade despite Western attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully.
  - At the same time, the world witnessed ethnic tension and violence as genocide in Rwanda and Burundi went unchallenged by the international community.
- On September 11, 2001, the world witnessed deadly, and economically destructive terrorist attacks against two important cities in the United States. These attacks set into motion a U.S.-led global war on terror.
  - The United States fought a war in Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime, which was providing safe haven to Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda organization and a base from which it freely planned and carried out a global terror campaign against the United States.
  - Following the successful war in Afghanistan, the United States, convinced that Iraq maintained weapons of mass destruction
and supported terrorist organizations, attempted to build support in the UN for authorization to remove Saddam Hussein from power. When the UN failed to back the U.S. request, the United States built its own coalition and overthrew the Iraqi government. The fight continues today.

- Despite its primacy, the United States does not feel it is secure from attack. The issue of whether U.S. power will be balanced by an emerging power is also far from resolved.

VIII. In Sum: Learning from History

- Our examination of the development of contemporary international relations has focused on how core concepts of international relations have emerged and evolved over time, most notably the state, sovereignty, the nation, and the international system. These concepts provide the building blocks for contemporary international relations.
- Whether the world develops into a multipolar, unipolar, or bipolar system depends in part on the trends of the past and how they influence contemporary thinking.

KEY TERMS

balance of power (p. 33): any system in which actors (e.g., states) enjoy relatively equal power, such that no single state or coalition of states is able to dominate other actors in the system.

bipolarity (p. 63): an international system in which there are two great powers or blocs of roughly equal strength or weight.

capitalism (p. 45): the economic system in which the ownership of the means of production is in private hands; the system operates according to market forces whereby capital and labor move freely; according to radicals, an exploitative relationship between the owners of production and the workers.

Cold War (p. 43): the era in international relations between the end of World War II and 1990, distinguished by ideological, economic, and political differences between the Soviet Union and the United States.

colonialism (p. 30): the fifteenth- through twentieth-century practice of founding, maintaining, and expanding colonies abroad. Colonialism, now
universally delegitimized, was marked by two main motivations: (1) showing indigenous peoples how best to live (a “civilizing mission”) and (2) exploiting indigenous people and their territory for labor and material resources in order to increase the power of the colonial authority.

**containment (p. 44):** a foreign policy designed to prevent the expansion of an adversary by blocking its opportunities to expand, by supporting weaker states through foreign aid programs, and by using coercive force only to oppose an active attempt by an adversary to physically expand; the major U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.

**détente (p. 55):** the easing of tense relations; in the context of this volume, détente refers to the relaxation and reappraisal of threat assessments by political rivals, for example, the United States and Soviet Union during the later years of the Cold War.

**deterrence (p. 56):** the policy of maintaining a large military force and arsenal to discourage any potential aggressor from taking action; states commit themselves to punish an aggressor state.

**domino effect (p. 53):** a metaphor that posits that the loss of influence over one state to an adversary will lead to a subsequent loss of control over neighboring states, just as dominos fall one after another; used by the United States as a justification to support South Vietnam, fearing that if that country became communist, neighboring countries would also fall under communist influence.

**hegemon (p. 33):** a dominant state that has a preponderance of power; often establishes and enforces the rules and norms in the international system.

**imperialism (p. 30):** the policy and practice of extending the domination of one state over another through territorial conquest or economic domination; in radicalism, the final stage of expansion of the capitalist system.

**League of Nations (p. 38):** the international organization formed at the conclusion of World War I for the purpose of preventing another war; based on collective security.

**legitimacy (p. 24):** the moral and legal right to rule, which is based on law, custom, heredity, or the consent of the governed.

**multipolar (p. 63):** an international system in which there are several states or great powers of roughly equal strength or weight.
nation (p. 25): a group of people sharing a common language, history, or culture.

nationalism (p. 24): devotion and allegiance to the nation and the shared characteristics of its peoples; used to motivate people to patriotic acts, sometimes leading a group to seek dominance over another group.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (p. 49): military and political alliance between Western European states and the United States established in 1948 for the purpose of defending Europe from aggression by the Soviet Union and its allies; expanded into Eastern Europe after the Cold War.

socialism (p. 45): an economic and social system that relies on intensive government intervention or public ownership of the means of production in order to distribute wealth among the population more equitably; in radical theory, the stage between capitalism and communism.

sovereignty (p. 21): the authority of the state, based on recognition by other states and by nonstate actors, to govern matters within its own borders that affect its people, economy, security, and form of government.

summits (p. 55): talks and meetings among the highest-level government officials from different countries; designed to promote good relations and provide a forum to discuss issues and conclude formal negotiations.

superpowers (44): highest-power states as distinguished from other great powers; term coined during the Cold War to refer to the United States and the Soviet Union.

transnational (p. 56): across national or traditional state boundaries; can refer to actions of various nonstate actors, such as private individuals and non-governmental organizations.

Treaties of Westphalia (p. 22): treaty ending the Thirty Years War in Europe in 1648; in international relations represents the beginning of state sovereignty within a territorial space.

war on terrorism (p. 62): a powerful rhetorical call to exploit a given society’s total available resources (both material and nonmaterial) in order to defeat a political tactic. A key implication of declaring “war on terrorism” is that few if any limits on the use of a society’s resources either should or will be observed.

Warsaw Pact (p. 49): the military alliance formed by the states of the Soviet bloc in 1955 in response to the rearmament of West Germany and its inclusion in NATO; permitted the stationing of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.
weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (p. 62): chemical, biological, and radiological weapons distinguished by an inability to restrict their destructive effects to a single time and place; they therefore share a quality of irrationality in their contemplated use because attackers can never be entirely protected from the harm of any attacks they initiate with such weapons.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. The Treaties of Westphalia are often viewed as the beginning of modern international relations. Why are they a useful benchmark? What factors does this benchmark ignore?

2. Colonization by the great powers of Europe has officially ended. However, the effects of the colonial era linger. Explain with specific examples.

3. The Cold War has ended. Discuss two current events where Cold War politics persist.

4. The development of international relations as a discipline has been closely identified with the history of western Europe and the United States. With this civilizational bias, what might we be missing?

**TEACHING SUGGESTIONS**

1. The key emphasis in this chapter is less on “what happened,” and more on how it affected the sorts of questions asked by international relations theorists then and now. Challenge students to make these connections between the past and theories of international relations by asking how the past glory of Islamic civilization, and its eventual decline, might motivate contemporary political and religious actors? Ask how the Thirty Years War and English Civil War might have affected the writings of Thomas Hobbes and, by extension, realist political thought in general?

2. Challenge students to think about why we remember history as we do, and what sorts of events get remembered. Is war the most significant cause of human suffering and death over time, or might plagues or pov-
The Historical Context

Why win this contest? Ask students what it is about war that might attract historians. Ask whether female and male historians might emphasize the same things. If so, why; and if not, why not?

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

Ask students to think of a current event in international affairs and offer an explanation for that event as a class of similar events. Do they have any theories that might explain the event, and if not, can they come up with some logical explanation that might apply beyond the particular event itself?

VIDEO EXERCISES

- Video Exercise 2.1: Revisiting the End of History
  Students will watch an excerpt from an interview in which Francis Fukuyama looks back on his original idea of the “end of history.” They are then asked to consider how Fukuyama’s argument about the process of history fits into the idea of thinking theoretically presented in the textbook.

- Video Exercise 2.2: A Mythical Clash?
  Students will watch a news report on the September 2009 change in U.S. antiballistic missile policy. They are then asked to evaluate the impact of the Cold War on the war on terror and current thinking about international relations.

PHOTO BANK AND POWERPOINTS

Find lecture PowerPoints, all images from the text, and seven supplementary photo PowerPoints for this chapter on the Instructor’s Resource Disc and the instructor web site (wwnorton.com/nrl).

TEST BANK

Find 70 multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions for this chapter on the computerized test bank as well as the instructor web site.
VIDEO LIBRARY

See page 143 for a list of available videos arranged by topic.

READER SELECTIONS

For this chapter, the following readings are included in *Essential Readings in World Politics*, Fourth Edition:

- Woodrow Wilson, “The Fourteen Points”
- George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”