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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 relationships 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 uses practical examples 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 French Revolution in 1789 and the French Revolution in 1789.
 - B. Multipolar distribution of power between Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.
 - C. Rise of nationalism and Marxist, nationalist, and Christian conservative political ideologies.
 - D. Continuation of the Industrial Revolution.
 - E. Urbanization in Europe and continuation of European colonialism.
 - F. Ends with the onset of World War I.
3. **19th-century system (1800-1900)**
 - A. Begins after World War I, the Treaty of Versailles, and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires.
 - B. Multipolar distribution of power between Britain, France, Germany, Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union.
 - C. Creation of the League of Nations.
 - D. Rise of fascism, Nazism, and communism.
 - E. Shattered by the Treaty of Versailles.
 - F. Ends with the onset of World War II.
4. **Cold War system (1900-1990)**
 - A. Begins after World War II.
 - B. The UN is founded.
 - C. Bipolar distribution of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.
 - D. Colonized countries gain their independence.
 - E. Nuclear arms race between the two superpowers.
 - F. Ends with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990.
5. **Post-Cold War system (1990-)**
 - A. Starts with the collapse of the Soviet Union.
 - B. The United States remains a dominant military power.
 - C. Disintegration in Eastern Europe.
 - D. Emergence of the European Union.
 - E. Intensification of the process of globalization.
 - F. September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks occur.
 - G. Marked by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

Year	Event
1492	The fall of Spain.
1648	The Treaty of Westphalia, which established secular nation-states as the main actors on the world stage.
1789	The French Revolution begins.
1848	The Congress of Vienna begins.
1914	Nation-states are established at Westphalia.
1918	World War I begins.
1919	Treaty of Versailles is signed.
1929	October Revolution in Russia.
1939	World War II begins.
1945	World War II ends; the UN is founded.
1949	The People's Republic of China is founded.
1950	World population hits 2 billion.
1962	Cuban missile crisis.
1974	World population hits 3 billion.
1979	October Revolution in Russia.
1989	World population hits 5 billion.
1990	Reunification of Germany.
1991	Soviet Union collapses.
1999	World population hits 6 billion.
2001	September 11 terrorist attacks; the United States invades Afghanistan.
2003	The United States invades Iraq.
2008	The global economic crisis begins.
2010	World population hits 7 billion.



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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