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Political Science: Int'L Relations

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Quick Study ACADEMIC **POLITICAL SCIENCE** **International Relations**

INTRODUCTION

1. **International relations** is a major subfield of political science; political scientists refer to international relations simply as **IR**.
2. IR is also referred to as **world politics**, **global politics**, **international politics**, and **international studies**.
3. Usually, the "relationship between countries," IR is concerned with the relationships among the governments of the world and the relationship of state governments with other actors, such as the United Nations (UN), multinational corporations, and individuals.
4. The subject matter of IR includes war, peace, diplomacy, foreign policy, international political economy, international organizations, international law, the global environment, ethnic conflict, human rights, security studies, world population trends, and international development.
5. **Politics** is the struggle for power; **international politics** is the struggle for power on a global stage.
6. **Power** is the ability to make people or things do what they otherwise would not have done; **hard power** is measured by a nation-state's military capabilities, size of population, and geographic territory; **soft power** is based on the ability of a nation-state to achieve its goals through persuasion and diplomacy rather than military force.
7. IR uses both **deductive** and **inductive** research methods; the **deductive** study of IR is largely theoretical, whereas the **inductive** study of IR is largely empirical and deals with practical economic and political issues.
8. **Political scientists**, who specialize in IR, attempt to describe what world politics is like, predict what will happen, and prescribe how it ought to be; they use both **qualitative** and **quantitative** research methods.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

1. The **international system** is composed of nation-states, individuals, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and multinational corporations.
2. The **modern international system** comprising independent nation-states emerged after the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia.
3. Over time, as the post-Westphalian system, state sovereignty replaced the **dynastic right of kings**.
4. The **international system** has been shaped to a great extent by the West, primarily the great European powers and the United States.
5. The balance of power in the world periodically shifts.
6. From 1945 after end of the Thirty Years' War to 1945 after end of World War II, there was a **multipolar world**.
7. From 1945 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was a **bipolar world** and an East-West axis between the United States and the Soviet Union.
8. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States was left as the world's dominant superpower.
9. A modified multipolar world may be emerging with the balance of power spread between the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, and the UN.
10. A significant characteristic of the 21st-century international system is a disparity of wealth and power between the rich countries of the **global north** and poor countries of the **global south**.
 - A. The countries of the **global north** (e.g., in Europe and North America) are referred to as **economically developed countries** or the **First World**.
 - B. The **global south** consists primarily of Asian, African, and South American countries and are referred to as **less economically developed countries** or the **Third World**.

C. The terms **First**, **Second**, and **Third World** have evolved since the end of World War II in 1945 and the end of the Cold War in 1991.

1. **First World:** Originally the countries aligned with the United States and its allies during the Cold War; the term is now associated with the wealthy, industrialized, capitalist, democratic, economically developed countries, compared to the **global south**, the average annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is high, literacy and education rates are high, health is good, and life spans are long.
2. **Second World:** Originally the countries aligned with the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War; this term has mostly lost its original meaning in the modern language of IR.
3. **Third World:** Originally nonaligned countries, mostly in Asia, Africa, and South America, that sided with neither the United States nor the Soviet Union during the Cold War; the term is now associated with the poor, underdeveloped (or in the process of underdeveloping), less economically developed countries that are often transitioning to democracy; many were colonized by the European powers, compared to the **global north**, the average annual per capita GDP is low, literacy and education rates are low, health is poor, and life spans are short; the term "Third World" is not accepted in some contexts and so "less economically developed" is often used as an alternative.
4. **Fourth World:** The poorest of the poor countries of the world, the indigenous peoples of the world, and the poor citizens living in the wealthy First World countries.

Evolution of the International System

1. **16th-century system (1492-1700)**
 - A. Begins with the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
 - B. Multipolar system with power distributed between Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Influenced by the political ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
2. **18th-century system (1700-1800)**
 - A. Begins with the onset of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
 - B. Multipolar system with power distributed between Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Influenced by the political ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
3. **19th-century system (1800-1900)**
 - A. Begins with the onset of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
 - B. Multipolar system with power distributed between Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Influenced by the political ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
4. **20th-century system (1900-1990)**
 - A. Begins with the onset of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
 - B. Multipolar system with power distributed between Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Influenced by the political ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
5. **21st-century system (1990-2000)**
 - A. Begins with the onset of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
 - B. Multipolar system with power distributed between Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Influenced by the political ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

Year	Event
1492	The Age of Discovery begins.
1648	The Treaty of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years' War.
1701	The War of Spanish Succession begins.
1789	The French Revolution begins.
1804	The Congress of Vienna begins.
1815	The Congress of Vienna ends.
1848	The Revolutions of 1848 begin.
1871	The Franco-Prussian War begins.
1914	World War I begins.
1918	World War I ends.
1919	The League of Nations is founded.
1929	The Great Depression begins.
1939	World War II begins.
1945	World War II ends.
1949	The People's Republic of China is founded.
1950	The Korean War begins.
1954	The Geneva Conference begins.
1959	The Cuban Revolution begins.
1960	The Congo becomes independent.
1961	The Soviet Union launches the first satellite state.
1962	The Cuban Missile Crisis begins.
1963	The Vietnam War begins.
1964	The Congo becomes independent.
1965	The Vietnam War begins.
1966	The Congo becomes independent.
1967	The Six-Day War begins.
1968	The Vietnam War begins.
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2049	The Vietnam War begins.
2050	The Vietnam War begins.



Synopsis

Navigating the complex world of international relations has always been, and continues to be, an important part of being an intelligent world citizen. Whether you are a student of international relations or just looking for a refresher to get up to speed with current events, you will now find it easier to follow along with BarChartsâ™ Political Science: International Relations QuickStudy® guide. This three-panel guide includes up-to-date information on the history of international relations, fields of thought, and important organizations.

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