ITI 1202: Introduction to Global Politics

Evolution of International Politics (Part 2)

The Road to World War I

- By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was intense competition among European powers.
- The increased power and ambitions of the newly unified Germany made the existing state of affairs in Europe appear unsustainable.
- It resulted also in a this arms race between Germany and Great Britain, and in a growing sense that a European war was inevitable.

The Road to World War I

- The Ottoman Empire was slowly losing control of territories in what are today Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, and Bulgaria, an area generally known as the Balkans. National independence movements plagued the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well.
- Russia sought to control the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, for both religious and geopolitical reasons. This is because, Istanbul, previously known as Constantinople, had been the traditional home of the Orthodox Christian Church until its conquest by the Muslim Turks in 1453.

- Germany sought to deny Russia this victory by bolstering Austria and the Ottoman Empire.
- France, fearing Germany after the Franco-Prussian war, saw Russia as a potential ally.
- Great Britain saw its place as the most powerful military and economic player on earth jeopardized by the rapid rise of Germany.

- Britain's willingness to go to war in 1914 rested on logic similar to that which Thucydides attributed to the Spartans: If war was likely, it was better to fight it before the enemy became even stronger.
- By 1914, Europe was delicately balanced between two great alliances, the Triple Alliance, consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; and the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia.

Alliances Powers	Entente Powers
Germany	Great Britain
Austria-Hungary	France
Ottoman Empire	Russia
Italy (until 1915)	Italy (after 1915)
	United States (after 1917)

L'assassinio a Serajevo dell'arciduca Francesco Ferdinando erede del trono d'Austria, e di sua moglie.

The Road to World War I

- A spark of WWI was provided by Serbian nationalists, who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro- Hungarian throne, in July 1914.
- In the "July Crisis" that ensued, Austria issued an ultimatum insisting that Serbia submit to Austrian intervention or face war. Russia pledged to defend Serbia. Germany, seeing that its position would be ruined if Russia defeated Austria, backed Austria.
- France, fearing its position should Germany defeat Russia, backed Russia.

The Road to World War I

- Finally Britain, fearing that Germany might defeat both Russia and France and therefore rule all Europe, backed its allies.
- WWI was far more destructive than any previous war and soldiers were butchered in terrifying numbers. On July I, 1916, at the Battle of the Somme, the British army took 58,000 casualties in a single day.
- By the end of that battle, in September 1916, the British, French, and German casualties surpassed 1 million.

The Road to World War I

- The stalemate was broken only in 1917, when the United States intervened on the side of Britain, France, and Russia.
- The war ended in November 1918, but not until four major empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian) collapsed, the communists had come to power in Russia, and more than 8 million soldiers had died.

The Road to World War I

- The Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended World War I, was signed on June 28, 1919. It created the League of Nations, redrew Germany's boundaries, required Germany to pay substantial "reparations" for the harm it had caused in starting the war, and specified numerous limits on Germany's ability to rearm in the coming years.
- Out of the rubble of the collapsed empires, the Treaty of Versailles established several countries, including Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and the Baltic states in Europe.

The Road to World War II

- Woodrow Wilson called World War I "the war to end all wars." Yet a mere 21 years later, in 1939, World War II began, and it was even more brutal than World War I. Why did the League of Nations fail to prevent World War II?
- The policy of collective security, whereby all states would agree that if any state initiated a war, all the others would come to the defense of the state under attack. So, any state would know that if it started a war, it would face retaliation from every other country.

The Road to World War II

- However, after WWI, almost every state was determined to avoid another war.
- The United States return to the traditional U.S. policy of isolationism. The U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Charter of the League of Nations because many senators rejected the commitment to go to war if needed.
- When Japan invaded the Chinese territory Manchuria in 1931. The League of Nations demanded that Japan withdraw, but when Japan continued the invasion, other states did nothing.

The Road to World War II

- When Germany first violated the Treaty of Versailles in 1936, other countries again hesitated to respond with force.
- Germany's demand that it be allowed to occupy the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia with many ethnic Germans, precipitated the Munich Crisis of 1938.
- British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain advocated appeasement, a strategy of avoiding war by acceding to the demands of rival powers (in this case Nazi Germany).

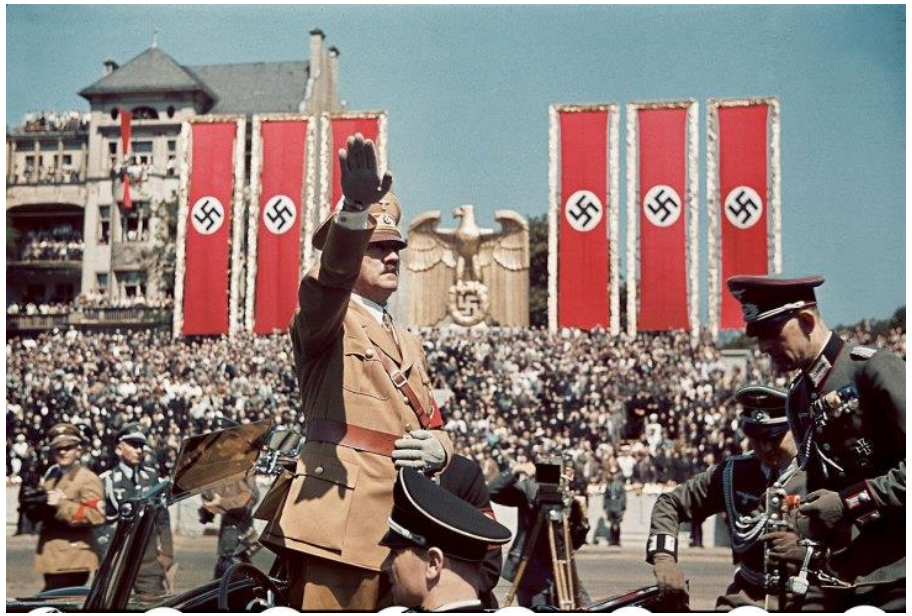
The Road to World War II

- The United States, France, and Britain, all of which were hostile toward the Soviet Union, hoped that Germany would attack eastward (toward the Soviet Union).
- However, the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty with Germany in 1939, hoping to turn German aggression westward.

The Road to World War II

- By playing the potential allies against each other, the German leadership was able to divide and conquer.
- The US continued to avoid involvement in Europe's war, even after Adolf Hitler attacked Poland, France, and the United Kingdom in 1939 and 1940.

The Axis Powers	The Allied Powers
Germany	France
Italy	Great Britain
Japan	Soviet Union
	United States



The Road to World War II

- Only after Germany declared war on the United States in 1941 did the United States join the war.
- Germany was defeated only when Hitler chose to go to war with all of these countries simultaneously.
- Economic Roots of World War I World War II – the lack of international economic cooperation allowed Hitler come to power in Germany. Also, the financial burden of reparations required by the Treaty of Versailles further undermined a German economy that had already been ravaged by war, to the brink of collapse.

The Road to World War II

- Fascism, under Hitler, took nationalism, which had been growing since the late eighteenth century, to a militant extreme.
- As it developed in Italy and Germany, the doctrine saw the strengthening of the nation, as represented by the state, as the most important political goal.
- In fascism, the rights or goals of individuals are subservient to those of the nation which is viewed as a single organism. This doctrine justified political authoritarianism, economic centralization, and the belief that one nation was superior to all others.

- Fascism had its ultimate expression in the Holocaust, the systematic murder of approximately 6 million Jews by Germany and its allies.
- In Japan, which had limited supplies of raw materials, started industrialization later than the Great powers and was striving to catch up.
- Japanese imperialism in Korea and China was motivated by economic pressures combined with intense nationalism.

- The Great Powers saw Japanese expansion as a threat to their own interests in Asia, cut off sales of key raw materials to weaken Japan and to impede further expansion.
- The embargo convinced the Japanese leadership to ejecting the United States, Britain, and France from the Far East.
- In December 1941, Japan sought to force the United States from the Pacific region by bombing the U.S. Pacific Fleet at its base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

World War II

- Two related lessons were learned from World War II.
- First, the immediate cause of the war was the rise to power of intensely nationalistic and undemocratic regimes in Germany, Italy, and Japan. Thus, democracy is a key underpinning of peace.
- Second, democracies would be under threat if economies performed badly and that more effective governance of the global economy was needed to prevent the sort of economic chaos that facilitated the rise of authoritarianism in Germany, Italy, and Japan.

World War II

- The political and military lessons taken from World War II is that while World War I had shown the foolishness of going to war before diplomacy was exhausted, World War II showed the foolishness of neglecting to confront expansionist powers.
- World War II also unleashed a new force into international politics: nuclear weapons, which the United States dropped in August 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The enormous power of these weapons, and the indiscriminate destruction they caused changed how military strategists and political leaders thought about war.

The Cold War

- At the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union mistrusted each other intensely and had incompatible plans for postwar Europe. The period from 1946 through 1991 is known as the Cold War because despite the intense conflict between the superpowers, actual "hot" war never broke out.
- The Cold War conflict dominated world politics for almost 50 years. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were intent on not repeating mistakes of the 1930s. Having learned the "lesson of Munich," each side strived to convince the other that the slightest aggression would be countered.

The Cold War

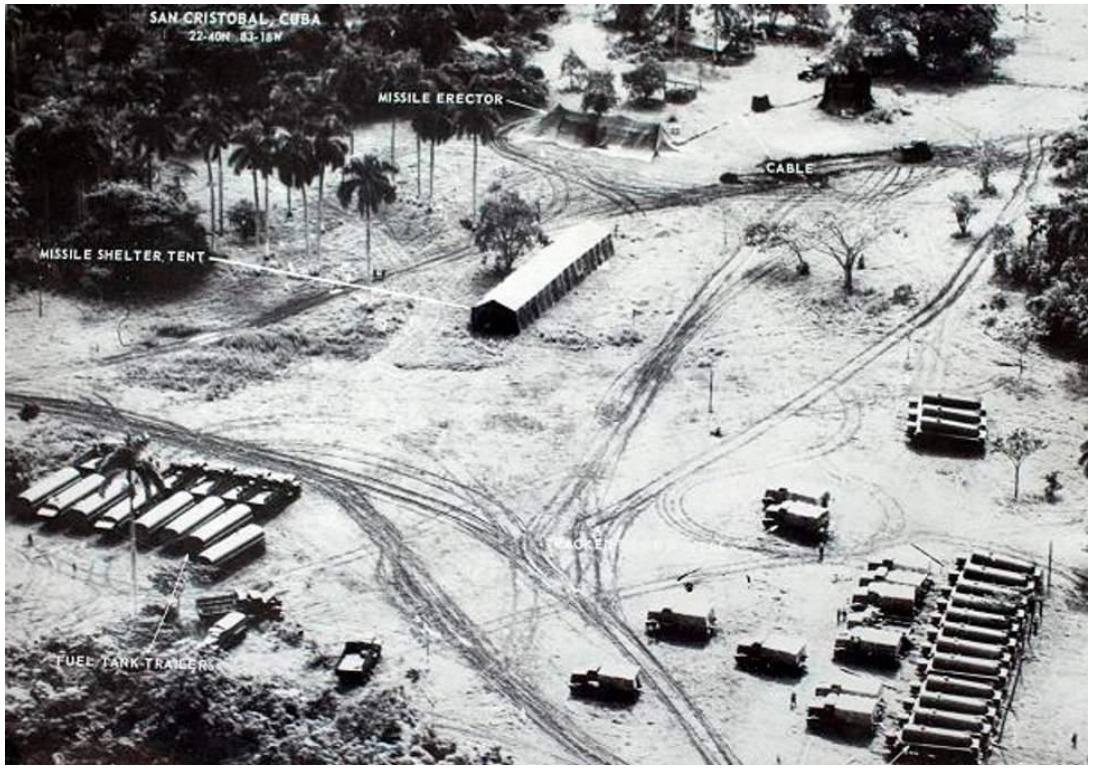
- For example, there was a series of crises over the status of Berlin, which was surrounded by communist East Germany but had been left under joint control of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and the United States after World War II.
- However, the United States and its allies maintained that any attack on Berlin would lead to a general war.

The Cold War

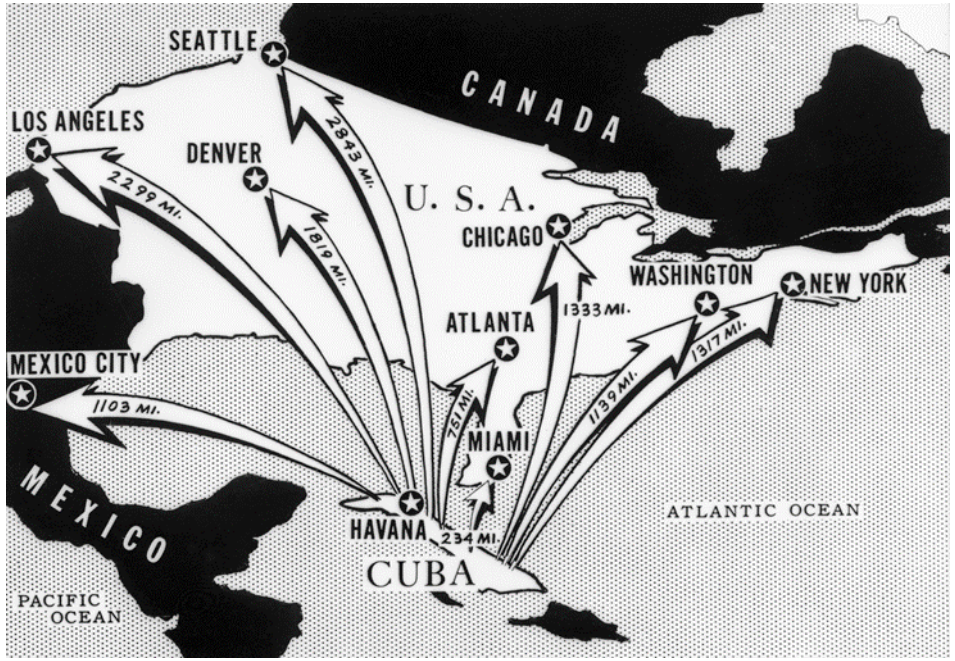
- These attempts at deterrence were strongly influenced by the development of nuclear weapons, which fundamentally changed the nature of military security by raising the potential death toll of the next major war to unimaginable levels.
- The period of highest tension culminated in the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Fearing that it was falling behind in the arms race, the Soviet Union began to install medium-range missiles in Cuba, less than 100 miles from the U.S. coast.

The Cold War (The Cuban Missile Crisis)

- The United States threatened military retaliation and blockaded Cuba to prevent the missile installations from being completed.
- After a tense standoff, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw the missiles in return for concessions by the United States.



- The Cuban Missile Crisis ended the period of greatest danger in the Cold War for two reasons.
- First, it frightened both sides into taking steps to reduce the chances of such a crisis in the future. One measure taken was the installation of a “hotline” enabling immediate communication between leaders in Washington and Moscow.



The Cold War (The Cuban Missile Crisis)

- The first major arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union followed shortly thereafter.
- Second, as both sides built more nuclear weapons and more missiles and aircraft to deliver them the chance that either side could win a nuclear war, even if it waged a successful surprise attack, diminished. This situation was known as mutual assured destruction (MAD). The fact that neither country could get away with a surprise attack—and that both U.S. and Russian leaders understood this—increased stability.

The Cold War (The Global Economy)

- Among the lessons learned from World War II was that states needed to collaborate to avert global economic crises. For the Western powers, the importance of international collaboration was increased by the communist challenge.
- The main institutions of international collaboration were formed at a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1946, and the postwar economic system is therefore often referred to as the Bretton Woods system.

The Cold War

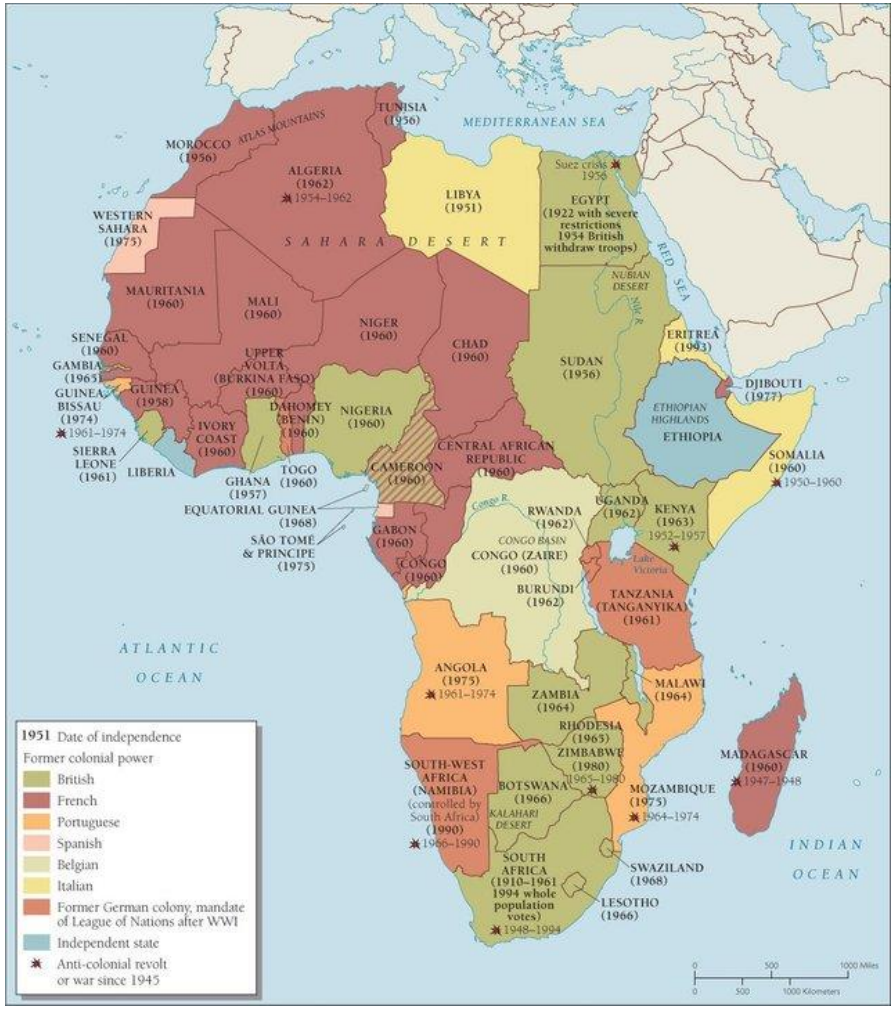
- A major goal of the system was to foster expanded international trade in order to increase prosperity. The mechanism was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which in 1995 evolved into the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- A second key goal of the Bretton Woods system was to provide stability in the international financial system. This was accomplished through the development of an international currency system based on the U.S. dollar, which in turn was linked to the value of gold.

The Cold War

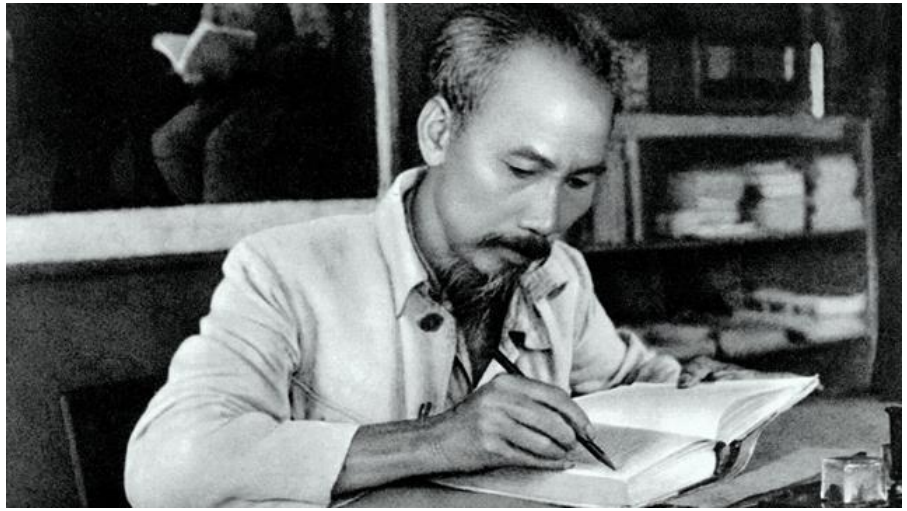
- The gold standard system was managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Agreements on exchange rates between different currencies provided stability and predictability, and a system of IMF loans helped countries overcome short-term imbalances their international financial positions.
- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), commonly known as the World Bank, was founded in 1944 to promote the postwar reconstruction of Europe.

Decolonization, Development and Underdevelopment

- Following World War II, a wave of decolonization from 1945 until 1975 disbanded nearly all of the colonial rule.
- Several factors contributed to decolonization. First, the major colonial powers had been severely weakened by World War II and were less able to resist independence movements.



- Second, the independence movements themselves grew stronger, as a result of the doctrine of national self-determination and the democratic ideals that were the rallying cries in World War II.
- Third, the United States, which had few formal colonies but was now the leading power in the West, disapproved of colonialism and sought to undermine it.



Decolonization, Development and Underdevelopment

- The superpowers in the Cold War avoided direct combat with each other, but they often waged it through allies, or "proxies," in the developing world.
- In addition to the Vietnam War (1954-1975), other regional wars that drew the superpowers in included the Korean War (1950-1953), the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia (1978), and the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989).
- As Africa and Asia decolonized, they did not revert to precolonial territorial and political arrangements (which varied from place to place).

Decolonization, Development and Underdevelopment

- Rather, newly independent territories were integrated into the sovereign state system. New states were formed, their borders were demarcated, and they were recognized as sovereign through membership in the UN.
- The sovereign state system is based on o the strict territorial division of political authority. Borders had to be drawn in regions where they had not existed prior to colonialism.
- This created problems within countries, such as Iraq, and between countries, such as and Pakistan, that persist today

Decolonization, Development and Underdevelopment

- Many of the new states were not "nation-states at but included multiple ethnic, linguistic, and national groups, while some groups found themselves spread across two or more states.
- In 1955, leaders of 29 African and Asian nations met in Bandung Indonesia, to establish an agenda of collaboration for development among states hoping to avoid taking sides in the Cold War. In 1961, this group was formalized in the Non Aligned Movement, which eventually numbered more than 100 members.

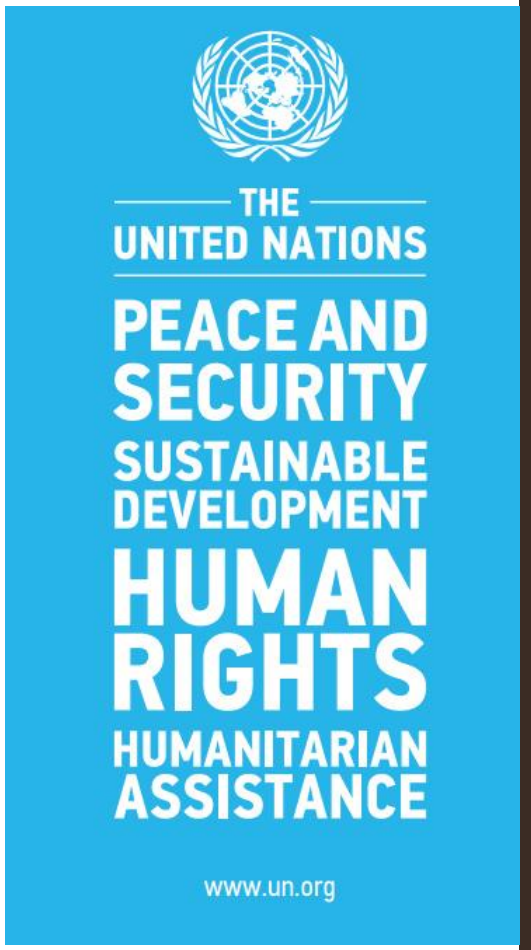
Decolonization, Development and Underdevelopment

- Poverty was viewed as the major problem in the parts of the world usually labeled as “underdeveloped,” “developing.” or “Third World.”
- By the 1970s, poor countries were trying new strategies of economic development. The ability of oil-producing countries to band together into the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to force global oil prices higher was seen as a major victory for some poor countries. Efforts to form cartels to boost prices of other raw material exports, such as copper, coffee, and cocoa, generally failed.

The World Today (The Rise of Nonstate Actors)

- In the post-World War II era, new kinds of actors were recognized as having important impacts on international politics.
- One of the first nonstate actors to gain widespread notice was the multinational corporation (MNC), a company with operations in more than one country.

- In some case, these global corporations had more power than local governments. There was also considerable concern about the links between these large companies and their "host" governments in North America and Europe
- Second group are international organizations (IOs)-organizations formed by governments to help them pursue collaborative activity. These too proliferated after World War II. The UN is perhaps the best known of these, but economic IOs, such as the World Bank and the IMF, also attracted intense interest, as they were becoming very influential actors in the world economy.



The World Today

- More recent group are international advocacy groups, often known as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), have proliferated and taken a higher profile on many international issues.
- The European Union, having started with six members in 1950, the European Union now has 27 members, including almost every state in Western and Central Europe (Norway and Switzerland are prominent exceptions).

- Eastern Europe went through a period of nationalist resurgence that led to the fragmentation of three states: the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.
- After 45 years of Cold War, civil wars broke out in the former Yugoslavia and in Russia (Chechnya), and ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia brought back memories of genocide during World War II.

The World Today

- The collapse of communism also led to a new wave of democratization. Authoritarian regimes were replaced with elected ones, and many people believe that the spread of democracy would help to reduce conflict.
- However, by the end of the decade, it was clear that the post-Cold War world was not going to be as simple and kind as some ha hoped. The attacks on New York City and Washington D.C., on September 11, 2001, fundamentally changed the nature of international security. Overnight, the world focusing on nonstate transnational terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda.

The World Today

- While the problems of terrorism and the wars in the Middle East dominated the headlines, the global economic crisis that began in 2008 shows that, economically, global interaction has increased and increasing wealth and equality continues to be an elusive goal.