ITI 1202: Introduction to Global Politics

Evolution of International Politics (Part 1)

The Birth of International Politics

- Histories of international politics begin with developments in the Greek city-states in the fifth century BC. It is later came to be viewed as a system of independent states.
- This period gave rise the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, written by the Athenian general Thucydides.
- His analysis was the first known attempt to advance a general understanding of how international politics works, and his fundamental assertions continue to be influential today.

The Birth of International Politics

- In 431 BCE, Sparta and Athens, two Greek city-states, went to war.
- Thucydides asserted that the war was caused by an imbalance in power between Athens and Sparta. As long as Sparta was considerably more powerful than Athens, there was no cause for war.
- However, as Athens' power approached that of Sparta, the Spartans feared that Athens would soon become strong enough to attack and defeat Sparta. To avoid that, Sparta attacked Athens first.

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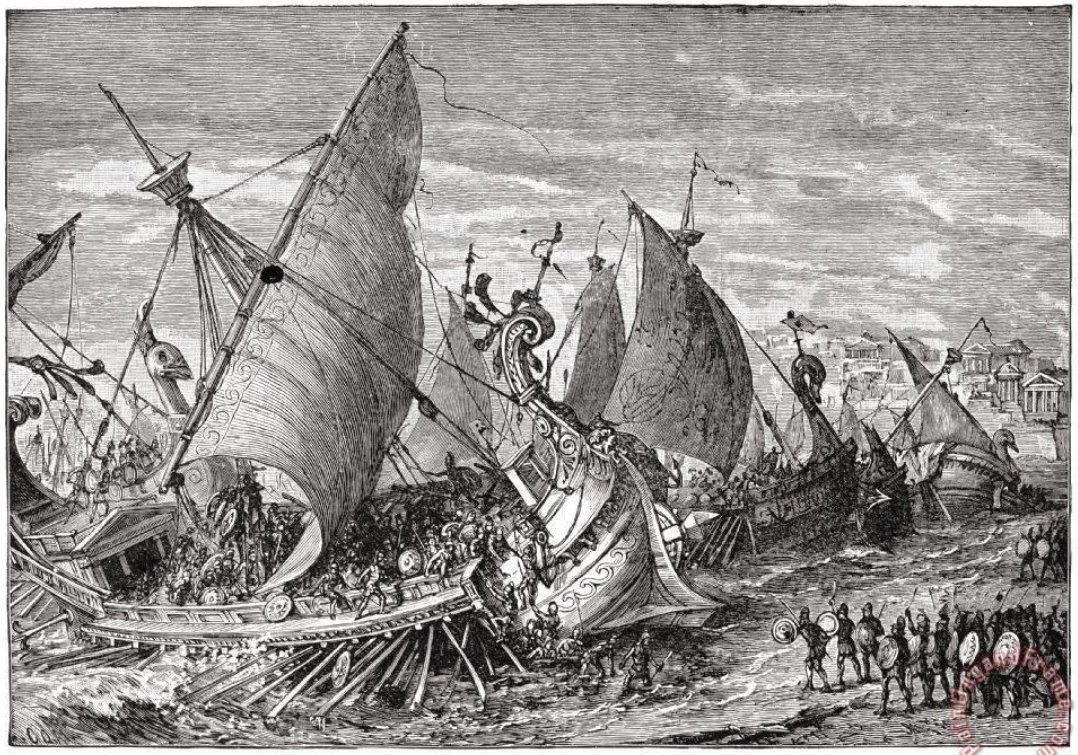
- Athens sent ships and troops against the island of Melos, a colony of Sparta who wanted no part between Sparta and Athens.
- Athenians – "the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."



THE NAVAL BATTLE IN THE HARBOR OF SYRACUSE.

The Birth of International Politics

- "You would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you."
- "By extending our empire, we should gain in security by your subjection"

The Birth of International Politics

- The Melians surrendered at discretion of Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves.

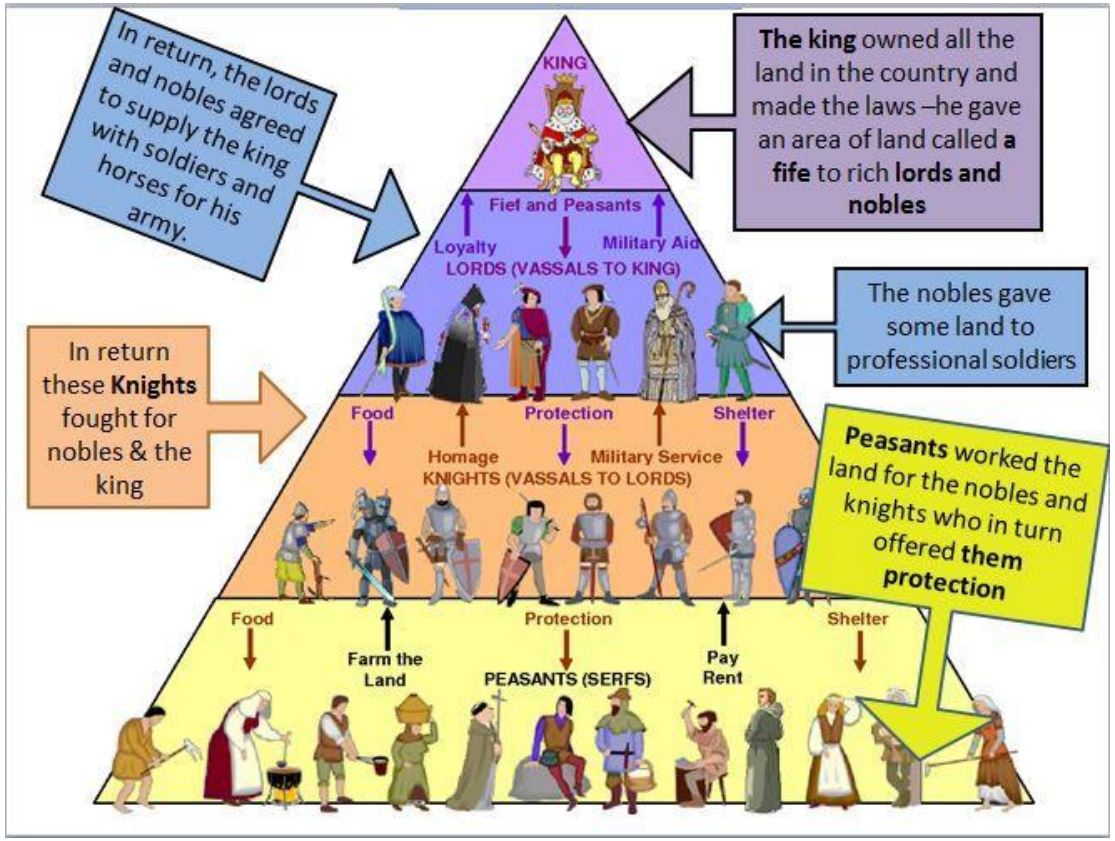
The Birth of International Politics

- The key actors were states. The key factor in international politics was the distribution of power, upon which war and peace depended.
- Thucydides also argued that discussions of justice had no place in international politics.
- Morality plays a less significant role in politics among nations.
- International politics continues to resemble the state of nature, i.e., who lives and who dies/survival is at stake.

From City-States to Nation-States

- Many histories of international politics begin in the seventeenth century.
- Between the fall of the Greek city-states and the rise of Western European sovereign states, the Roman Empire dominated the known world. In that system, a single empire dominated international politics.
- Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, Europe was dominated by a feudal system, in which political power and authority were highly fragmented.

- In a feudal system, political authority was defined personally and religiously, rather than territorially.
- Powers were divided among local nobles; kings, or emperors, whose power had a wider geographic scope but whose local authority was limited; and the Church of Rome, which claimed religious authority over all of Europe but whose practical power was limited.



Europe in 1100 AD

- These different bases of power often clashed with one another, as each actor tried to expand its own territorial control, political power, and wealth.

The Westphalian System

- The Thirty Years War (1618-48) started initially in Bohemia as an uprising of the Protestant aristocracy against Spanish authority. Later, the war was motivated both by religious conflict and by a contest for political control over Europe.

The Westphalian System

- Catholic leaders sought to defeat Protestant states to restore the "true faith." States also battled to increase their power at the expense of their rivals. Several sought to conquer all of Europe and to establish a new Roman Empire.
- Over time, the political motive displaced the religious motive, and the conflict is thus sometimes called "the last of the religious wars." The triumph of "national interest" over religious motives is seen as one of the long-lasting effects of the war.

The Westphalian System

- The Thirty Years War lasted much longer and was much more devastating than anyone expected. In central Europe, roughly one-third of the population died as a result of the war (Sweden and France as the challengers, Spain and the dying Holy Roman Empire as the defender of status quo, and newly independent Netherlands).

The Westphalian System

- Exhausted, the European powers gathered in Westphalia (in today's Germany) in 1648 to make peace and marked the emergence of the nation-state system.
- The Treaty of Westphalia established principles that defined the system from then until now. First, the treaty recognized the existence of sovereign states. Second, it defined the rights of sovereign states.
- This meant acknowledging Europe as a system of multiple states.

The Westphalian System (State Sovereignty)

- The principle of sovereignty meant that each state had complete authority over its territory.
- Sovereignty had both internal and external dimensions. Internally, it meant that no one within a state had the right to challenge the ruler's power. Any challenges that occurred were regarded as illegitimate or unjust. This principle gave kings power over lesser nobles.
- Continuous warfare as well as advances in taxation and administration slowly strengthened monarchs at the expense of lesser nobles.

State Sovereignty

- France under Louis XIV (the Sun King who ruled from 1643-1715) was emblematic of the strengthening of the modern absolutist state.
- The external dimension of sovereignty was that no one outside a territory had the right to say what should go on within that territory.

“I am the State” (l'état, c'est moi)

The Westphalian System (State Sovereignty)

- This principle, often known as the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other states, was especially important in religion.
- In particular, the Treaty of Westphalia recognized the power of rulers to determine the religion of the people in their territory. The treaty acknowledged the reality of political and religious pluralism.
- In political terms, pluralism meant accepting that Europe would not be a single empire based on a single religion.

The Westphalian System (The Balance of Power system)

- The history of Europe from 1648 until the beginning of the nineteenth century was characterized by the classic balance of power system.
- A balance of power meant that no individual state could gain enough power to conquer all the others, and many states, made the maintenance of a balance an explicit goal of policy.
- As modern notions of nationalism and patriotism had not yet emerged, there was little reason for people to fight for the rules as they were not citizens (except the nobles).

The Westphalian System (The Balance of Power system)

- There also existed a law of war, based on Christian doctrine, which raised moral objections to unlimited war, and particularly to the targeting of noncombatants (civilians).

City-states and Empires	
500 BCE-100 BCE	Greek city-states system (Hellas)
200 BCE-AD 500	Roman Empire
306-1453	Orthodox Christianity: Byzantine Empire, Constantinople
500-1500	Catholic Christendom: The Pope in Rome
1299-1923	Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, Istanbul (Constantinople)
Other historical empires	Persia, India (Mogul), China

Napoleon and National Warfare

- The rise to power in France of Napoleon Bonaparte and in the wars he waged fundamentally alter the nature of international politics.
- By 1800, Napoleon sought to overthrow the Westphalian system in Europe by taking control of the entire continent.

- Two important developments in European politics made possible Napoleon's rise: nationalism and democracy.
- Nationalism is the doctrine that "nations"—large groups of people who perceive themselves to be fundamentally similar to each other and distinct from other groups—are and should be a basic unit of politics.
- Closely linked to nationalism is the principle of national self-determination, the idea that each state should consist of a single nation and each distinct nation should have its own state.

Napoleon and National Warfare

- Democracy is the doctrine that the entire population of a nation, rather than a small elite or a single monarch, should control government. All of these doctrines were fairly new at this point in European history.
- The French Revolution of 1789 overthrew the French monarchy and replaced it with a regime that claimed to be democratic. The doctrines of nationalism and democracy gave, in theory, every French resident a stake in the welfare and in the glory of France.

Napoleon and National Warfare

- In revolutionary France, every adult male was considered a citizen, with a voice and an interest in government. Moreover, Moreover, with the doctrine of nationalism, every citizen of the French state was a "Frenchman."
- When Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in 1799, he harnessed democracy and nationalism for military purposes. The crucial innovation in revolutionary France was the institution of a draft, known as the levée en masse, which conscripted hundreds of thousands of ordinary French peasants into the French military.

Napoleon and National Warfare

- By 1812, Napoleon had conquered Austria and Prussia (one of the forerunners of modern Germany), the leading European powers of the day, and had reached Moscow, where he stabled his horses in the Kremlin.
- Ultimately, he failed to conquer Russia and was defeated so badly there that he was pushed all the way back to France and then exiled.
- Napoleon was beaten partly because Russia and others began to adopt his strategies, using nationalism to mobilize masses of common people into the army.

- After Napoleon, war became national war, which engaged entire populations against one another.
- This “democratization of war,” coupled with industrialization, led to a massive increase in the size of armies, the scale of combat, and the number of casualties. The 1812 Battle of Borodino, near Moscow, involved more than 250,000 soldiers and led to 70,000 casualties.

The Concert of Europe

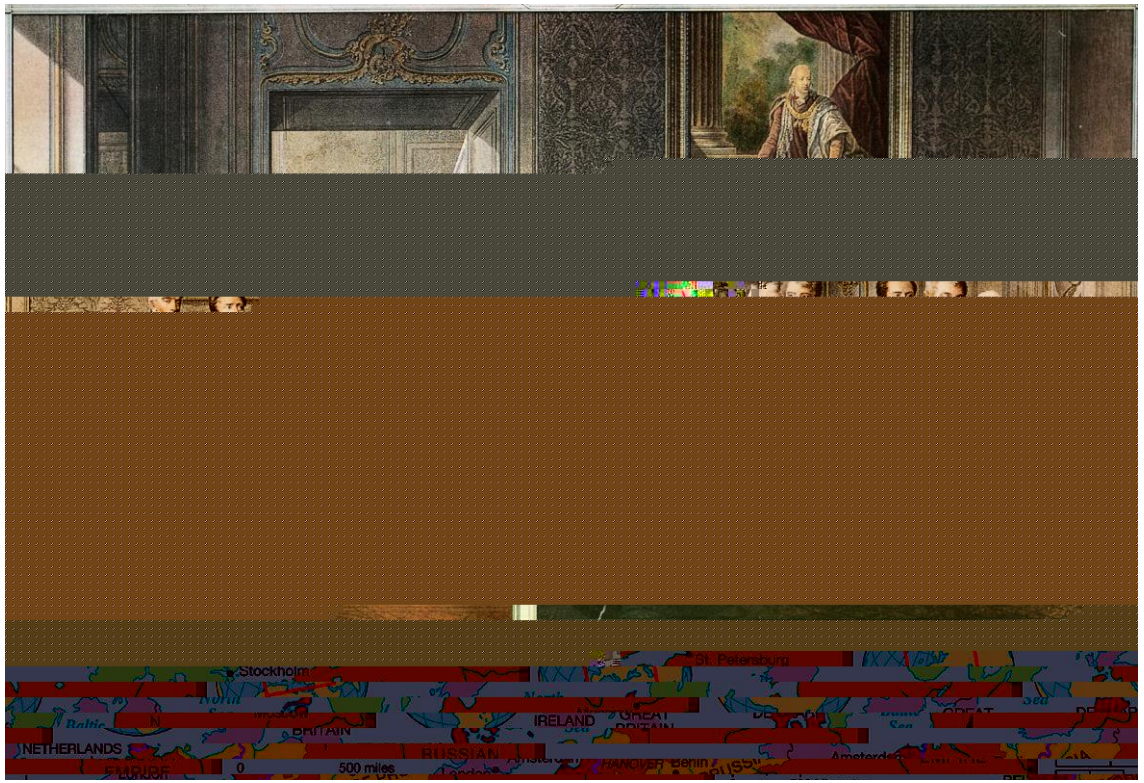
- The Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century changed not only how wars would be fought, but also how peace would be sought.
- At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the victorious powers (Austria, Prussia, Britain, and Russia) put into place a mechanism intended to prevent a country such as France from again seeking to dominate the continent.
- This agreement, known as the Concert of Europe, was the first of its kind in modern history.

The Concert of Europe

- The Concert of Europe was based on an understanding that the inability of the four powers to form an early alliance against.
- To prevent any future recurrence, the four powers agreed to work together to preserve the status quo and to confer periodically.
- From a theoretical perspective, it is the first attempt to put into practice the emerging liberal approach to international affairs.

The Concert of Europe

- With no formal procedures or legal documents, the Concert of Europe was a statement of intentions, based on a shared understanding that peace could be better preserved if active collaboration supplemented traditional balance of power politics.



Nationalism and Imperialism

- The nineteenth century saw the rise of two phenomena that had originated earlier: nationalism and imperialism.
- Imperialism refers to a situation in which one country controls another country or territory. Imperial control was exercised either formally, through the establishment of colonies (territories that are governed from the imperial center, rather than having their own government), or informally, using economic means or military threats to control the government of another country.

Nationalism and Imperialism

- Beyond Europe, the competition inspired by nationalism helped justify the extension of European imperialism to cover nearly the entire globe.
- The doctrine of nationalism convinced people that smaller states should be combined into single, large, ethnically and linguistically homogeneous states.

Nationalism and Imperialism

- The results fundamentally altered European international politics because a unified Germany, with great industrial power, seemed to have the capacity to take over the continent, a concern that dominated the period from 1900 to 1945.
- In the multinational Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires, nationalism created pressure to break large states into smaller parts.
- In the Russian Empire, these included Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, and Chechnya.

- In the Austro-Hungarian Empire they included territories parts of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- The Ottoman (Turkish) contained much of the modern Middle East (including Israel/Palestine, Syria Jordan, and Lebanon) as well as parts of southeastern Europe (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania).

Nationalism and Imperialism

- In the Caribbean and Latin America, nationalism led to the world's first wave of decolonization. In Haiti, an indigenous movement overthrew slavery, instituted a democratic constitution, and declared independence from France in 1804.
- Similarly, Mexico fought a successful war of independence ending in 1821, and Brazil declared independence from Portugal in 1822.
- Great Britain's colonies in Canada formed the Canadian Confederation and became autonomous in 1867.

Nationalism and Imperialism

- Nationalism helped spur a new wave of colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, driven by the idea that soon all the territory would be taken and slow movers would be forever at a disadvantage.
- Most of Africa and Asia were colonize during this period. In most cases, imperialism took the form of territory (the Spanish in South America and the British in India).
- In some cases, imperialism was exercised through indirect control but still achieved the goal of harnessing the local economy for the benefit of external powers.

- In China, foreign powers used military force to compel the Chinese to trade on terms that were highly favorable to the Europeans. Twice, in 1839 and again in 1856, European powers waged war on China to force its government to allow Europeans (and Americans) to sell their goods in China. The resulting "unequal treaties" created economic advantages in China for Western states without requiring them to take over the territory directly.