Learning Objectives

1. Define world politics and be able to understand current political events through the competing forces of centralization and decentralization.

2. Understand how world politics affects your life and how studying international affairs will help you develop analytical skills to better see patterns in the complexity of current events.
Chapter Outline

What Is World Politics?
- Politics as the Authoritative Allocation of Values
- An Overview of World Politics
- Current Political Trends

Why Study World Politics?
- Relating International Affairs to Your Life
- Interconnections and Patterns in Politics

What New Forces Are Shaping the Planet?
- Information Technology
- The New Global and Transnational Issues
- The Increasing Inability of the State to Solve Problems
- The Rise of Ethnic Nationalism and Religious Fundamentalism
- New Citizen Activism

Identify the five most significant forces shaping the world today and understand how these forces have centralizing or decentralizing effects on world politics.

Globalization
- The process by which economic, social, and political institutions become worldwide in terms of activity, influence, and application.

World Politics Today

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, rapid change and globalization dominate our world. Rapid change is all around us. At the end of World War II, intercontinental plane service was a rarity, and a flight from New York City to Shannon, Ireland, took over nineteen hours with stopovers. Today, you can fly nonstop from Seattle to Tokyo, a far greater distance, in thirteen hours. The increase in airplane speed and the universality of air travel has made the planet smaller and brought previously inaccessible places within the reach of virtually every traveler. It also made possible the horrors of the World Trade Center catastrophe of September 11, 2001, and facilitated the lightning spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic around the world in 2003.
The high-tech revolution of the 1970s and 1980s brought the personal computer, the Internet, the cell phone, and hand-held personal digital assistants, which are now commonplace throughout the world. The days of media companies or government-owned organizations that gathered, monitored, and controlled information flow have given way to news that is transmitted over TV and the Web as it happens. In the last thirty years, there has been a similar revolution in biotechnology. Modern advances promise cures for many of humanity’s ailments and at the same time raise the threat of biological warfare.

Global interconnectedness shapes our experiences. Rapid technological change makes the world a global village, where what one group of people does in one part of the planet can be immediately acted upon in another part. The collapse of the World Trade Center towers was filmed as it happened and instantaneously transmitted around the globe in real time. On a more positive note, the high-tech revolution has brought great economic benefits. A college student’s purchase of a T-shirt with a particular design at a Wal-Mart in Des Moines, Iowa, or a Grande Surface in Lyons, France, triggers a computer-programmed merchandise accounting-and-ordering system that crosses continents with the speed of light and generates new orders from China that are shipped out the next day. For the college student in the West, this high-tech ordering system enables him or her to buy goods at the lowest possible price. For the Chinese factory owner, the system ensures a constant demand for the product, and for the worker, steady wages.

The absence of an overarching world authority is a third characteristic of the modern international system. Rapid change is taking place in a world where there is no overarching authority that can use force to restrain the violent or bring the offenders to justice. We live in a world whose outlines were set by the Treaty of Westphalia, a seventeenth-century treaty signed by the states of Europe that were eager to work out ways to stop the violence that had been tearing their continent apart for thirty years (see chapter 3). The treaty’s program for peace was based on the twin notions of state sovereignty and noninterference in the affairs of other states. Three and a half centuries later, the principal world actors remain the sovereign states, or independent countries, like China, Japan, Russia, France, and the United States. When we call a state sovereign, we mean no higher authority can control its decisions; the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Almost all of the world’s states are members of the world organization of states, the United Nations (UN), but UN decisions are not binding on its members because the UN’s institutions have no coercive means to compel compliance.

Sovereignty thus presents states with opportunities for conflict or cooperation. In particular, sovereignty engenders political forces within states that promote cooperation with other states, as well as forces that emphasize the state’s individuality, uniqueness, and national interest. World politics today is
push-and-pull between the forces of **decentralization** and forces of **centralization**; you will find this theme recurring throughout this book. Since the 1970s, non-state actors have played an increasing role in influencing subgroups within states one way or the other. These actors include international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-state actors representing groups of individuals rather than governments. These actors have taken advantage of rapid change and global interconnectedness to undercut the longtime dominance of states in world politics. Through their activities non-state actors have challenged the viability of actions long accepted as lying solely within the jurisdiction of states, such as war, treaty making, and diplomacy.

This text is designed to give you the analytical and factual tools to develop your own appreciation of how the interaction of these forces shapes world politics. To help you understand your world better and to address its challenges, chapter 1 introduces you to the subject matter of world politics. It gives you three major reasons for studying world politics. The chapter closes with a discussion of the significant forces currently at work in the world today. At the end of the chapter, we provide a case study on *The Report of the 9/11 Commission of the U.S. Senate and New Forces Shaping the Planet*. The case study draws together and puts into practice the chapter’s main points.

**Define world politics and be able to understand current political events through the competing forces of centralization and decentralization.**

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC) wrote, “Man by nature is a political animal.”¹ Politics comes from the Greek word for the principal form of state organization in ancient Greece, the city-state, or *polis*. Aristotle took for granted that a primary feature of a political community is authority to make decisions for the well-being of the community. This authority or power may be exercised in a legal or dictatorial manner, and it may be located in one person (a king or dictator), a few people (oligarchy), or many people (representative government or mob rule). The nineteenth-century thinkers Karl Marx and Max Weber emphasized the importance of power deployed within a given territory as central to the concept of a political association.

**Politics as the Authoritative Allocation of Values**

Twentieth-century political scientists have built on these theories. We discuss two definitions that are particularly useful to world politics today. Political scientist Harold Lasswell defines politics as a power struggle about “who gets what, when, and how.”² His colleague David Easton says, “Politics is the authoritative allocation of values or scarce resources.”³ Let us examine these definitions to understand aspects of relations among the world’s states and non-state actors.

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¹ Aristotle, *Politics*.
² Harold D. Lasswell, *The Policy Theorists*.
³ David Easton, *The Political System*. 
Chapter 1  The Importance of World Politics

The Major Actors

The major actors in world politics are the ones who, in Lasswell's definition, compete to gain sufficient power to have a say in determining what the issues of political power struggle are and how the struggle will be played out.

a. As we saw at the beginning of the chapter, the principal group of actors are the 191 sovereign and independent states located around the globe. The governments of these states make decisions in the name of the state based on what the government determines are the national interests of the country. While in principle these decisions are independent of the influence or actions of other actors in world politics, in practice a state's decisions are based on the ebb and flow of the international political activity in which that state is engaged (see chapter 5 on foreign policy).

b. The second group is composed of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). These intergovernmental organizations are made up of representatives of state governments that have agreed to participate in them. The largest of these entities is the UN, of which almost all the world's states are members. Then there are regional IGOs, such as the European Union (EU), as well as regional trade, economic, and cultural organizations such as the North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA), which includes Canada, the United States, and Mexico and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a loose association of Southeast Asian states interested in pursuing common economic and, to a lesser degree, social policies.

c. Non-state actors (NSAs) are the third group of major actors in world politics. The members of these organizations are not representatives of states but of groups of individuals with shared economic, social, religious, or environmental interests. NSAs are a diverse group ranging from paramilitary and terrorist groups to international business corporations to scientific and professional organizations, humanitarian groups and religious movements. NSAs are the most recent arrivals on the international scene and among the most significant, as you will see throughout the book.

d. Finally, we should not fail to mention the importance of individuals as actors in world politics. History is full of people who change the course of history by virtue of their military, economic, or scientific genius. We talk about some of them in chapter 2.

Interactions among the Actors

If politics is about who gets what, when, and how, interactions among the actors are the when and the how. Timing and the ability to carry out a decision economically and efficiently are key determinants of the struggle for political power.

a. Timing: When a state decides to undertake an action on the international stage is critical to the probability of its success in that action. Throughout the 1930s, Chancellor Adolf Hitler of Germany engaged in small invasions into the territory of other European countries, starting with the Rhineland and ending with his takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1938. With each invasion, he tested the response of the Western democracies. After almost ten years of little or no response, Hitler judged the time was ripe for a full-scale invasion. His timing was perfect. The United States and Great Britain were not prepared to go to war.
b. Ability to Carry Out a Decision: Hitler underestimated the capabilities of his opponents. He invaded Poland and started World War II in 1939 because he wrongly thought that the Western democracies were so weak that they lacked the capability to oppose his superbly trained armies.

c. The Struggle for Power: This World War II example illustrates the hard fact that politics everywhere is a struggle for power. In the game of who gets what and how, power is exercised by somebody over someone else. Politics, in Easton’s definition, is the authoritative allocation of resources. Some actor or group of actors must gain sufficient power to be able to decide what the other actors in the game get. How political actors understand the exercise of power determines, to a large extent, their sense of timing and the way they develop and utilize their capabilities. These issues are raised in the discussion of the modern state in chapters 3 and 4.

Theoretical approaches to understanding how power is exercised divide into two main viewpoints. The so-called realist approach sees the struggle for power as a game between players in which there is a clear winner and loser. While other players may improve their situation, the game is always about who wins and who loses. The idealist approach to power says while the struggle for power is a fact in world politics, states do not need to resort to violence or force to get what they want. In this view, peaceful cooperation for long-term gain is a vital component of any state’s vision of its future. We talk more about the theoretical approaches to world politics in chapter 2.

Allocating Resources
Resources constitute the final component of Lasswell’s definition, the what, or the values of Easton’s definition. These resources may be conveniently divided into three types: political resources, economic resources, and social and cultural resources.

a. Political resources refer to a country’s power, prestige, and status, backed by military power. We call these scarce resources because of the internationally perceived hierarchical arrangement of world order. As we show in chapter 3, we tend to perceive the international system as a four-tiered structure with the developed industrial states at the top and the poorest and failed states at the bottom. Developed countries can leverage their status and prestige to gain their objectives even if they lack military power. Poor and failed states can only use their weakness as bargaining chips. One state, the United States, is a superpower. Other industrialized states, like Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, are world powers. All these states have in common stable political systems. Although elections may be hotly contested, the transition of power from one leader to the next is peaceful. States with stable political systems are less likely to collapse or fail than states with weak political institutions. States like Russia and China are harder to categorize because they are in the midst of enormous political as well as economic transformation. However, Russia’s nuclear weapons and China’s large military gives these countries more power and greater status than very poor countries, like Chad, or failed states, almost non-states, like Somalia.

b. Economic resources include a state’s financial resources, such as wealth, annual national income, supply of capital, and investment opportunities; industrial and agricultural production; and natural resources (oil, coal, soil, water, and
mineral resources). Like political resources, these are also scarce resources not equally distributed around the globe. For example, most of the world's capital is located in the hands of the top 1 percent of the world's population, living primarily in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe. The United States attracts foreign investment, especially from Asia, because of its huge financial resources and relatively free financial markets, which make it easy to invest. Asia, by contrast, has become the global industrial powerhouse, producing the majority of consumer goods for the rest of the world.

By far, the most significant scarce economic resources are energy resources. So important is oil to the developed world's economies that many of us tend to explain world politics simply in terms of the struggle for control of the world's oil supplies. We look at this issue in chapter 7. Water is another scarce resource whose availability is grossly under appreciated. The world may eventually learn to do without oil, but human beings can never do without water. From California to Mexico, to Australia, China, and the Middle East, the Earth's water supply is increasingly failing to meet the needs of the Earth's large population. The twenty-first century is likely to see water wars (see chapter 14).

c. Social and cultural resources may not seem directly related to the global struggle for power, but they most certainly play a huge role. Like all other resources, these are scarce and unequally distributed around the globe. They include health, education, a clean environment, and a population that agrees on the major values of its government so that ethnic or religious diversity adds to the power of the state rather than undermines it. Once again, the United States, Japan, and Western Europe lead the world in these resources. They have the most educated populations, the healthiest people, and relative harmony between diverse ethnic and racial groups within national borders. A sick population has little strength to engage in economics or politics. For example, the AIDS epidemic in Africa is so severe that it is wiping out the middle generation of Africans, the very individuals who should be actively engaged in the economic and political life of their countries. Despite its political instability, Russia remains a powerful state, able to project itself on the world stage because it has a highly educated population with high-tech skills that are valuable all over the globe. What keeps Russia in a secondary power position is the declining health of its citizens. AIDS is becoming widespread throughout the country, and, as in Africa, threatening to wipe out much of that educated population.

We see, then, that who gets what, when, and how in world politics depends, in large measure, on which states can demonstrate sufficient power to determine or dominate decisions on the distribution of the world's scarce resources. It should come as no surprise that the wealthiest states with a strong military, high educational and health levels, and relative ethnic harmony should be the states in the best position to make their decisions prevail.

An Overview of World Politics

In world politics, as we have said, there is no authoritative institution—no world government—that is recognized as such by its member states and that has the power to make decisions about the distribution of the world's scarce resources.
Hence, throughout history, world politics has been characterized by the struggle for power. The international system has provided the jungle-like setting where force, conflict, and violence have often played key roles. We discuss the nature and exercise of power in chapter 4. Traditionally, power has been the exercise of brute force by a dominant and dominating authority to maintain order.

The Struggle for Power in European History

The struggle for power is an historical fact. Europe in particular has been the scene of bloody conflicts about which dynasty or state was to control the continent. So much has conflict characterized European interactions that the ruling European governments frequently tried to mitigate the violence by creating institutions promoting peace.

- Birth of the Modern State System: In 1648, the leading states of Europe ended the Thirty Years War that each of the combatants at last realized it could not win. In the Treaty of Westphalia, signed that year, the competing states agreed not to try to overthrow each other's governments, not to interfere in each other's internal affairs, and generally to work toward a more peaceful Europe. The treaty was a landmark in that it set up mechanisms through which new states could be recognized and all the signatories could interact peacefully. Diplomacy became a regular practice in Europe, and although wars continued, some progress had been made to curtail the use of brute force to decide what was going to happen, when, and to whom.

- Balance of Power: At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Napoleon Bonaparte of France led his triumphant armies to the gates of Moscow, overthrowing long-established governments in his path. To stop him, the leading states of Europe banded together and, in 1815, dealt Napoleon his deathblow at the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was exiled to a remote island for good. That same year, the European powers came together again, this time in Vienna, to negotiate the composition of Europe after Napoleon. One of the concepts that played a determining role in the negotiations was that of the balance of power. No one or even two states should be allowed to grow as powerful as France had. To prevent this, states chose their allies with an eye to seeing that the military might of one alliance was roughly equal to that of another. (Balance of power is discussed more fully in chapter 4.)

World War I marked the demise of the balance-of-power concept as a way to lessen or resolve conflict. Not only did the two major alliances at the end of the nineteenth century fail to prevent war, they may have actually promoted it. Germany, Italy, and Austro-Hungary were allied on one side, and England, France, and Russia on the other. When the heir to the Austrian throne was murdered in Serbia, Germany sprang to the rescue and said it would go to war for the honor of its Austrian ally. Russia protested, saying it had a paternal interest in the Slavic populations of Eastern Europe and would protect its Slav cousins if anyone invaded Serbia. (The Russians and the Serbs are two of many Slavic ethnic groups.) The British said a treaty was a treaty, and they backed their Russian allies. And so one of the bloodiest wars of the twentieth century began. The war was fought to a stalemate in 1917, with huge losses on both sides. The entrance of the United States into the war on the British and French side swung the balance of forces, and Germany was forced to surrender.
Collective Security: At the Peace Conference at Versailles, outside Paris, France, the nations of Europe once again came together to talk about the organization of a postwar world. Europe was in a shambles, its economy in ruins. France had spent all the wealth accumulated in the previous century and lost 20 percent of its population. Because the Americans had had the decisive power to stop the Germans, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, a former political science professor and president of Princeton University, presented to the Conference his view of an international organization where collective security would replace the old alliance system and the nations of the world would resolve their conflicts peacefully in a global assembly. The Conference delegates agreed somewhat reluctantly to form a League of Nations. However, despite Wilson’s efforts, the United States Senate refused to ratify the treaty. With the most powerful world player absent, the League had a short life. In 1933, Hitler became chancellor in Germany. Just two decades after signing the Versailles peace treaty, Europe was at war again.

The vision of an international institution that could deal with conflict remained alive through the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. In 1945, a new world organization came into being, the United Nations. This organization is still in existence. On balance, it has achieved a great deal and done much to alleviate world poverty and conquer disease. However, it has proved unable to stop conflict. We discuss the UN and its current role in world politics in chapter 6.

Current Political Trends

The current world situation returns us to the major theme of this book, the push and pull of the forces of centralization and decentralization. The 2006 elections in the United States revealed the frustration and weariness with the global war on terrorism and the war in Iraq felt by the majority of the electorate of the United States. In October 2004, the Afghan people voted for a president in the first free election in decades. Free parliamentary elections were held a year later. The elections constituted a major achievement for the Afghan government in cooperation with the United States and its allies in the UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). By 2007, the Taliban had regrouped from their safe bases inside Pakistan and threatened to undo this progress. The increasing sectarian violence in Iraq presents an even more complex picture, demanding a high level of international cooperation that so far the international community has not come together to
provide. Europe and the United States have two very different approaches to internationalization. Europe prefers to see the UN as the authoritative decision maker in the world, doubtless because of that continent’s horrific experience with an aggressive Germany trying to carve out a greater living space in two world wars. As the planet’s sole superpower, the United States prefers to consider the UN’s deficiencies in its calculus of that organization’s role as world decision maker. The United States is thus less ready for the world to become more centralized politically than it already is. On the other hand, the United States is one of the leading advocates of economic globalization, whereas large groups of Europeans and Asians are not so ready to embrace that reality. Let’s look at the world’s experience with central world organizations. We begin with historic attempts to form central world organizations and the possible consequences of centralization. We then consider the rise of non-state actors in the post–World War II era and the possible consequences of decentralization.

A Peaceful World Order under a Central World Organization

If the struggle for power and dominance has been a central feature of world politics, the efforts to create order in place of conflict cited above suggest another dynamic that has also been at work, the push and pull of two opposing forces: centralization and decentralization. Forced centralization was a primary condition of the traditional empires of China, India, and Rome. However, each emperor had to allow some expression of regional differences to keep the empire intact. The empires fell apart under pressure from outside invaders and regions seeking more say in imperial affairs.

In the history of Europe, as we have seen, the movement since 1648 was toward voluntary centralization, culminating in the League of Nations and the UN. But the road was littered with the dead of European wars. In 1957, the Europeans took perhaps their most innovative and challenging step in forming the European Common Market, whose supranational governing institutions had the authority to impose rules and regulations on the governments of the member-states and to make sure those rules and regulations were enforced. Today, the Common Market has become the European Union (EU), with a membership of twenty-five states. We talk about the EU in chapter 6.

The Consequences of Centralization

Ultimately, the tendency toward centralization could lead to world government and the globalization of the world economy. Global economic integration (discussed in chapter 12) is well on its way. However, while world government has many supporters, it is unlikely to occur any time soon. Those in favor of it argue that a world government would more easily solve the planet’s most urgent problems of violence, hunger, disease, poverty, and environmental decay. Those against it hold that because these problems can’t be solved even on a national level, it is pie-in-the-sky thinking to believe a world government could solve them. They further argue that a world government would not end the power struggle that characterizes all of politics. Moreover, such a government would be so huge and create such a huge bureaucracy that no one on Earth would be able to identify with it. World citizenship is a long way off. Nevertheless, both sides would probably agree that the UN could be given more authority to make binding decisions on some of the more critical global issue areas, such as economic development, poverty, and disease.
The Rise of Non-state Actors and Increasing Decentralizing Tendencies

The movement toward voluntary centralization initiated by the European states was supported by the victorious powers of World War II, the United States, and Soviet Russia. The UN was designed to include all the states in the world so decisions about global issues could be made centrally by delegates from every government on the planet meeting in an inter-nation or inter-state assembly. However, the founders of the UN made no provision for the rise of non-state actors, and it is precisely these actors who form the core of the decentralizing and fragmenting forces at work in the world today. Not only terrorist groups, but religious organizations and even humanitarian or environmental groups sometimes seek to change social structures and political outcomes in the countries where they are working. On March 11, 2004, just prior to national elections, a terrorist group bombed one of Spain's main railways, killing more than 200 people. The action had a decisive influence on the outcome of the elections and encouraged the new Spanish government to pull its troops out of Iraq.

The Consequences of Decentralization

At the extreme end of decentralization is the descent of the world into prolonged chaos, where non-state actors have succeeded in bringing down or destroying national governments and have weakened the resolve of the powerful nations to take action. Niall Ferguson, a professor of history at Harvard University, suggests the defining movement of our time is not a shift of power upward to a centralized international organization like the UN but rather a shift of power downward. States have lost their monopoly over the means of violence and, with the advent of the Internet, can no longer control how and what individuals communicate to each other. Ferguson posits that the non-state actors now wield the power to decide who gets what when and how. The resultant scenario, as he sees it, is the plundering of the wealthiest countries of Europe, North America, and Asia, limited nuclear wars, pirate attacks on the high seas, an AIDS plague in Africa, and other horrors.4

Others argue that decentralization is not such a bad thing, as it allows non-state actors and individuals access to influence and decision making that was impossible before the Internet and the World Wide Web. In the last twenty years alone, citizens have overthrown dictatorial governments in the Philippines, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe, and staged a massive protest in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the capital city of Communist China (1989). Instant photos and replay enabled these events to be transmitted immediately around the globe, so the whole world could see what was happening. Decentralization has its positive aspects, they argue.
Why Study World Politics?

Understand how world politics affects your life and how studying international affairs will help you develop analytical skills to better see patterns in the complexity of current events.

Among the many reasons that might be given for studying world politics, we offer three: The study of world politics will help relate the world's future to the rest of your life. World politics will help you see the connections between international issues and the politics of individual states. And studying world politics will help you find patterns in the complexity of current events.

Relating International Affairs to Your Life

Before 9/11, you might have thought about taking a course in world politics to satisfy some core college requirement, or because you wanted to understand your world better so you could choose a career or be directed toward a rewarding job. For example, you might have read about the high-tech jobs shifting to India, or the transfer of manufacturing jobs to China and Mexico, and wondered whether an understanding of the global forces behind such events could save someone (you) from a similar fate. Or you might have been planning to study or work abroad and wanted to know more about the place in world affairs of your

Test Prepper 1.1

True or False?

____ 1. IGOs (intergovernmental organizations) are the principal actors in international politics.

____ 2. NSAs (non-state actors) have only recently become major players in the international system, yet are among the most significant.

____ 3. The idealist approach to power attempts to obtain as much power as possible by focusing on elevating a state's status and prestige.

____ 4. Social and cultural resources are significant factors in whether a state will have power in the international system.

____ 5. A state using the balance of power approach to international politics will attempt to balance its political and economic resources as much as possible.

Multiple Choice

____ 6. Which of the following makes the Treaty of Westphalia a landmark treaty for international affairs?

a. Allowed for recognition of new states and for peaceful interactions between states

b. Ended a war that had gone on longer than most other wars during that period of history

c. Bypassed traditional diplomatic practices in favor of the use of force

d. Allowed states to band together to form collective security alliances

____ 7. Which of the following is not an example of centralizing tendencies in international politics?

a. The League of Nations

b. The United Nations

c. The European Union

d. Non-state-actor influence in the international system
country of destination. One of the most common reasons for studying world politics is in preparation for a career in the foreign service or the United States Department of State.

**World Politics and International Events**

Perhaps one of the most important reasons for studying international relations is the hard truth that ignorance is not bliss. World politics affects every aspect of your daily life—the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the technology you buy, and the gas you put into your car. Before 9/11, Americans had so little grasp of international affairs that they couldn’t begin to understand the event. “Why do they hate us?” they asked.

Today, you need world politics more than ever to enable you to understand the forces that are shaping your life and your future. You must live and breathe world politics to grasp what may be in store for you. The 9/11 attacks were a tragic demonstration of the main theme of this book, namely, the increasing tension between the centralizing forces of globalization and the decentralizing forces of religion and ethnicity, which extend to every corner of our Earth. The U.S.–led war in Iraq and the subsequent transfer of sovereignty back to an Iraqi government turns the world spotlight on the role of the UN as a centralizing force for peace and stability and the proper exercise of power by member-states, like the United States, to compel regime change in states ruled by tyrants.

**World Politics and Your Career**

The economic downswing of 2001–2003 illustrates a second aspect of how world politics affects your life: the interdependent and transnational character of the issues. In 2002, Enron, a huge global corporation with deep ties to the powerful in Washington, suddenly went bankrupt. Its chief executives were accused of fraud, and its employees lost their life savings. Other major American corporations followed Enron into bankruptcy, their chief executive officers exhibiting the same fraudulent behavior as Enron’s. The news of corruption in the U.S. economy quickly went out over the TV, radio, and Internet. Europe congratulated itself that its more regulated companies could not behave in the same way—until its business executives were charged with the same kinds of actions. The value of stocks on the U.S. stock market rose and fell in violent swings, and foreign stock exchanges experienced similar confusion. This confusion further reduced the value of stocks on Wall Street.

The stock decline made U.S. consumers fearful that their pensions and life savings, invested in the stock market, might disappear. So they decided to buy less. Fewer consumer orders to U.S. companies forced those companies to reduce their orders of supplies from foreign companies. Receiving fewer orders, the Asian and Latin American factories were forced to cut both expenses and production and to fire their employees. Unemployment rose and consumption fell around the world. International uncertainty about the U.S. economic future was increased by the war in Iraq and fear of oil shortages. In the United States, this international uncertainty translated into higher heating and energy costs, further raising the cost of production and discouraging consumer spending.

In this discussion of an economic downswing we circled the globe and introduced issues ranging from local production decisions to global war and peace. The modern world is so complex and interconnected that you cannot begin to know how to act without understanding the connections.
**Studying World Politics and Developing Analytic Skills**

In this book, we address

- The building blocks of world politics (the international system, power, foreign policy, international organizations, the global economy)
- The major issues (political geography, global justice, the environment)
- The theoretical and factual background that can enable you to answer those questions most important to you:
  - What role should the United States play in world affairs?
  - How can we ensure that we won't run out of energy?
  - How can we ensure that the planet will continue to be hospitable to human life?
  - How can we reduce the huge gap between the rich and the poor nations?
  - What can be done about terrorism?

To help address these and related questions, each chapter contains a “Join the Debate” box that you can use to argue the theoretical points made in the chapter, or a box that invites active participation. If you work on these questions, when you have finished the book, you will be able to work out your own answers to questions of importance to you.

In summary, the study of world politics helps you make sense of your world. It gives you a set of tools with which to assess the world situation, whatever the crisis or driving forces at work may be. World politics provides methods of analysis to help you understand the diverse positions of the world’s leaders and peoples, and it proposes frameworks for evaluating the media sound bites that flood the daily news. Last, studying world politics shows you how the world “out there” is closely tied to your world “at home” and how the interaction between the two affects your life.

**Interconnections and Patterns in Politics**

In the modern world, no country conducts its domestic affairs in a political vacuum but there are real differences between international relations and comparative government.

**World Politics and Comparative Government**

World politics is the study of interactions between international actors, such as those listed earlier in the chapter. Its focus is on who gets what, when, and why in the international arena. World politics thus differs substantially from comparative government whose subject area is the contrasts and similarities between who gets what, when, and why in different types of national governments. If we want to compare the role of the chief executive, like the president in the United States to the role of the president in Russia, we would turn to the tools of comparative government. The boundaries become confused, however, when we seek to compare national foreign policies, and the actions of state governments in the global arena. The fact is that in the real world, we cannot make a total separation between the conduct of actors within states and the conduct of these same actors between states. Domestic politics impacts on world politics and vice versa.
World Politics and Domestic Politics: Internestic Issues

Political scientists have coined the word internestic to describe the interconnectedness of international and domestic political issues. You have seen this linkage in the discussion of the 2001–2003 international economic downswing. Here is a specific example.

In the 2006 U.S. elections, the Democratic Party won majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The new majority interpreted the election results as a mandate to get U.S. troops out of Iraq as soon as possible. Republican President George W. Bush responded by initiating a surge in troops to Iraq to reduce the violence and bring more law and order to the capital city of Baghdad. The Democrats in the House reacted to the initiative by passing a budget that included stipulations and dates as to when the troops in Iraq were to be withdrawn. As is his prerogative under the U.S. Constitution’s system of checks and balances Bush vetoed the budget, which then had to go back to the legislature for reconsideration. Bush argued that the Constitution made him commander-in-chief, and in that capacity, he had the right to initiate any action he considered necessary in the war in Iraq. We have been talking about this situation so far in comparative-government terminology: the separation of powers according to the U.S. constitution, the powers of the separate branches of government, and the checks and balances on these powers. How does the tension between the legislature and executive in the United States differ from an analogous tension between Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the British House of Commons? Where does tension between the legislative and executive lie in France? Can such tension exist under the more autocratic Russian constitution?

As students of world politics, however, our question is not about relations between branches of government as a comparative-government issue, but how these relations impact on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. How does the bickering and bargaining between the executive and legislature in the United States structure foreign policy inputs and outputs? What effect does all the infighting have on the Sunni-Shiite conflict in Iraq? When we ask these questions, we are treating the current legislative-executive standoff in the United States as an internestic issue.

Finding Patterns in the Complexity of Current Events

Perhaps the most important reason you need to study world politics, as we noted at the beginning of the chapter, is that the world of the twenty-first century is changing at a more rapid pace than at any other time in history. In the final decade of the twentieth century, we witnessed a revolution in communications and technology, and the end of the Cold War. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two major powers in the world at that time, lasted almost fifty years (from 1946 to 1991), and the global bipolarity of that era seemed a permanent fixture of the international landscape. Suddenly, the war was over, leaving the international community grasping for a definition of the new era. Too soon, however, terrorism supplied some of that definition, as did religious extremism, which has become a major ideological factor in world politics in the new century.

Giving students tools for understanding the complex, rapidly changing circumstances around us is an important goal of this book. Despite the seeming chaos of the events portrayed on the nightly news, patterns can be found. The principal patterns on which we focus in this book are the centralizing and decentralizing forces at work in world politics today. Forces for centralization can be
seen in the twin processes of globalization and global interdependence. In contrast, forces for decentralization are those that insist on their own identity, self-worth, and autonomy of action. They can be found in ethnic nationalism; in individual, group, and state terrorism; religious militancy; and in immediate citizen access to information. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States are a dramatic example of the centralizing/decentralizing tensions in the modern world. Islamic terrorists justified their murderous actions through references to Islam and the Koran. In so doing, they energized supporters of Islam in the Middle East, and Central and East Asia (decentralizing force). The rallying of the whole world around the United States in its moment of tragedy was a centralizing force that focused world attention on the need to deal with terrorism. In the course of this book, we return to this theme of centralizing/decentralizing tensions repeatedly in our study of the structure, actors and issues of world politics.

When you are asked why you have chosen to study world politics, you can now give at least three important answers:

- World politics provides you with a framework with which to evaluate and define your life and future.
- World politics also enables you to see the interconnectedness of international and domestic politics, and to understand that decisions made in one country may one day profoundly affect you.
- You need to study world politics to find the patterns that can make sense of those forces that are so rapidly changing our fast-moving world.

The last section of the chapter looks at the main forces at work in world politics today that are shaping your future and the future of the planet.

### Test Prepper 1.2

**True or False?**

1. Religion and ethnicity act as centralizing forces leading to increased peace and stability in international politics.

2. The bankruptcy of corporations in America has the potential to lead to the increase in unemployment and reduced consumption throughout the rest of the world.

3. Comparative government—the study of political processes internal to governments around the world—can be clearly separated from the study of international affairs, which focuses on politics between states.

**Multiple Choice**

4. Which of the following is not a proposal from the UN Commission on Global Governance?
   - a. A system of global taxation for individuals and companies that burn fuels emitting carbon dioxide
   - b. A standing UN army to intervene in states that abuse human rights
   - c. A system that allows individuals to sue states that engage in economic policies that counter free trade practices
   - d. UN authority over global commons such as the oceans

5. Intermestic issues deal with:
   - a. The intersection between politics of developed countries and developing countries
   - b. Internal political processes influenced by domestic lobbying groups
   - c. Issues that have both a domestic and international component
   - d. International economic situations that affect the UN’s ability to provide funding for its internal operations
What New Forces Are Shaping the Planet?

Identify the five most significant forces shaping the world today and understand how these forces have centralizing or decentralizing effects on world politics.

In this book, we discuss five forces that are important in shaping our world at present. These are not the only forces, but to our mind, they are the most significant. They are:

- information technology
- new global and transnational issues
- increasing inability of states to solve their problems individually
- rise of ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism
- new citizen activism

Whether these forces will push the world closer together or farther apart it is too soon to tell. But it is safe to say that at present, each of them can be either centripetal or centrifugal. They can work toward greater cooperation or toward more global fragmentation. Let us look at each of these forces in turn.

Information Technology

Since 1980, the industrialized nations have shifted to what are termed postindustrial technologies. These technologies make distances shorter and increase the speed of communication. They range from currency-exchange transactions via the computer to the transfer of ideas and pictures via satellite, fax, E-mail, and the Internet. Our lives have been transformed by the information revolution. How have these technologies affected international relations? Here are a few examples.

The Global Village: The Internet and Videotechnology

On September 11, 2001, thanks to an array of improved information technologies, TV viewers around the world watched in disbelief as two airplanes crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, causing them to collapse. The film sequence was played over and over again in the days and months that followed.

Since then, Osama bin Laden’s organization, al Qaeda and other terrorist groups have made consistent use of the mass media to publicize their goals, their view of the world, and their selected killings of those who would be against them. They have successfully planned and executed terrorist attacks—not only in the United States but also in Saudi Arabia; in the port city of Aden on the Red Sea; at a Jewish synagogue in Morocco; at a vacation resort in Indonesia; on the fast rail line between Madrid and Seville, Spain; in London, UK; in resort towns in Egypt; and all over Iraq. Behind their success lies a skillful, coordinated usage of old and established technologies such as bombs and airplanes with the new technologies of rapid communication, instant replay, and mass audiences.

Information Technology and Global Financial Markets

In 1987, the U.S. stock market fell more points in a single day than on Black Friday in 1929. In 1998, the stock market went on a roller-coaster ride, leaving investors breathless. In March 2007, volatility on the Shanghai stock exchange caused mar-
kets around the world to fall. There was talk of a possible crash. In both cases, computer technology and instant satellite communication of corporate and market news played a role in market volatility. Let’s look at how.

Computer programming and instant recording of stock sales have played a major role in the roller-coaster market that characterized the beginning of the twenty-first century. Before the Internet, brokers handled all stock dealings. Today, individuals may manage their own stock transactions over the Internet, or they can send instructions to their brokers to program the computer to trigger the automatic sale of a stock when it rises or falls to a specified value. The computer has thus enabled thousands of people to enter the stock market who never had participated before. Information technology has created twenty-four-hour virtual stock markets. When the real stock market closes in Tokyo or Hong Kong and before it opens in New York, computer stock traders are already trading stock based on activity in the Asian markets.

In international financial dealings, information technology, in a very real sense, is a force integrating global financial markets, even risking the replacement of real stock exchanges with virtual ones. On the other side of the coin, information technology is a decentralizing force, as it provides access to information previously obtainable only by being physically present at the stock market and thus enables individuals to play the market independently of a stockbroker or exchange.

**Information Technology as a Decentralizing Tool**

A third example of the impact of rapid information technology on world events is the incredible speed-up of information exchange. Anyone who perpetrates a terrorist act can immediately evaluate the results of a bombing, shooting, or killing by watching how the media report the event on that day’s evening news program. Of key importance is the media’s assessment of the action’s impact on public opinion. The bombing of the World Trade Center provoked universal horror and sparked a major U.S. offensive against terrorist camps in Afghanistan. The bombing of a Spanish train in March 2004, however, produced an opposite reaction. In this case, horror moved the Spanish people to give in to terrorist demands that Spain withdraw its troops from Iraq. Because the effect of terroristic acts on public opinion within states and around the world is immediately visible through the intensity of public outcry and government response, terrorist groups quickly learn to exploit the weak links in the chain of opposition to them to influence world opinion in their favor.

**Information Technology: A Tool for World Centralization or Decentralization?**

Today, we find ourselves in the middle of the information revolution and can only begin to assess its impact. Change occurs so fast that we may not be able to understand the dimensions of this revolution until we have experienced its unintended consequences. A search on the World Wide Web will locate virtually any information one could want and bring together like-minded people around the world. The information revolution has liberated individuals from dependence on some authority for information and, thus is a powerful decentralizing force. So much information is available, in fact, that individuals have difficulty separating reliable and trustworthy information from erroneous hearsay. The revolution thus risks producing a worldwide population of information junkies who lack the tools for finding meaning in the message but who are ready to react to it.

On the centralizing side, the new technology has the ability to disseminate information around the globe, permitting governments and corporations to make
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In the twenty-first century, events in one part of the world can reverberate on the global level. They differ from the old issues in that they are transnational, freely crossing state borders.

The New Global and Transnational Issues

In the twenty-first century, events in one part of the world can reverberate on the global level. They differ from the old issues in that they are transnational, freely crossing state borders.

The Global Economy

One example, in the new global economy, is the transnational corporation. This is a corporation that can use communications technology to run a global business without having a national home. It can invest and locate anywhere on the planet, benefiting the people who live in that location with jobs, but it is ready and willing to pull capital out and move elsewhere if the business climate in that country shifts to its disadvantage. When global capital pulled out of Indonesia in 1997, the Indonesian people were quickly reduced to poverty. In some regions and countries, such as Russia, corporations are reluctant to invest global capital. Other countries seem to attract capital. We talk more about transnational capital transactions in chapters 10 and 11.

A main feature of our world today is the large gap between the world’s rich and the world’s poor, both within countries and transnationally. This problem highlights one of the paradoxes of the tension between centralization and decentralization. Global capital responds to the global market. In so doing, it acts at odds with attempts by the international community to put weak or failed states back on their feet. Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan, has made frequent appeals to the international community to invest in his country, with few responses from global capital sources.

The global economy allows corporations of the major industrialized countries to take advantage of low costs and cheap labor in the developing countries in order to manufacture products to market around the world. On the plus side, people all over the globe benefit from the quantity and quality of goods produced by global corporations. On the downside, the economies of mass production can drive out local companies and local products causing large-scale unemployment whenever a local industry shuts down.

Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation is another transnational and interdependent problem. Early environmentalists such as the English poets William Blake, and William Wordsworth deplored England’s “satanic mills” and “stagnant waters.” In the New World, John James Audubon painted and Henry Thoreau decried the disappearing flora and fauna of the rapidly expanding American frontier.
In 1969, we went to the moon and for the first time appreciated how fragile and small our planet really was. In the industrialized countries, environmental degradation has become increasingly obvious in the pollution of waterways, and smog in the larger cities. At first, these problems seemed to be solvable by the action of national governments—where a problem such as pollution of a river involved several states—or by a group of states. Now we know that these problems require a transnational approach to their solution.

The 1980s brought recognition of a new dimension to environmental pollution: the degradation of the global commons. The global commons are areas of the planet, such as oceans and the Earth's atmosphere, which are shared by all the world's population. Soil erosion, deforestation, and water pollution are more than local problems; they are transnational as well. Not only does the cutting down of forests lead to local soil erosion but also to reduced rainfall caused by deforestation that contributes to regional droughts, as in Saharan Africa, and to global warming. The jury is still out as to whether reduction in our consumption of fossil fuels would significantly slow down the process. Nevertheless none of us would wish by our actions to contaminate the atmosphere in such a way as to risk life on Earth. At the opening of the twenty-first century, climate change and sustainable development have become international priorities. (We talk more about these issues in chapter 14.)

International Terrorism

Finally, terrorism recognizes no state borders and has no single source. In recent years, the face of terrorism has changed. Terrorists are now networked all over the globe, and their attacks have become more deadly. They come from a diverse set of countries—Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Peru, and Central America. Fifteen of the nineteen hijackers who commandeered the four planes on 9/11 were Saudi citizens. Identifying terrorists and preventing attacks are transnational tasks that necessitate timely coordination of both large amounts of information from all parts of the world and action among countries.

Can you identify other transborder problems? Do not overlook international drug trafficking, the global child and sex trade, and the large migrations of refugees who seek to escape the consequences of global problems. These, as well as the issues that we have identified, have acquired a life of their own, demanding international agencies to assure maximum benefits and minimum hardships to all the world's people. The new issues thus operate as a powerful force pushing the world toward cooperation and international community building.

The Increasing Inability of the State to Solve Problems

The twenty-first century has seen the ability of the state to resolve serious problems both within and without its borders decline. Not only are governments finding it harder to solve transnational problems on their own but they are also discovering they can no longer solve basic domestic problems. Why is this so? Let us first consider transnational problems, and then domestic.

Transnational Problems and Transnational Solutions

An important theme that runs throughout this book is that no state can solve the new transnational problems on its own. Solutions to terrorism, migration, drug trafficking, environmental degradation, and the global child and sex trade require the cooperation of the major governments around the world, including the
We have seen the difficulties faced by states trying to solve transnational problems on their own. Even a nation as powerful and wealthy as the United States cannot stop terrorism or drug trafficking by unilateral action. In the case of the environment, it is clear that no one country can undertake the cleanup of the world’s oceans or air by itself. Some reduction of domestic levels of carbon or sulfur dioxide emissions into the air can be achieved through the passage and enforcement of national emission standards. But these reductions are generally limited to local areas. The achievement of worldwide reduction of emissions requires a global agreement on the nature of the problem and its solution, with stipulations on which country is to do what to contribute to the solution.

**Inability of States to Solve Problems at Home**

If states are limited in what they can do to solve the new transnational problems, they are also limited in their ability to solve problems that were once viewed as purely domestic single-handedly. This is an entirely new situation requiring rethinking of what noninterference in the affairs of other states mean. Problems such as a fair wage for workers, the right price for wheat, and standards for industry and consumer goods are now enmeshed in the politics of globalization. The U.S. Congress could raise the minimum wage to $10 an hour, but many U.S. industries would quickly move to Mexico, the Caribbean, or Southeast Asia, where the cost of labor averages a dollar a day. The result would be rising unemployment in the United States and a further increase in the gap between rich and poor, as more unskilled workers are thrown out of the U.S. work force. In addition, the $10 hourly labor cost would increase the cost of products made in the United States to a level where they could not compete with cheaper products on the world market. The United States could try to push China and India into adopting a higher wage scale, but clearly, both countries would see this as interference in their domestic affairs. Globalization has been one of the strongest forces in reorienting state problem solving in the direction of international organizations (centralization). On the other hand, the perceived erosion of the state’s control of the domestic agenda has contributed to an increase in decentralizing tendencies within state borders.

**The Rise of Ethnic Nationalism and Religious Fundamentalism**

The weakening of centralized state power has encouraged decentralization in many parts of the globe. For examples, please take a good look at Table 1.1.

Where state power has dramatically decreased, ethnic nationalist and religious movements have sometimes succeeded in breaking that state into national ethnic entities, as happened in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the 1990s after the collapse of communism. More frequently, the inability of the central government to quell ethnic tensions has resulted in a persistent low-level state of civil war. For example, each of the Central Asian states that arose from the fall of the Soviet
Union has a multiethnic population. In many of them, the larger ethnic minorities would prefer their own independent country, or at least a large share of self-rule. Since 1991, civil wars have raged in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Tajikistan, as has a war for independence in Chechnya, a region of Russia. (To understand the differences among state, the nation, and ethnic groups, review Figure 1.1.)

### Ethnic and Religious Tension

Ethnic and religious tensions have increased in many parts of the world. In Africa, the most salient examples are the civil wars in Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, the Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. An example of seemingly irresolvable religious nationalism is the century-old conflict between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories. The conflict is made more complex by the division between the Palestinians themselves over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Source of Dissension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Low-level conflict between Mexican government and the Native Americans of Chiapas for greater autonomy of the Chiapas region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Conflict in Northern Ireland between Roman Catholics and Protestants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Basque separatist movement wants either independence or more autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Continuous dissension between Flemish- or Dutch-speaking Protestant North and French-speaking Catholic South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Chechnya seeking independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Conflict between majority Christian Georgians and minority Muslim Abkhazi demanding independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Conflict between majority Muslim Azeris and minority Christian Armenians who want the Armenian-controlled part of Azerbaijan ceded to Armenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Delineation of a Palestinian state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Conflict between minority Sunni Iraqis, ethnic Kurds, and majority Shiite Iraqis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India/Pakistan</td>
<td>Conflict between Muslims, supported by Pakistan, and Hindus, supported by India, for control of the territory of Kashmir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Fifty-year-old conflict between Chinese government and Tibetans over Tibetan desire for independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Ongoing conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sudan       | Two conflicts:  
1) A civil war between the black Christian south and Arab Muslim north that has been going on for decades  
2) In Darfur, in western Sudan, raids and mass murders of black Muslims by Arab Muslims |
| Rwanda      | Ethnic rivalry between Hutus and Tutsis |
| Ivory Coast | Civil war between largely Christian south and Muslim north |
**Chapter 1**

**The Importance of World Politics**

whether to follow a more traditionally nationalist path to self-government represented by President Abbas and his party, al Fatah, or to take the more extreme religious nationalist route of Hamas (the majority in the legislature) and become a Muslim state.

In Kashmir, Indian Hindu soldiers have faced Pakistani Muslim soldiers since 1948 in a bloody drama of hostility, over which country (and religion) is to prevail. In Sri Lanka, the Tamils, a minority ethnic group, want independence from the Sinhalese ethnic majority. The French-speaking Catholic Canadian province of Quebec has held several referendums on whether it should become independent of Canada.

The driving force behind the rise of religious fundamentalism has been the rise of militant Islam. While militant Islam is composed of many diverse terrorist groups, its primary leader is Osama bin Laden. Scholars differ as to the objectives of militant Islam, but it is generally conceded that its goal is to end the domination of the world by the Western, highly industrialized countries that militant Islamic groups consider decadent and corrupt, and to replace the existing world order with a Muslim universal caliphate rooted in the Muslim holy book, the Koran, and Islamic law known as the Shari’a. To achieve these goals, terrorists groups have

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**Do You Know the Difference Between . . . ?**

**State**
- A geographic territory with internationally recognized boundaries
- An internationally recognized and identifiable population that lives within those boundaries
- An internationally recognized authority structure or government

**Nation**
- A group of people linked together in some manner, such as by a common territory (Estonians, Czechs, Norwegians), although not necessarily by a common territory (Arabs, Tamils, Kazaks)
- Common culture that may or may not be based on religion
- Common language
- Common history or understanding of the past
- General desire for independence

**Ethnic Group**
- A group of people linked together similarly to those of a nation, EXCEPT:
  - No expressed desire for independence
  - Most important unifying or identifying factor is language
  - Religion is often a unifying factor.

**Multinational State**: A state such as China, India, Nigeria, Russia, or the United States, which contains more than one nation within its territory. Most states are multinational.

**Multistate Nation**: A single nation occupying more than one state boundary. The German, Russian, and Kurd nations are classic examples.

**Ethnic Nationalism**: An ethnic group that seeks independence and bases its right to independence on the right to speak its own language (the Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania; the Kurds in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey; the Basques in Spain and France; the Albanians in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo). In contrast to the American fight for independence, which was based on self-rule over a specific territory regardless of language, most modern nationalist movements are language oriented. We call groups seeking independence under such conditions ethnic national groups.

**Race**: A division of humankind possessing biological traits that are transmissible by descent and are sufficient to characterize it as a distinctive human type. Based on the criteria of pigmentation, color and form of hair, shape of head and nose, and stature, anthropologists generally agree on three major races: the Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. To classify humans on the basis of race is highly problematic, for there has been an intermingling of races since earliest human history.8
attacked strategic sites in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Nowhere is the struggle for power being more fiercely fought than in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**New Citizen Activism**

The fifth and last new force we discuss as influencing world politics is the rise of citizen activism. People around the world appear frustrated by what they see as the weakness and failure of the state to pay attention to their concerns. They may blame their governments for corruption, for abandoning traditional values or traditional religion, or for failing to take sufficiently radical measures to either create or halt change.

**Citizen Activism and Citizen Empowerment**

The efforts of citizens to take power into their own hands and change the politics of their country has markedly increased since the 1970s. In Iran, angry citizens in 1978 protested against what they perceived as their government’s inhuman and absolutist methods of rapid industrialization. In 1979, within a little more than two weeks they ousted the ruling shah and welcomed home Ayatollah Khomeini, a cleric urging the return to fundamental Islamic values. In Indonesia in 1998, thousands of young people took to the streets to demand democracy as a solution to the collapse of the Indonesian economy. In 2003–2005 citizens in the Republic of Georgia and Ukraine in what became known as the Rose and Orange Revolutions, organized massive sit-ins in their main squares demanding a more democratic government. The mass demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO) at every meeting it has held since November 1999 provide another illustration of this new level of citizen activism with the protesters demanding the end of globalization. In the first four examples, citizen activism brought changes in the government of the country where the demonstration took place. Iran became an Islamic Republic, Indonesia embarked on its democratic road. In Georgia, the new government has brought economic growth and greater political freedom, while Ukraine has been forced to learn the value of compromise and national reconciliation.

Citizen empowerment is thus more than a passing phenomenon. Unlike any other technology, the personal computer or cell phone linked to the Internet gives the individual the ability to seek and send information and to communicate with individuals who have similar views but live in other countries and cultures. Messages flowing across the Internet provide the infrastructure necessary to support citizens’ organizations.

**Rise of Non-state Actors**

Citizen activism is not only a matter of mass demonstrations. Increase in citizen activism has gone hand in hand with the accelerated growth of individual initiatives and non-state actors (NSAs). Non-state actors are actors on the international stage that are not states. NSAs may be subdivided into four main groups: international paramilitary and terrorist groups such as the Shining Path (Sendero luminoso) in Peru or al Qaeda and its associated terrorist groups; firms and business with a global reach, such as multinational corporations (MNCs); the international media; and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize
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winner exemplifies the individual and non-state-actor dimensions of citizen activism. The 2006 prize went to Bangladeshi native, Muhammad Yunus for his founding of the Grameen Bank, the first bank to give microcredit to poor people.

As noted earlier, NGOs are organizations of citizens with a common agenda or set of demands they would like a government to implement. NGOs are discussed in more depth in chapter 2 and chapter 7. Some NGOs go back to the nineteenth century, but most got started in the 1970s or later. NGOs may be organized at the grass-roots level, or at the state and international levels. Grass-roots groups commonly organize around a local issue. National NGOs organize to pressure national governments to adopt certain policies or legislation, while the newest of the NGOs, international NGOs, aim to influence international organizations, such as the UN. NGOs are as diverse as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (national), Friends of the Earth (international), the Adirondack Mountain Club (local), Sister Cities International (international), and al Qaeda, an international terrorist organization.

Pressure exerted by global NGOs became so strong that in the late 1980s the UN agreed to give legal standing to NGOs that registered with them. Legal standing means that the registered NGOs are represented in an official capacity at world conferences and in deliberations about UN activities. Such a practice would have been unthinkable one hundred years ago.

As you can see, the new citizen activism can reinforce the centralizing tendencies at work today through the formation of like-minded NGOs that can influence policy at the local, national, and international levels. It can also strengthen the fragmentation of world politics through the proliferation of groups with specific agendas. International terrorism is not the product of one large terrorist organization but rather a collection of smaller groups that are loosely associated and tend to act on their own volition for their own goals.

Test Prepper 1.3

True or False?

___ 1. Forces such as information technology either act as centralizing or decentralizing forces in world politics, but not both.

___ 2. Transnational corporations operate in multiple countries but do not possess a national home.

___ 3. While the origins of transnational problems may lie across multiple countries, oftentimes it is possible for just one powerful country (such as the United States) to solve the problem.

___ 4. Ethnic or national movements leading to internal dissent is a problem faced by many different countries, including countries in the developed world such as Great Britain and Spain.

___ 5. With the changing world landscape after the attacks in the United States on 9/11, the world has seen a significant decrease in citizen-based efforts to take power into their own hands.

Multiple Choice

___ 6. The global commons are:

a. A variety of affiliated IGOs dealing with transnational economic issues

b. A subdivision of the UN that focuses on bridging the gap between divergent viewpoints throughout the world

c. Issues, such as human rights, that generally act as centralizing forces in world politics

d. Areas of the planet shared by all the world's population

___ 7. A geographic territory with internationally recognized boundaries is one element of a:

a. state c. race

b. nation d. ethnic group

Between Nations
Practice Test Questions
Practice Test 1.3
www.BetweenNations.org
Join the Debate

Should There Be One World Government?

Overview
In 1995, the United Nations Commission on Global Governance published Our Global Neighborhood. This report was commissioned after a meeting in 1991 in Stockholm, Sweden, entitled “Common Responsibility in the 1990s: The Stockholm Initiative on Global Security and Governance.” The report suggests changes in the way the world community goes about running its affairs in order to promote a more just and equitable world society. It presents a cogent argument for consolidating our current international organizations by giving more power to the organizations of the United Nations. The concept of global governance is opposed by those who see the road to one world government as the end of state sovereignty and an opening of the door to tyranny on a scale the world has never seen, all overseen by a gigantic, faceless, unelected bureaucracy. You are just starting your course on World Politics. It is more than likely you have never given any thought or marshaled any arguments in favor of one world government or national sovereignty. Below, we give you some arguments to start you off. Go ahead. Try it. What about one world government?

Most Important Proposals
- A system of global taxation based on the levy of special-user charges, such as a carbon tax, for individuals and companies that burn any kind of fuel that emits carbon dioxide
- A standing UN army that would have the sole authority to intervene in states that abuse human rights
- An Economic Security Council that would oversee more equitable payment for labor, the promotion of sustainable development around the world, and policies to alleviate poverty and disease
- UN authority over the global commons—the oceans and the atmosphere
- An end to the veto power of permanent members of the UN Security Council
- A new Petitions Council to which individuals and NGOs could bring suit against states for noncompliance with international law
- A new International Court of Criminal Justice, whose verdicts would be binding on all the member states of the UN. (This court, established in July 1998— but without binding jurisdiction on all UN member states—is now located in The Hague, the Netherlands.)
- Expanded authority for the secretary-general of the UN.

Arguments for a Stronger, More Powerful United Nations Organization
- A small world needs a world government. The world is already so small that we can fly around it in supersonic planes or satellites in three hours or less.
- The world’s economy is already globalized. What better way to promote more equitable labor conditions and conservation of environmental resources than through a central organization empowered to oversee the planet’s human and natural resources?
- Intervention by one country in the affairs of another is unacceptable. Decisions on the invasion of member-states must be made collectively within the UN Security Council.
- There already exist UN military forces with specific orders for specific places and targets. The upgrading of these forces into a permanent army would give more clout to UN decisions on the resolution of global conflicts.
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The International Court of Justice should have mandatory jurisdiction over all member-states of the UN. How else is the world to fight criminal abuses of authority by heads of state, national armies, and international terrorists?

Arguments against a Stronger United Nations

- The larger the government, the more likely it is to rule tyrannically. We don't need global government; we need honest national governments willing to act first and foremost in the national interest.
- There are no internationally recognized global values and no consensus on how a world government should be organized. One of the most severe value conflicts in the world today is over the rights of women and children. If the UN cannot resolve these conflicts today, a more centralized UN will have to impose its values throughout the world.
- Regulation of the world economy by a UN economic institution would promote a global welfare state in which resources are taken from the most productive global citizens and distributed to the least productive. What is needed is to step up the training of the poorest members of the global community in effective methods of food production and technology development. Education, not welfare, is the answer.
- People are not prepared to surrender their national sovereignty and to entrust the security of their homes and families to a UN army. If states give up their military and police forces, how secure will we be against terrorists, criminal gangs, drug rings and sheer cranks?
- Sovereign states must have the right to intervene and invade other states whose expressed policies and interests are opposed to their own and threaten the world community.

The arguments pro and con highlight the basic problem: that the formation of a global government with its own military force and court of justice to enforce decisions of a global legislature means each state must surrender its sovereignty. This surrender is made all the more problematic by the report's proposal to form a separate parliament composed of recognized NGOs. That would put al Qaeda on the same parliamentary standing in the NGO assembly as the United States is in the current UN General Assembly. You will discover as you debate that the issue of global governance is more complex than it seems at first and that it demands some heavy thinking.

Questions

1. How could a world government more efficiently and more equitably handle such global issues as regional conflict, poverty, and environmental degradation?
2. How readily do you think any state would be persuaded to give up voluntarily the right to control its own political, economic, and social affairs?
3. How do you understand the term global governance? Do you see the centralization of the world's economic and political activities as a positive or negative step? Why?

Select Readings

Peter Singer, One World: The Ethics of Globalization (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002).

Selected Websites

www.sovereignty.net/p/gov  This site provides the total text of Our Global Neighborhood, plus material supporting the con side of the global governance debate.
www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global  The Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics provides information, links, and evaluations of materials published on global governance.
http://globalization.about.com/od/globalgovernance/  This site provides a bibliography of articles and reports on the institutions and practice of global governance.
Define world politics and be able to understand current political events through the competing forces of centralization and decentralization.

- We defined world politics as the global allocation of the planet's scarce political, economic, social, and cultural resources.
- Because there is no world government, this allocation takes place through the struggle for power and dominance by international actors, including states, international intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals.
- Over the past centuries, various institutions have been created by European governments to promote peace, including: the birth of the modern state system, the balance of power, and collective security.

Understand how world politics affects your life and how studying international affairs will help you develop analytical skills to better see patterns in the complexity of current events.

- The study of world politics is important to you. It is not just a subject for diplomats and experts. As a voter, a future player in the global economy, a future professional or businessperson, and as a consumer concerned about your health, your present and future lifestyle are profoundly affected by international relations.

Identify the five most significant forces shaping the world today and understand how these forces have centralizing or decentralizing effects on world politics.

- The five most significant forces shaping the world today:
  - The new information technology
  - The transnational character of the new issues, such as AIDS and other pandemics, terrorism, and global environmental degradation
  - The inability of traditional states to solve these problems on their own
  - The rise of ethnic nationalism and religious extremism
  - The new citizen activism promoted and sponsored by the new information technology

To use these interactive learning and study tools, including video and audio multimedia resources, go to www.BetweenNations.org.

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Flashcards  Historical Background  Weblinks for Further Exploration
Learning Objectives

1. Understand and be able to summarize the key assumptions of political realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.

2. Identify and understand the key theories that result from realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.
In chapter 1, we said that world politics was the struggle for power among the world’s sovereign states in the absence of a world government to enforce the rules of the game. We further said that this struggle over the world’s scarce resources was the continuation of a historic phenomenon that has been going on since the human race began. This struggle takes place within the framework of movement toward centralization countered by movements toward decentralization. However, the struggle at the beginning of the twenty-first century differs from those in the past due to new forces that are shaping the planet. These include the high-technology revolution; the globalization of political, economic, and social issues; the inability of one state to solve even
domestic problems without taking a global perspective; the rise of ethnic nationalism and religious extremism; and the new citizen activism.

How do you make sense of all that is happening in the world today? What does all the news in the media add up to? Do the rapid changes taking place provide any idea where the world is heading? What are your predictions based on Figure 2.1?

Here is where theory can help. Chapter 1 supplied numerous bits of information. The only way to make the information intelligible is by organizing it in a systematic way. All such systems are rooted in the assumptions you make about human behavior in relation to the world around you. A group of those assumptions is called a paradigm. Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn has defined a paradigm as “an entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques . . . shared by the members of a given community.” In the case of international relations, members of the given community would be scholars in the political science discipline.

A paradigm is thus the intellectual framework from within which we derive theories about the natural and social world. As shown in Table 2.1, theories, in turn, provide the lens through which we are able to describe events, explain them, and, less accurately, make predictions about them. Theories also help us make policy recommendations; this is a very important way in which theory and reality are linked.

**FIGURE 2.1**

**The Difficulty of Prediction**

**Theories Help Us To**

- Describe things
- Explain things
- Make predictions
- Make policy recommendations

The year was 1984 and a political prophet was asked to predict what would happen in the world in twenty years’ time. He looked into his tea leaves and prophesied in twenty years that communism would have collapsed, that China would be a member of the World Trade Organization, that the biggest threat to the United States would be from militant Muslims then being supported by the United States, that apartheid would have ended in South Africa, and that Germany would be reunited into one state. People at that time would have thought the prophet was a lunatic.

In fact, in 1984 no one predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. You be the prophet.

What do you think the international system will look like in 2024? Which states will be the major powers?

What will be the major alliances and trading blocs?

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**Paradigm** The framework of assumptions from within which we derive theories about the natural and the social world.
In this chapter, we present three of the major paradigms with their accompanying theories. In the first section, we present each of the paradigms, and in the second, the theories that derive from them. In the last section, we look at theories that are critical of the assumptions behind the major paradigms and are starting to play a larger role in analyses of world politics.

**What Are the Tools of Analysis in World Politics?**

Understand and be able to summarize the key assumptions of political realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.

In this section, we discuss three paradigms that underlie theory building in world politics today and help us understand the international world: political realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm. In many ways, the three paradigms differ dramatically from each other. You must read and decide which worldview best suits your outlook on life. Keep in mind as well that each can offer useful insights into how the world works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Paradigm</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Theories Derived from Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>Human beings are imperfect. The international world is a jungle characterized by an anarchic struggle for survival and power. War is inevitable. The only thing that stops power is power.</td>
<td>Political Realism Balance of Power Hegemonic Stability Neorealism (structural) Offensive Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>Utopianism: The world is getting better. Human beings are basically good and perfectible. Caring and compassion are innate. Everyone has equal value and human dignity. We can cooperate to build a better world. We must restructure flawed institutions to create good ones.</td>
<td>Marxism Imperialism Dependency theories Subjective Approaches Liberalism Democratic Peace Theory Collective security Regime Theory Neoliberalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Paradigm</td>
<td>The human world is a subset of the global ecosystem. Resources on Earth are finite. Humans cannot exceed an ecosystem’s carrying capacity or that system will collapse. Sustainable development is the answer to a planet at risk.</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Theory Deep ecology Ecofeminism Ecojustice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Political realism** A philosophical position that assumes that human beings are imperfect and possess an innate desire for power. The international system is composed of states and other entities whose primary interest is to survive and thrive in an anarchic jungle whose competing actors are constrained by no higher authority. The fundamental purpose of the state is to use its power to further its interests while containing the power of other states that might prevent this from happening.

**Idealism** A philosophical position that argues that human beings are basically good. War can be prevented when the proper international institutions are created. States can cooperate to solve problems and improve the existing world order, given the right institutions.

**Ecological paradigm** The approach to international relations that assumes that the world of humans cannot be studied apart from its natural environmental context and that sees the human world as a subset of the global ecosystem. Central to this paradigm is the view that planet Earth, with its surrounding atmosphere, represents a finite ecosystem.
Political Realism

Political realism is the dominant paradigm in international relations. The paradigm is based on the twin assumptions that human beings are imperfect and that they have an innate desire for power. Realists thus like to theorize about the uses of power, the consequences of power, and the containment of power. Central to this view is the belief that we live in a world of anarchy, where only their offensive and defensive capabilities keep states from each others’ throats. Security is thus the big issue in realist analysis.

An Overview of Political Realism

The realist approach to international affairs traces its origins to the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, who wrote what was probably the first systematic analysis of war, titled The Peloponnesian Wars. The work recounts the story of the thirty-year war between the Greek city-state of Athens and its great rival, Sparta (431–404 BC). In a celebrated passage, Thucydides has the Athenian Assembly debate the fate of a rebel colony, Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. The angry response of the Athenian army to the revolt was to order the whole colony put to death. The Athenian citizens protested that order, and they called for another meeting of the Assembly. Using arguments based on political realism, the ruler of Athens, Cleon, urged that the punishment be carried out and the colonists executed. He claimed that the rebels had known what they were doing and had planned the whole thing. Here are three of Cleon’s arguments:

- “One only forgives actions that are not deliberate.” (That is, we should not feel pity for the rebels.)
- “A sense of decency is only felt toward those who will be our friends in the future.” (That is, give these people what they deserve.)
- “It is a general rule of human nature that people despise those who treat them well, and look up to those who make no concessions.” (That is, punishment is the best medicine.)

These arguments and others like them have been used to justify the use of force throughout history.

The realist path runs through the Indian philosopher Kautilya (3rd Century BC) to Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and his famous book, The Prince. Written to gain favor with the Medici rulers of Florence, Italy, the author describes an ideal ruler very similar to the cruel and cunning prince of the Papal States, Cesare Borgia. The Medicis rejected the book, and it outraged the Florentine public. Since that time, Machiavelli has had a bad reputation. Machiavelli wrote of the realities of state power through an analysis of the means by which individuals have tried to seize and keep power in the highly volatile and fragmented environment that was Renaissance Italy. Perhaps his best-known statement is “It is better for a prince to be feared than loved,” but a wise ruler will take care not to be hated. His central idea was that power was so changeable, a single mistake could topple a ruler. To stay in power, the ideal prince must enforce his will through a combination of strong character, ruthlessness, a love of risk taking, and an ability to calculate the consequences of his actions. Machiavelli was the first major Western thinker to uncouple politics from ethics. To him, politics was solely about getting and keeping power.

A century later, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), an adviser to another prince—Charles II of England—set forth his realist approach in his treatise on government,
entitled *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth*. Hobbes’s use of the Hebrew word *leviathan*, or sea monster, as a metaphor for the state’s power over its citizens, gave the word a negative connotation. When we speak of a leviathan state today, we are probably referring to an authoritarian state with a huge bureaucracy to enforce its rule. Hobbes based his arguments for the leviathan state on his realist view that human nature is imperfect, rooted in the senses, and prone to strong emotional reactions and imprudent decisions. He argued that to be happy, human beings needed “a common power to keep them all in awe”; otherwise, every person would be the enemy of every other person. Hobbes saw the causes of conflict as endemic in the nature of human beings: competition, distrust, and desire for glory.¹

**Modern Political Realism**

Political realism has become synonymous with the practices of Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian prime minister who engineered the unification of modern Germany in 1871. Bismarck, in fact, coined the term *realpolitik* (“politics of the real”) to characterize his foreign policy. Bismarck was a leading supporter of the balance-of-power principle, discussed later in the chapter and in detail in chapter 4. As a realist, he saw power primarily in terms of armaments and military preparedness. He did much to build up Germany’s military so that Germany quickly became a leading European power that challenged Great Britain’s supremacy.

In the United States, Hans Morgenthau probably made the largest contribution to the development of American political realism after World War II. Morgenthau argued that events that occurred between the two world wars, as well as World War II itself, demonstrated that human beings do not come into the world inherently good. They are capable of both good and bad, but the drive for power is innate and instinctive. War is thus a certainty. Governments and individuals must devise their actions and responses in the international world based on the worst-case scenario. The central event in Morgenthau’s life was the onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR). If the United States wanted to keep out of a hot war with the USSR, he argued, national security required it to have superb offensive and defensive capabilities, and to be dedicated to opposing communism.

**Political Realism Today**

Drawing on the work of Bismarck, Morgenthau, and others, realists today emphasize the primacy of foreign policy over domestic policy, the importance of a strong military force and cutting-edge military technology, and the centrality of national security. The major player in the international arena is the state. States operate on an international stage where anarchy rules. With no higher power to constrain their behavior, states struggle to increase their power and prestige at the expense of other states. World politics is a *zero-sum game*, where the winner takes all and is the most powerful state. Where idealists argued that we should do away with nuclear bombs because they present a hazard to humanity, realists argued that the only way to keep power-hungry states like the USSR from attacking was through

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**Realpolitik** A term coined by the nineteenth-century German chancellor Otto Von Bismarck to describe his foreign policy for Germany—namely, the building up of the military to make Germany one of the leading European powers, rivaling Great Britain.

**Between Nations**
For more information see
*Contemporary Realism: Morgenthau*
www.BetweenNations.org

**Audio Concept**
*Zero-Sum Game*
www.BetweenNations.org

**Zero-sum game** The concept that in politics, the winner takes all; if one side gains, the other must lose.
the building of a nuclear arsenal on each side that guaranteed the other would not
attack. This situation was known as mutually assured destruction (MAD).

In summary, political realism:

- Starts from the premise that human beings as well as the world in which they
  live are imperfect.
- The games of states take place in an arena dominated by the struggle for power.
- Realists tend to support a strong military and to put national security ahead of
  international cooperation.
- In aligning themselves with national sovereignty and independence, realists
  are skeptical of a centralized world order, preferring a more decentralized and
  flexible relationship among states.

Idealism

Idealism is the second major approach to international relations. Idealists differ
from realists in that they ask what the world could or ought to be and how to get
there. In contrast to realists, they believe that human beings are basically good.
Therefore, institutions must be developed that will enable them to be the best they
can be. The two great transforming ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth
centuries, Marxism and liberalism, stem from the idealist view of the world. Many
scholars would not place Marxism in the idealist camp. Karl Marx was an idealist,
however, in the sense that he was a utopian and believed the world would become
more just and more equitable by means of fundamental changes in the way human
society is organized. In addition, the subjective approaches discussed at the end of
the chapter also derive from Marxism.

In January 1918 ten months before the end of World War I, U.S. president
Woodrow Wilson in a speech to the U.S. Congress presented fourteen points that
announced a new approach to international relations. These ideas came to be
known as liberalism. The central tenet was that war could be prevented. It was not
inevitable if the proper international institutions were created. Rather than the
balance of power keeping nations from war, nations would join a League of Nations
dedicated to collective security: “An attack against one is an attack against all.” The
League would operate on the principles of international law, provide a forum for
discussion to prevent war, and threaten the potential aggressor by collective mili-
tary action.

World War II demonstrated that neither international law nor the League of
Nations was capable of preventing war. Still, idealists were not disheartened.
Human beings may be imperfect, but they are perfectible. The League was a badly
conceived institution, they argued. It was open only to democratic nations—and,
unfortunately, the largest democratic nation, the United States, did not join. After
the war, idealists, both Marxists and liberals rallied around the formation of a new
international organization, the United Nations (UN; see chapter 6). This time,
membership was open to any duly recognized state. The United States and the
Soviet Union were among its founding members, and the United States took the
lead in designing the organization. Although some may argue the point, other
international institutions and agreements formed after World War II, including the
International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and
Trades (GATT), owe their existence most analysts believe to the analogous liberal

Mutually assured destruction (MAD)
In the context of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, both sides were
deterred from attacking each other because they believed the destruction of both countries
was be assured if one initiated a nuclear attack.
conviction that cooperation can be achieved in the economic sphere and is a rational alternative to bankrupting nations and starting trade wars.

**The Importance of Cooperation to Build Peace**

Idealists share the conviction that altruism is as fundamental to the human condition as competition and rivalry. Human beings through the centuries have understood the benefit of cooperation to minimize risks and maximize benefits for all the participants. Governments and states can and should work together to develop policies and strategies that call humankind to a world order of justice, compassion for the less fortunate, and concern for basic human values.

A common concern of most idealists is the horror of modern war. If the two world wars were terrible in general, the dropping of the atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed more than 140,000 people, was especially horrific. Idealists were fierce critics of nuclear war and the nuclear buildup between the United States and the USSR. During the Cold War, Marxist thinking provided the ideological underpinnings for many Western peace movements.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, idealists (liberals and Marxists alike) fought for more international cooperation, more international regulation, and the value of multinational treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Montreal Protocol, which limits the emission of chlorofluorocarbons into the atmosphere. Idealists are often active members of peace movements, women’s movements, and environmental and human rights movements.

Today, many idealists center their hopes for a cooperative future on the extraordinary increase in the number of international treaties that have been signed and ratified by the world’s governments. These treaties cover a wide range of subject matter. Generally, they outline a procedure or identify a process that the treaty signatories agree to follow. The process or procedure that is born of a treaty...
is termed an international *regime.* The existence of international regimes challenges the realist assumption that only the struggle for power can characterize international relations. Each state may be out for itself. But the existence of regimes is an indication that cooperation between states without coercion from a global authority is not only possible but also an effective way to resolve or promote international concerns.

The idealist paradigm builds on the notion that altruism is a fundamental characteristic of human behavior. It just needs the right kind of social and government structure, to be released. States can and should cooperate among themselves with the aim of constructing a more just and cooperative world order. Violence can be prevented by binding states together through international treaties and addressing the causes of violence through the combined efforts of the world community.

**The Ecological Paradigm**

The third approach to international relations that we present is the ecological paradigm. Of far less prominence than realism or idealism, it dates from the late 1970s and was developed by political scientists Herman Daly and Dennis Pirages, along with many others. The element that differentiates the ecological paradigm from any variant of idealism or realism is its insistence that the world of humans cannot be studied apart from their natural environment. The human world, in fact, is a subset of the physical universe; humanity survives or disappears according to its ability to adapt to the global ecosystem. Central to this approach is the realization that planet Earth and its surrounding atmosphere are finite. Most important, the planet possesses finite resources. No amount of money can substitute for the exhaustion of these resources. If humankind is to continue to exist, it must conduct its global transactions in such a way as to sustain or build up the ecosystem and not destroy it.

**Sustainable Development**

A vital concept for the ecological paradigm approach is *sustainable development* (see Figure 2.2).

Sustainable development means that in the interests of its own survival, the human species must not undertake any economic development that leaves a larger footprint on the environment than the ecosystem can successfully accommodate without breaking down. If we overgraze our fields, erode our farmlands, cut down our forests, and use up and pollute our water, our species will disappear, like the dinosaurs. In the context of the theme of this book, the ecological paradigm posits that many decentralized regional or national acts of environmental degradation ultimately add up to global pollution. In other words, the domestic policies of individual countries, such as rapid deforestation, the promotion of farming on marginal soils, the spread of the urban metropolis, and the concentration of the world’s populations in cities combine to, produce intermestic environmental issues that can only be solved on a global scale.

*Political scientist Oran Young was the first to look at regime formation resulting from environmental treaties and to ask how we can determine whether or not a regime will successfully complete or follow the process demanded of it by its treaty.*
In 1988, the former president of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, was the first world leader to put sustainable development at the top of the global political agenda. His placing of planetary survival on the international agenda encouraged politicians and scientists in other countries to address the issue.

**Think Globally, Act Locally**

In 1998, Hurricane Mitch brought torrents of rain down on the Central American countries of Honduras and Nicaragua. In the resulting floods and horrendous mudslides, some 10,000 people died. One of the principal reasons for the scope of the tragedy was the rapid deforestation of tropical forests in both countries. Another was the pressure on the poor peasants to till marginal land, because the good land had all been dedicated to export agriculture. In December 2004, a submarine earthquake in the Indian Ocean and attending tsunami, the deadliest ever recorded, killed upwards of 187,000 with 43,000 missing in the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

In August 2005, Atlantic Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans causing at least 1800 deaths, and $81.2 billion in damages. A major reason for the lethal destruction caused by the two storms was the human alteration of natural coastlines and watersheds, such as the Mississippi River, to the benefit of industry, pisciculture, and the resort business. Similar tragedies might be avoided in the future if the international community presses forward in its promotion of sustainability.

### Pirages’s Five Capitals and Three Pillars of Sustainability

**Sustainability:** Community control and prudent use of five types of capital supported by what Pirages calls “the three pillars of sustainability.”

#### The Five Types of Capital

1. **Nature’s capital** = natural resources
2. **Human capital** = people and the body of knowledge they contribute to community and production
3. **Human-created capital** = products and technologies created by humans
4. **Social capital** = civic trust and civic involvement in a place; participation in the political life of a particular community, newspaper readership, membership in associations from sports clubs to the Lions Club, from unions to choral societies. Social capital defines where you are and the importance of that place to you.
5. **Cultural capital** = a community’s culture, including factors that provide it with the means and adaptations to deal with the natural environment and modify it, such as creation myths and dreams of a better world.

#### The Three Pillars of Sustainability

1. **Economic security** = the control that individuals have over their own economic lives and the degree to which they are capable of shielding themselves from external economic shocks
2. **Ecological integrity** = living in harmony with natural systems: clean air, water, and land use that meets human needs and maintains the essential elements of the ecosystem
3. **Democracy** = citizen participation in community decision making. The three pillars are created and supported by the five forms of capital.

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**Tsunami** An ocean wave produced by a submarine earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption. These waves may reach enormous size and travel across entire oceans.
40 Chapter 2 Approaches to World Politics

The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, China
Research is showing that dams may frequently do more harm than good. On the positive side, they generate electricity from falling water, one of the cleanest ways to generate power. On the negative side, they store water in huge reservoirs, completely changing a river’s ecology. Environmentalists all over the world have been protesting the construction of huge hydroelectric projects like this one in China.

Anthropogenic Caused by humans or originating from human actions.
Carrying capacity Carrying capacity is usually defined as the maximum population of a given species that can be supported indefinitely in a defined habitat without permanently impairing the productivity of that habitat.

sustainable development programs and prevails on the nations of the world to agree to them.

Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, typhoons, and ice storms are natural phenomena. They become human tragedy when the anthropogenic, or human-created, impact exceeds the carrying capacity of the at-risk ecosystem, causing the ecosystem to collapse. Sometimes we can predict the collapse. Sometimes it comes as a surprise. We talk more about the surprise factor in the environmental paradigm in chapter 14.

In summary, the environmental paradigm believes:

- That world politics is essentially environmental politics.
- Individual states need to recognize that their domestic and foreign policies have significant environmental repercussions for the global community.
- On their part, centralizing world-order institutions, like the organizations affiliated with the UN, must be able and willing to assist states in ensuring not only their environmental security but also the security of the world as a whole.

The proliferation of natural disasters in the twentieth century resulting from human activities suggests that the ecological paradigm may well take center stage in the international politics of the twenty-first century.
What Theories of World Politics Flow from the Paradigms?

Identify and understand the key theories that result from realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.

How do these basic paradigms about the human condition influence the theories one adopts to explain the international world? Throughout this book, we explain a variety of global events and issues based on one of the paradigms. We explore the theories one adoption to explain the international world. Throughout this book, we explore the theories one adoption to explain the international world. Throughout this book, we explore the theories one adoption to explain the international world. Throughout this book, we explore the theories one adoption to explain the international world.

Test Prepper 2.1

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following does theory help us do?
   a. Describe things
   b. Explain things
   c. Make predictions
   d. Make policy recommendations
   e. All of the above

2. A zero-sum game refers to which of the following situations?
   a. When both countries in a nuclear arms race are devastated completely through nuclear war
   b. When anything gained by one country must come at the expense of another country
   c. When the absolute gain made by two countries through economic trade "zeroes out"
   d. When the relative gain by one actor is reduced to zero through excessive military spending
   e. None of the above

3. A central idea in the ecological paradigm is:
   a. The environment should take precedence over all other living things in the country
   b. The environment, human rights, and sustainability
   c. The global environment is the single most pressing problem in the world.
   d. All of the above
   e. None of the above

4. True or False?
   _____ 1. The dominant theories of world politics allowed scholars to predict the fall of the Soviet Union.
   _____ 2. Proponents of realism believe that the international system is characterized by anarchy.
   _____ 3. Idealism argues that international institutions should be developed in order to allow human beings to be the best they can be.
   _____ 4. Marxists and idealists basically believe the same things when it comes to explaining international politics.
   _____ 5. Because of increased environmental concerns in the past decade, the ecological paradigm has become the dominant approach to international politics in recent years.

Answers appear on page A12.
Political Realism

Realism's central concerns are war, peace, and security. War may be inevitable, but we can limit the desire of enemies to wage war by appropriate military preparedness and by diplomatic maneuvers to redirect that country's interest. We use diplomacy as long as it promotes our state interest but are ready for war if diplomacy fails. In the words of the nineteenth-century Prussian general Karl von Clausewitz, "War is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means." In every international interaction, the gains of one state come as a loss to another.

To give you a sense of realism as a tool to understand world politics, we present three modern theories that derive from the realist perspective. Many others also come from realism, some of which were mentioned earlier. The theories presented here are balance-of-power theory, hegemonic stability theory, and neorealism or structural realism.

Balance-of-Power Theory

According to the realist balance-of-power theory, war is avoided by a condition of equilibrium between the main players in the potential war. Just as we can find out a baby's weight by placing him or her on one side of a scale and adding increments of pounds or kilos to the other side of the balance until the two sides of the scale are in equilibrium, so we can measure global or regional equilibrium by weighing the power attributes of one state or set of states against the power attributes of a second state or set of states. Power attributes of states include:

- Military and economic potential
- Nature of a state's leadership
- Extent of international involvement

If the power attributes of one side outweigh those of the other, the balance goes out of equilibrium and war ensues.

Balance-of-power theory dominated diplomatic and international military and economic relations throughout the nineteenth century. Using this theory, Admiral Alfred Mahan of the United States and English geopolitician, Sir Halford Mackinder argued late in the nineteenth century that power was determined by strategic and geopolitical factors. Geopolitics is now a subdiscipline of international relations that we discuss in chapter 8.

The theory was also used to justify the formation of the two alliances that dominated Europe prior to World War I: the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. According to the theory, World War I was caused by a breakdown in the rough equality or balance between the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Italy, and the Triple Entente between France, Great Britain, and Russia, as shown in Figure 2.3.

A number of scholars, including Paul Kennedy, George Modelski, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Chase Dunn have questioned whether in the rise and fall of world systems, the United States today is historically in decline as a world power and how that decline might affect the international balance of power. Balance-of-power theory is also a good tool to use in investigating regional conflict, such as Iraq's invasion of Iran, or the difficulties in finding a solution to the century-old conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.
Hegemonic Stability Theory

A second theory in the realist paradigm argues that economic and/or political stability in the world or in a region requires a strong power, termed a hegemon, from the Greek word for “leader.” Contrary to balance-of-power theory, hegemonic stability theory (HST) does not fear an imbalance of power but rather argues that the imbalance is necessary. Why were the Asian countries of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan able to industrialize as rapidly as they did in the last quarter of the twentieth century? HST says they were able to do so because there was a hegemon (the United States) in the Pacific basin that provided the military and economic security necessary for these states to develop. Moreover, the United States was strong enough economically to keep its markets open to the products of Asian countries, which a weaker power could not do.

HST thus argues in favor of a dominant political, economic, and military state that can guarantee the order necessary for weaker states to develop, provide the force necessary to secure the peace in a given region, and commit its influence to treaty implementation.

**Hegemon** A country whose overwhelming military, political, and economic power gives it the ability to write and enforce the rules of the international system. A powerful regional state that tries to use its military or economic power to dominate countries in the region—as in Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

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**FIGURE 2.3**

Realpolitik and the Balance of Power, 1878–1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Powers</th>
<th>Atlantic Powers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1879–1918 The Dual Alliance: Germany/Austro-Hungary</td>
<td>1902–1913 Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention: Russia, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881–1887 Three Emperors League: Germany, Austro-Hungary, Russia</td>
<td>1904–1918 Entente Cordiale: France, Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881–1895 Austro-Serbian Alliance: Austria, Serbia</td>
<td>1907–1917 Anglo-Russian Entente: Great Britain, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882–1915 Triple Alliance: Germany, Austro-Hungary, Russia</td>
<td>1907–1917 Triple Entente: France, Great Britain, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883–1916 Austro-German Romanian Alliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

World War I 1914–1918
**Neorealism**  An approach to international relations, developed by Kenneth N. Waltz, that argues that while humans may be selfish by nature and driven by a lust for power, power is not the true end. States really pursue power in order to survive. The goal is national survival.

**Neorealism**  A third theory based on the realist paradigm, neo- or defensive realism, was first formalized by U.S. political scientist Kenneth N. Waltz (1979). Waltz agrees that people are by nature selfish, that they are driven by a lust for power, and that international relations is, as Hobbes put it, “a war of all against all.” But Waltz no longer considers power an end in itself. States, in his view, pursue power for the sake of survival. For Waltz, the single most important property of the international system is the absence of central governing institutions. States operate in an anarchic world, where uncertainty of other international actors’ intentions reigns. To overcome the security dilemma, states must pursue their offensive capabilities if they want to survive. In general, neorealists agree with the following points:

- States remain the primary actors on the world stage. The main goal of all states, however, is not power but survival in a dog-eat-dog environment.
- The primary difference between states is not different goals but their differing capabilities to influence the course of international events.
- The unequal distribution of capabilities defines the structure of the international system and shapes the ways states interact with one another. We talk more about this point in chapter 3.

Neorealists pay little attention to what is going on inside states—as, for example, whether states are democratic or dictatorial. Regardless of internal beliefs and ideologies, the foreign policies of all states in their view, are driven by the same systemic factors present in the international system; they are so many “billiard balls” obeying the same laws of political geometry and physics. Because the structure of the international system is defined by the capabilities of states, neorealists are pessimistic about achieving international cooperation and a world of peace and justice. The anarchic structure of the system compels states to worry about their relative position in the distribution of power and in self-defense to compete to improve or just maintain their position. For neorealists, permanent insecurity is the major impediment to global cooperation, and it is built right into the anarchic international system, whether we admit it or not.

**Offensive Realism**

Of the fourth theory, offensive realism, turns neorealism on its head. Its leading proponent, John Mearsheimer, holds that states are not content with the power they have, but seek dominance or “hegemony,” to satisfy their sense of vulnerability in an insecure world. Mearsheimer argues that there is no such thing as the status quo. Every great power faces the problem of determining how much power is enough for its survival and thus is constantly striving for world dominance to eliminate the possibility of challenge by another great power. Offensive realism contrasts with Waltz’s theory of defensive realism, where insecurity forces states to compete to keep their relative position in the global distribution of power.

**Realism in Perspective**

Political realism has its gloomy moments. Its predictions for the future are not hopeful. Realists do not want to be discouraging, but they do insist we look at reality as they see it. That reality is an anarchic world where, in the absence of a central
authority or world government, states and other international actors compete in a fierce and brutal struggle for survival. The only way to contain power is with power. During the Cold War, nuclear war was prevented through the realpolitik of mutually assured destruction. In the post–Cold War world, the insecurity brought about by the changed landscape of states, the globalization of the economy, and other problems all call for the state to maintain its vigilance to look out for Number One.

**Idealism**

Idealists are nowhere near as skeptical of international cooperation as are realists. Their assumption, that the world can be made better if we can only get the institutions right, leads us to two important theoretical perspectives on international relations. Idealists believe that the world, or at least its human institutions, is perfectible. In this sense, idealism is utopian. Idealists ask, What is wrong with human society? How can it be improved? Idealists are convinced that change is for the better and that human beings can become more caring, more mindful of others’ needs than they generally are. They believe that human beings can be perfected through education and by changing institutions and their relationships. The right structuring of institutions, they assert, enables human beings to bring about a better world, free of greed and envy.

The two great transforming ideologies of the twentieth century, Marxism and liberalism, stem from the idealist view of the world. Many scholars would not place Marxism in the idealist camp. Karl Marx was an idealist, however, in the sense that he was a utopian and believed that the historical process, as it unfolded, would bring about a more just and equitable world through transformative changes in the way human society was organized. In addition, many modern critiques of the tenets of realism and idealism derive from Marxism. We discuss a few of these approaches in the last section of the chapter, “What Are the Subjective Approaches to World Politics.”

**Marxism**

History, according to Marxist theory, is a one-way street from the past into the utopian future. As we move from the past to the present, we see that certain thresholds in human experience mark turning points, or decisive changes, to a different form of socioeconomic and political organization. The historic instrument of these changes was what Marx called the class struggle. Every major socioeconomic change in the history of humankind, Marx said, occurred as a consequence of the struggle between the two most important socioeconomic groups in that period of time: the property-owning class, or haves, that controlled the key economic assets and made all the rules, and the property-less class, or have-nots, that owned none of the assets and worked for and obeyed the ruling class.

Marx argued that the changes were typically violent because they involved real struggle between the haves and the have-nots. But the changes were always a change forward and indicated a progressive betterment of the human condition. Communism, for Marx, was the end-state of human social organization. Under communism, he asserted, all exploitation would cease; there would be no rich or poor and no class divisions, and the state would no longer possess coercive and oppressive authority. All humankind would live in harmony according to the principle “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”
The ideas of Marx inspired both the democratic socialist democracies, with their pluralist, multiparty systems, in Western Europe and the dogmatic communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and Asia. In Western Europe, the social democratic party was the party of the have-nots, the working class, whose aim was the improvement of the worker’s life by peaceful means, such as elections and legislation. A central assumption of communist regimes is that improvement of the lot of the working majority of a population can come about only through violent means.

Once the communist regime comes to power, the state can create a “new man” (or woman) who will have all the best qualities. To achieve these goals, capitalism, with its emphasis on individual and private gain, must be abolished and a new system of state ownership of the economy established. Once the revolution has been achieved, the state can then focus its vast powers on the education of the new man or woman and provide work in the new working environment—which is no longer governed by the profit motive but by the worker’s enthusiasm for work.

Imperialism

A theory developed by Vladimir I. Lenin, who described it as the highest stage of capitalism (see Marxism). Under imperialism, national states driven by economic success and the need for more and more raw materials acquired colonies. These they proceeded to exploit for cheap labor and natural resources and to use as an expanded market where they could sell their goods.

The application of Marxism to the international arena produced two corollary theories. The first was developed by the first leader of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Lenin used the term imperialism to describe the division of the nineteenth-century world by the European powers into colonial empires for each power. Imperialism, he said, was the most advanced stage of capitalism. Imperialism involved the movement of domestic capital abroad to Asia, Africa, and the Americas, in search of cheap raw materials, cheap labor, and new markets that the
mother country no longer or never had possessed. Lenin was quick to see the disrup-
tion of traditional lifestyles brought about by the transfer of the industrial sys-
tem to the colonies. The class struggle that Marx had identified between worker
and capitalist in one country, Lenin saw transferred to the international world.
The capital-exporting countries were the imperialists, and the peoples of the colo-
nial countries were the proletariat.

Until the late 1980s, the USSR and China based their foreign policies on antag-
onism to imperialism. They endorsed Lenin’s view that the institution of private
property inevitably led to wars and rivalry for power. Socialism, they believed,
brought the end of private property and thus opened the door to peaceful interna-
tional cooperation.

Unfortunately, history proved otherwise. For years, these two communist
nations conducted a foreign policy hostile to the world’s industrialized countries
and to the United States in particular. For years as well, Soviet and Chinese leaders
each claimed that their country represented the leading edge of the world march
toward communism. Interstate rivalry produced a mini-cold war for leadership of
the so-called socialist states that at times broke out into hot wars along the Soviet-
Chinese border.

In the new century, the word imperialism still resonates in the expansion of the
U.S. and European transnational corporations’ production, distribution, and retail
facilities around the globe. This concept of economic imperialism is matched by
the concept of political imperialism. Many states, both Muslim and non-Muslim,
believe the United States attacked Iraq for purely imperialist reasons. In 2003, for
example, France considered the United States such an imperialist threat that it
forged a coalition with Germany and Russia to threaten to use their veto power in
the UN Security Council to try to stop the United States from invading Iraq.

One reason that Americans do not like to admit that the United States is an
imperial power is because of Marxism’s association of imperialism with the
resource- and territory-grabbing European powers of the nineteenth century. By
contrast, Harvard historian Niall Ferguson argues that empires are the great
engines of world history, and that they can accomplish positive things, like main-
tain law and order among rival ethnic groups, and promote a civilizing mission
around the world.11

Dependency Theories

A second derivative of the dogmatic Marxist branch of idealism is dependency
theories. In the two decades following World War II, most of the colonies of the
European powers became independent states and were admitted to membership
in the United Nations. The end of colonialism was a major event of the time. One
of the big problems of the new states was how to develop their economies, prompt-
ing the elaboration of scenarios of how states could become industrialized as effi-
ciently and quickly as possible. As time went on, many of the new states seemed to
be growing economically, but they were not developing in the sense of becoming
industrialized states. A new theory, dependencia, or “dependency,” was born. The
term comes from Spanish because the concept evolved in Latin America.

Dependency theorists use state classifications similar to those of imperialism:
industrial states (core countries) and the developing states (periphery countries).
They address questions such as, Why don’t the developing states becoming indus-
trialized? Why do they remain sources of raw materials and cheap labor? These
questions are examined in detail in chapter 13.
Liberalism

Consistent with the idealist approach, the core assumption of liberalism is that the world is perfectible and, by choosing the right institutions, human beings can make it so. In contrast to Marx, who saw the perfectibility of human institutions and human beings rooted in immutable historical laws, liberals emphasize the individuality of each person and the fundamental human ability to choose. The liberal argument may be summarized as follows: Human nature is basically good and—more important—altruistic; we care about others. These qualities make us perfectible. Through education, we can learn to use our reason. We can learn to consider the whole of humankind and not just our national or local problems. Liberals believe government can create institutions that will train citizens to greater tolerance and produce a society dedicated to social justice. One of the main goals of a liberal democracy is to provide universal education to all its citizens so they can make rational choices about their leaders and the policies they would like to see adopted. Participation in government also develops our reason. According to liberal thinking, democracy is the best and ultimate form of government because citizens elect representatives to make decisions for them based on their understanding of the candidates and the issues. The election process makes elected officials accountable to their constituents and thus limits their power to act arbitrarily. The result is a stable political system and a prosperous economy. Democracy provides sufficient security to its citizens so they can develop their capacity to care for others.

Liberals also assert that our natural altruism lies at the heart of international cooperation and trust. Because their citizens feel secure, democratic states are less prone to make war on other states. And thanks to democracy’s internal stability, trade prospers among democratic states, improving the standard of living for all. One part of the liberal reform program insists on the merits of free trade to replace the economic nationalism that liberals believe propelled Hitler’s Germany into World War II.

Compassion and concern for the welfare of all should inform all actions taken on the global stage. An example of the world’s compassion is the humanitarian aid given to states experiencing famine or natural catastrophe. Another example is the enormous outpouring of sympathy for the families of the victims of 9/11 and for the United States as a whole from people and governments all over the world.

In addition, according to liberalism, violence and selfishness result from flawed institutions rather than the human condition. Agreements made between states in secret—what is called secret diplomacy—is one example of a flawed institution that can lead to war, as was the case with World War I. Liberals believe dictatorships are flawed institutions that promote violence and oppression, and they therefore urge the promotion of democracy worldwide. The United States asserts its liberal philosophy when it calls states that have oppressive dictatorships, such as North Korea, “rogue states.”

Democratic Peace Theory

This theory holds that although liberal democracies may go to war with non-democratic states, they typically do not fight each other. A key issue is the extent to which democracy has been consolidated in a country. History shows that new or
transitional democracies can be war-prone in their international politics. In addition, democratic peace theory does not explain the impact of democratization on internal conflict. Iraq today illustrates high internal conflict as the democratic process struggles forward.

**Collective Security**

Liberals are convinced that war is not a certainty. It can be avoided by perfecting institutions designed to control violence. Liberals are strong advocates of the United Nations and seek to extend and strengthen the Security Council’s mandate of *collective security*, the second offshoot of liberalism we address.

Collective security holds that individual agreements between countries are no guarantee against war. As a consequence, all wars are a matter of collective concern. The two world wars of the twentieth century demonstrated that agreements between states are no guarantee against war. The best guarantee is when all countries subscribe to the notion that “an attack against one is an attack against all.” When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, U.S. President George H.W. Bush immediately called together the UN Security Council and secured a UN mandate to drive Saddam Hussein’s army out of Kuwait. The UN action against Iraq in 1991 may be viewed as a success story of collective action from the liberal point of view.

**Regime Theory**

A third derivative of liberalism is regime theory. This theory assumes that international policy making can be organized in such a way as to promote cooperation. It is possible to devise treaties and international agreements that will set up a process or regime to implement the aims of the signatory parties. Once the process is initiated, the states can move forward toward the treaty’s goals by making little modifications, one by one, over an extended period. For example, the 1973 Polar Bear Treaty provides for specific action by the signatory states, a joint research program, and periodic consultation. The U.S.–Russian extension of that treaty in 2000 goes further in establishing a joint commission to supervise and coordinate activities. Regime theorists believe that if states can agree on a general direction of action, subsequent meetings and consultations can refine and direct that action into increasing cooperation between states.

**Neoliberalism**

A third offshoot of liberalism is *neoliberalism*. Neoliberalism developed as a response to what liberals saw as the failure of realism. Realism proved unable to predict or explain the peaceful disintegration of the USSR in the early 1990s, the enormous transformation of global society that took place in the late twentieth century, and the emergence of global problems, such as environmental pollution, the AIDS epidemic, mass migrations, population growth, and failed economic development. The neoliberal proposed a new look at liberalism based on the following assumptions:

- Progress in international relations can be achieved only through international cooperation.
- International institutions can help countries resolve their differences peacefully. This is one reason why neoliberals are sometimes called *neoliberal institutionalists*. 

**Collective security** A concept of world order maintaining that aggression can be deterred by promising overwhelming collective retaliation by the combined power of the world’s states against any community member that pursued aggression. In other words, an attack against one is an attack against all. Collective security first took form in the League of Nations—which the United States refused to join—immediately following World War I.

**Neoliberalism** A philosophical position that argues that progress in international relations can be achieved only through international cooperation. Cooperation is a dynamic rather than a static process. By focusing on understanding the dynamics of the web of relationships driving the international system, states and other international actors can use the international institutions spawned by the system to promote peace and cooperation. More recently, the neoliberal economic argument in support of a global free market has come under criticism.
The world may look chaotic, but it has patterns that can be found by studying the dynamics of international relationships.

Peace and cooperation can be promoted if we focus on understanding the dynamics of the web of relationships and influences driving the international world, such as democratic government, free trade, international law, international organizations, collective security, arms control, and moral decision making.

Neoliberals, ask questions like these:

- What kinds of political and economic processes promote cooperation?
- How can negotiations lead to a cooperative solution for all parties?
- What types of governments or institutions tend toward cooperation rather than going it alone?
- What are the elements of conflict resolution?
- What kinds of economic institutions lead to stability and greater prosperity?

Neoliberalism claims not to be a theory per se. Its basic assumption is that process determines outcome.

Neoliberalism’s economic aspect has come increasingly to the fore since the 1990s. Advocates argue that neoliberalism promotes universal prosperity through free trade, a balanced budget, and stable currencies. Critics respond that global market liberalism is just another term for global capitalism, whose chief international institutions are the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In their insistence on a deregulated global market, these institutions have been the main contributors to the world’s increasing social and economic inequalities. In addition, the assumption that the operation of the market can be the main guide for human activity in developing countries, replacing traditional religious or moral beliefs belies the pain and suffering globalization has inflicted on the world’s weaker citizens. Opposition to the economics of neoliberalism inspired the creation of the anti-globalization movement and led to the mass demonstration at the WTO meetings in Seattle and Genoa. We discuss this approach more in chapter 12.

If we look at the theories derived from idealist assumptions, we can see that, essentially, they all aim to transform the world in some way—to make it better. They provide a theoretical framework that explains how and why the world is badly organized and how and why reforming or modifying the appropriate institutions will bring the desired world harmony.

On the negative side, both Marxism and liberalism, especially neoliberalism, have a strong utopian component. The goal of each is a perfect social system within which everyone lives in harmony. History suggests that that goal will not be achieved any time soon.

**The Ecological Paradigm**

The main tenet of the ecological approach is that you cannot separate humankind from nature either in theory or in fact. Humankind sprang from nature and depends on nature for survival and sustenance. From a tiny group, *Homo sapiens* gradually spread over the globe until the human species dominated the Earth. From the ecological approach, then, any theory of global politics that does not put Earth first underestimates the interdependence between humankind and the planet. From this perspective, new theories have emerged.
Sustainable Development Theory

Sustainable development theory evolved from the development theory, a concept which did not exist until the 1940s and which found its most enduring expression in W. W. Rostow’s book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, published in 1960. Rostow posited that economic growth went through a series of well-defined stages, starting with traditional society through development takeoff, economic maturity, and high consumption. At first the focus of development was on industry and agriculture with the goal of improving living standards. In the late 1970s Paul Streeten and others advocated a focus on basic needs, such as education, sanitation, health care, employment. Growing awareness of the unevenness of the development process, the gap between rich and poor within and between countries, and the realization that development was putting inordinate demands on local ecosystems and the global environment called for a new approach to development. By the mid-1980s scholars were questioning whether Earth’s ecosystem would survive the increased strains on its resources, if all nations reached satisfactory levels of GDP by, say, 2050. When the UN World Commission on Environment and Development published its report, *Our Common Future*, it sought to address the problem of competing environmental and developmental goals by formulating a definition of sustainable development. In her forward to the report, Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway and chair of the commission, defined *sustainable development* as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet theirs.”

While a definitive definition of sustainable development does not exist, a definition has emerged around three important features:

- **Economic**: An economically sustainable system provides goods and services on a continuing basis equitably to all Earth’s citizens.
Environmental: An environmentally sustainable system maintains a stable resource base, avoiding both the depletion of nonrenewable resources and the over-exploitation of renewable resource systems. An environmentally sustainable system further ensures the continuation of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and clean watersheds.

Social: A socially sustainable system ends the imbalance between rich and poor, provides adequate social services, and promotes gender equality, and political accountability and participation.\textsuperscript{14}

As you can readily see, sustainable development theory is more a set of goals to be reached than basic assumptions about the functioning of the world economy or international relations. The goals raise questions of how to balance competing objectives and how to judge success. Despite these drawbacks, sustainable development as a theoretical model dominates our thinking today about how human kind can continue to live on this planet without causing its ecosystem to crash. We will discuss the concept more in Chapters 13 and 14.

Deep Ecology

Deep ecology developed out of the thinking of Norwegian environmentalist and philosopher Arne Naess\textsuperscript{15} and others like him who saw the ecological concepts of complexity, diversity, and symbiosis, as the way to relate human life to all things on the planet. For the deep ecologist, the environment has its own value independent of human needs. Human beings need to rediscover their place in nature's web of interdependent elements and treat nature reverently.

The deep ecologist sees human beings in a living relationship with their environment. The environment has its own reasons for being. It speaks to each of us and assigns us our identity. Modern society has lost this sense of identity. Many of us are indifferent to where we live. But to the Mohawk, the Huron, or the Navaho, a particular mountain or stream, or a particular lay of land, is sacred. A tribal member finds renewal by going back to the natural home revered by his ancestors. Deep ecology proposes to reconnect modern humans to their natural home.

In international affairs, the deep ecologist tends to oppose large earth-moving projects, such as the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in China, extensive logging, the paving over of swampland for parking lots, and the destruction of habitat for agriculture or a new factory. For the deep ecologist recognition and acceptance of our rootedness in nature is the ultimate wisdom.

Ecofeminism

A third offshoot of the ecological perspective is ecofeminism. The ecofeminist argues that women are more closely associated with the natural world than men are. Men have an instrumental attitude toward nature and ask, How can I use it? Women have a reverence and empathy for nature, as they contain within themselves the secrets of birth and regeneration.

Ecofeminism holds that capitalism is the last and worst outgrowth of a patriarchal, male-dominated society. The division of labor that capitalism calls efficient divided men and women into two separate worlds, one the world of paid work, and the other the world at home. Men, with the aid of male-dominated modern
science, proceeded to rape the planet in search of raw materials to satisfy their always-hungry industrial machines. As a result, the world has lost most of its forests and biodiversity.

Ecofeminists relate male domination of nature to male domination of women, arguing that the structure of domination is the same in both cases. Women and nature are considered instrumental to the achievement of male goals, be they pleasure or power, and are treated accordingly.

Some scholars dismiss ecofeminism as irrelevant. But ecofeminists are quick to point out that at the local level, where women are most active politically, women are in the forefront of local environmental groups. Women organized the movement in India to save the subcontinent’s tropical forests. The most vocal opponent of the Three Gorges Dam in China is a woman.\textsuperscript{16} Women were the principal protesters against the dumping of chemical wastes into Love Canal in Niagara Falls, New York, and maintained their vigilance until the U.S. government agreed to buy the homes contaminated by toxic waste.

Ecofeminists argue that the global environment remains at risk as long as the international community continues its primarily male view of it. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women’s NGOs argued without success with national delegates to include phraseology guaranteeing indigenous peoples the right to benefit as much as the international drug companies from the scientific extraction of useful medicine from a local herb. (See chapter 11 for more details on the women’s movement.)

To the male ecologists’ argument that males can also feel a special closeness to the natural world, the ecofeminists answer that males who do develop an intimacy with nature are in essence discovering the women’s world. Ecofeminists would like to see the major international organizations give up their patriarchal emphasis on economic development as primarily industrial development and begin to assess the impact of development in terms of our place in nature and our spiritual need to connect with it.

**EcoJustice**

The fourth theory derived from the ecological paradigm is ecojustice. Ecojustice theory starts from the observation that environmental quality is not equally distributed around the globe. Some environments are more desirable than others. Some environments, like the world’s forests, belong to a few states but are essential to all humankind to protect our common atmosphere. The ecojustice movement originated among working black women in Warren Country, North Carolina, on land that had been predominantly owned by black people since the end of slavery in 1865. The movement began when Warren County was selected to be the final burial site for over 32,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). A woman named Dollie Burwell objected to the location of the site, which was just behind her and her neighbors’ backyards.

The merging of race, poverty, and pollution in a single issue rapidly picked up followers all over the United States and around the world, most notably in Kenya, Nigeria, and Russia. In Russia, in 1991 women lawyers took the initiative in organizing an ecojustice group, Ecojuris, to publicize the inequity of pollution in Russia’s major cities. The lawyers filed suit in a number of landmark cases, arguing that the principal victims of industrial pollution were women and young children.
Today, international relations scholars in the environmental field have added ecojustice to their theoretical tools of analysis. Ecojustice theory drives the argument of the developing nations that because today’s industrial pollution was generated by the industrialized countries, those countries must therefore pay for the cleanup. At the Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, commonly known as the conference on global climate change, in Kyoto, Japan, in 1998, China and other developing countries opposed a treaty to limit emissions from the use of fossil fuels because it was not fair. In China’s view, the industrialized nations were eager to prevent global warming and reach an international agreement because they already had achieved full development by polluting the planet at no cost to themselves. An adoption of the treaty would prevent developing countries from reaching their development goals.

Ecojustice theory attempts to develop methodologies and procedures to answer those questions by analyzing the connections between poverty and environmental degradation. A leading ecojustice theorist, Andrew Szasz, found, for example, that “toxic victims are, typically, poor or working people of modest means. Their environmental problems are inseparable from their economic condition.” In Russia, ecojurists have documented connections between environmental degradation, the living conditions of low-paid workers, and high mortality rates. In accordance with the environmental paradigm, ecojurists believe that justice in human society cannot be divorced from a search for a just distribution of environmental goods.

The environmental paradigm is the newest arrival in international relations. Many texts on world politics do not mention it at all. After reading about ecotheories, you may very well say, So what? Sure, the environment is important, but let’s be real. It has nothing to do with power relations between states. Is this a fact? What about mass famines created by the expansion of the desert in Africa? What about torrential rains and mudslides in Central America? What about earthquakes in San Francisco? No one emigrates to Mexico after a California earthquake. But you may be sure that thousands moved northward from Nicaragua and Honduras after the disastrous rains of 1998.

The environmentalists argue that citizens in the industrialized world are living the good life in a clean environment because they have transferred their most polluting industries to the developing world. The industrialized states have not tried sustainable development and so far have shown little desire to do so. To achieve sustainable development, the industrial states must recognize the primary importance of the environment to all humans, and not just a privileged few. The inequitable transborder effects of environmental pollution are already causing increased tension and conflict in the world. This recognition demands both a retreat from the instrumental view of the environment as a human resource and a deeper understanding of the functioning and value of the environment in and of itself.
What Are the Subjective Approaches to World Politics?

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, philosophers and political scientists launched increasingly sharp attacks on the basic assumption of political realists, idealists, and ecologists that the world and its political, economic, and social structure could be objectively known. The assumption that there is a real world out there, independent of ourselves, that all of us, using our reasoning power, can discover and use to our benefit, underlies all Western philosophy from the Greeks to the Enlightenment. Realists and idealists may disagree as to whether humankind is basically imperfect or basically cooperative and develop contrasting theories as to whether world politics is continuous anarchy or can become a cooperative venture. Ecologists and realists may disagree about whether the Earth is warming or not, but both groups base their arguments on empirical evidence drawn from objective observations of the real world.
Critical theory, constructivism, and most feminist theories in international relations question the ability of human beings to look objectively at the world. All people, they argue, are shaped by the society and culture in which they live. Our perceptions are formed by our society’s dominant attitudes about wealth, race, gender, and religion. This assumption that our background and upbringing totally inform our perceptions of the world derives from the Marxist teaching that all science, art, and culture reflect the interests of a given society’s ruling class. Throughout history, each social class that rose to power imposed its prejudices, its ethics, its way of doing things on the society it governed. In their struggle against the ruling class, the other classes developed their own class culture and identity in response to the reigning status quo. Critical theory and constructivism carry this logic to its conclusion and hold that every individual’s perception of reality is determined by personal experience of a given society’s dominant culture relative to that person’s position in its social structure.

**Critical Theory**

The term critical theory was first used by members of a scholarly group that formed at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt in the 1920s and lasted into the 1950s. These scholars were appalled by the rise of what they saw as the lack of freedom and irrationality in European capitalist societies in the 1920s and 1930s, culminating in fascism in Germany and Italy. Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) and Jürgen Habermas (1929–) are two major contributors to the ongoing evolution of critical theory in the latter half of the twentieth century. The common thread between them is that in modern society, human beings are increasingly losing their autonomy, their capacity to make independent individual decisions exclusive of outside control. Marcuse argued that “advanced industrial society” creates false needs to integrate individuals into the existing system of production and consumption. Mass media and contemporary culture, advertising, and industrial management all reinforce the political and suppress opposition.

Habermas posited that the technological revolution had contributed to the suppression of individual freedom by forcing humans to learn and adapt to new technologies that function on the machine’s inner logic. The market, the state, and social and economic organizations: all operate on some form of “strategic/instrumental rationality” based on how technology works rather than on how humans really live. Habermas argued for social change through communication. A freer, more democratic world was possible not through revolution, as the Marxists taught, but through people finding community through communication.

**Constructivism**

Constructivism started by the Frankfurt School leads directly into constructivism. Constructivism, like critical theory, posits that because human beings exist within society, knowledge can never be objective, only subjective. We all can use reason to try to figure things out, but how we reason is culturally determined—that is, it is shaped, or “constructed,” by the society and culture in which we live. Thus, all perceptions and all cultures reflect the worldview and social structure of a given social group, be it tribe or nation. We can never know what reality is, only what our perceptions of it are. Because reality cannot be known, every culture, every society presents a worldview that is equally valid. Contrary to the neorealist and neolib-
eral viewpoint, constructivism holds that the structure and institutions of the international system function only insofar as the international actors think they function and so do not influence states’ behaviors per se. Rather, the political culture, the diffusion of ideas circulating in the international system, informs, or “constructs,” the interests and national identities of states that, in turn, shape the dynamics of world politics.21

Constructivism in international relations leads to a focus on an individual or group’s experiences both as regards their understanding of the world and the actions they choose to take. Political scientist David Campbell uses the constructivist approach in his analysis of the emergence of Bosnia as an intractable ethnic problem. How did a once successful multicultural society turn into an international nightmare? Campbell finds that both the peacemakers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the belligerents in Bosnia failed or refused to take into account the possibility of overlapping identities. For example, a man could simultaneously be Bosnian, and a Serb, and a Muslim, or he could be a Bosnian, a Croat, and a Catholic. But instead of recognizing this fact, both sides shared the same misperception of identity: namely, that a national grouping had to have a self-contained shared history and culture, speak the same language, and live together in definable borders. Campbell faults the poverty of Western thought in developing concepts that promote identity politics within heterogeneous communities (national, ethnic, or linguistic groups that do not live in separate, culturally distinct, social enclaves). He concludes that Europe and the United States intervened in Bosnia not in the interests of saving a once vibrant multicultural community but to support the nationalist idea in order to prevent the spread of multiculturalism beyond national state borders at home.22

Feminist Theories in International Relations

There is no single feminist theory of international relationships but rather several different and often conflicting theories. We look at some of these theories more closely in chapter 11.

While the roots of feminist theory go back to Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) and the struggle for women’s suffrage, the European Marxist women’s movement of the nineteenth century bequeathed a powerful legacy to modern feminist theory building. Most feminists today agree that basic attitudes and behaviors are culturally determined. Western civilization is a patriarchy, a male-dominated enterprise. Males have dominated politics, science, economics, and the arts. Realism and idealism are constructions of the male imagination. Traditional Western male thinking perceives reality as a set of mutually exclusive dichotomies: black, white; rational, irrational; weak, strong; chaos, order; war, peace. Every term has a definition that limits its meaning to a specific thing. States have identifiable borders that separate them from other states. International governmental and nongovernmental organizations have constitutions, identifiable memberships, and identifiable goals. State organizations operate at different and distinct levels in the world system.

Feminism refuses to see the world in these terms. Instead of seeing it as a rather static dichotomous (either/or) hierarchical international system, feminists approach world politics as a to-be-determined, unstructured, interdependent, dynamic set of interrelationships, similar to those in their personal and family lives.

Constructivists and feminists alike understand political theory not as an approach to understanding objective reality but as a prescription, a recipe for
action. They see information and communication about world events as data to feed into an activist agenda directing what should be done rather than a framework within which to analyze facts describing what actually happens.

**Critiques of Constructivism**

Critical theory, constructivism, and feminist theories have played a decisive role in shifting our focus from external, state-to-state relations to a closer look at the subjective dynamics of international affairs. But in so doing, they have produced what one educator has called ‘the evidential dilemma.’ If there is no empirical evidence, on what does an individual, tribe, or state base a decision for action?

**Critical Theory in Perspective**

This section has looked at three critiques of subjective approaches to international relations theory. Constructivism and feminist theories have been important in drawing attention to the gap between what a culture says the world is like and actual individual experience. If, however, realist and idealist international relations approaches lead to excessive concerns about the struggle for power and the nature of war or peace in an anarchic world, the critical theorists can lead us into a quagmire of uncertainty about whether or not we can know anything about the nature of global issues and why states behave as they do in the international system.
**Test Prepper 2.3**

### True or False?

1. Subjective approaches to world politics are so named because they rely strictly on opinions and are opposed to collecting data of any kind.  
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2. Constructivist approaches to world politics tend to focus on the state level of analysis because they combine the impact of various entities when analyzing political behavior.  
___

3. Rather than having a single approach to world politics, there are multiple and conflicting feminist theories of international relations.  
___

4. Generally speaking, critical theory questions the objective nature of reality, arguing that each individual constructs their own reality based on their own perception.  
___

### Multiple Choice

5. Most feminists argue which of the following?  
   a. Basic attitudes and behaviors are biologically determined.  
   b. Western civilization is a patriarchy (or male-dominated enterprise).  
   c. Males have dominated the military while women have had an opportunity to control the arts.  
   d. All of the above  
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**Case Study**

*The Future of Afghanistan*


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**Join the Debate**

*Looking Out for Number One*

**Overview**

Traditionally, realists argue that it is necessary for states to focus on their own self-interest. Kautilya, an Indian scholar writing in the third century BC consistently advocated the need to, in essence, “Look out for Number One.”

Advocates of the U.S. invasion in Afghanistan and the preventive military action in Iraq might make a similar case. Osama bin Laden has been organizing and masterminding terrorist actions since the early 1990s. For an entire decade the United States took little aggressive action, even when U.S. ships and seamen were bombed and embassies blown up. The attacks of 9/11 changed all that. By doing nothing, the United States encouraged bin Laden to think it were scared to use its power. If the United States had waited until the UN agreed it should go to war in Iraq, Saddam Hussein would have thought the same thing and launched possibly a terrible preemptive strike of his own. Each nation has the right to use its power to defend itself. The UN cannot look out for all its members. A state either looks out for itself and forcefully uses its power, or it goes into decline.

Advocates of collective security and international cooperation look at the U.S. action in an entirely opposite light. Iraq was a country where international sanctions had been in place for a decade. During that period the people became impoverished and Saddam Hussein’s military preparedness decreased. Iraq was not a threat to any country, least of all to the United...
States. Negotiations were in progress. The United States broke international convention by rushing headlong into a venture—one that has proved costly in lives and materiel—contrary to the counsel of the world’s major powers. There is no indication that negotiation would not have worked. The proper way to conduct national affairs in a global community is through the global institutions established by that community. The United States has acted like a global bully, trying to push weaker states around.

A realist looks after Number One. An idealist looks to international cooperation as the only way to secure peace and prosperity for all states. In essence, the debate focuses on two key questions: (1) What does looking after Number One entail? Does it mean only using a state’s own power resources, or can it include cooperating in international organizations? (2) In what ways can cooperation contribute to a state’s prosperity? In what ways could it be a hindrance?

**Pro: Arguments for Number One Looking after Number One**

- There is no world government, only other states testing you and ready to move against you in the struggle for power.
- States that openly declare their hostility to you are your enemy.
- Each state has the right and obligation to act in its own interests.
- Self-defense is vital to a state’s preservation and should not require either international approval or catastrophes like Pearl Harbor or 9/11 to attack an enemy. Preemption is sound survival strategy.

**Con: Arguments for Collective Security and International Cooperation**

- Looking out for Number One to the exclusion of the interests and needs of the global community leads to needless violence and suffering by innocent people.
- War is to be avoided at all costs. Any war can lead to nuclear war, as nuclear weapons are readily available.
- War directed at one state puts at risk the independence and political stability of neighboring states and escalates violence to surrounding countries.
- In the modern world, one state can no longer impose its will on another and risk such consequences.
- Negotiation and diplomacy remain the best instruments of peaceful solutions.
- If war seems necessary to avoid the consequence of a widening war, military intervention should only be allowed with UN approval.

**Questions**

1. Depending on which side you took, did you find that all the arguments you used came exclusively from either the liberal or realist approach?
2. In what areas did your arguments cause you to change approach?
3. Did you find yourself arguing in favor of more centralized global oversight of state behavior or for the right of states to be the main actors in global politics? What reasons did you give?
Learning Objectives Review

1. Understand and be able to summarize the key assumptions of political realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.
   - **Realism** holds that human nature is, by definition, imperfect. We all have an innate drive for power. National governments, therefore, should concentrate on promoting the national interest through a strong military to defend against aggression and a “what’s-in-it-for-me” posture in the conduct of foreign policy.
   - **Idealism** posits that human beings are perfectible. With the right institutions to guide them, individuals and states can learn to cooperate and to prefer peace to war.
   - **The ecological paradigm** posits human society as a subset of the natural environment. This environment has limits, and we must learn what those limits are and accommodate our institutions to them if humankind is to survive.

2. Identify and understand the key theories that result from realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.
   - From the realist perspective, we derive the theories of the balance of power, hegemonic stability, and neorealism. These are theories that explain the management of the international system as a decentralized, many-sided process that takes place among states.
   - From the idealist perspective come the theories of Marxism and liberalism (the two major theories of the past 150 years) and the more recent dependency theory, collective security, and neoliberalism. Liberal theories tend to argue in favor of centralized cooperation by states in global organizations and to downplay the importance of national identity.
   - Within the ecological perspective, we find deep ecology, ecofeminism, and ecojustice. These theories seek to bridge the gap between the human footprint on the local environment and its impact on the global community.

3. What is a “subjective approach to world politics”?
   - Understand how such approaches differ from realism, idealism, and the ecological paradigm.
   - Critics of these approaches have developed critical theory, constructivism, and feminist theories of international relations that focus on the psychological and social components of state identity and behavior.
   - These theories seek to explain how the identities of cultures and societies are formed and how these relate to their behavior on the international stage.

Resources on the Web

To use these interactive learning and study tools, including video and audio multimedia resources, go to [www.BetweenNations.org](http://www.BetweenNations.org).

Practice Tests  Case Studies  Current Events
Audio Concepts  Primary Sources  Daily Newsfeeds from *The Washington Post*
Flashcards  Historical Background  Weblinks for Further Exploration

[Between Nations](http://www.BetweenNations.org)
3 Analyzing World Politics

Different Lenses for Different Pictures

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the primary characteristics of a state.
   Understand how the state has developed over the past centuries and its current role in world politics.

2. Understand what is meant by levels of analysis and who are the primary actors that operate at each level.
Analysis as a Tool to Understand Our World

In chapter 1 you learned that one of the five forces shaping the planet is the increasing inability of the state to solve problems because of decentralizing ethnic, religious, and economic tensions. You further learned that most issues today are transnational and transboundary in character, promoting a centralizing tendency in the international system—as, for example, the tendency for states to turn to the United Nations (UN) and other international agencies for regulations and guidelines. What is this entity called a state, and why does international politics seem to revolve around it? How can we understand the tensions that push states toward dissolution and the tensions that push them toward international cooperation?
This chapter enables you to address those questions. We first look at the state—what it is, how it arose, and why it plays such a central role in international relations today. We then look at the structure of the international system by applying levels of analysis. For example, we may study the international system in its entirety, as we might study the solar system as a whole. That's one level. But we can also study the international system at the regional level by looking at regional organizations of states such as the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). For a third perspective, we can study the international system at the state level—that is, by looking at the world from the standpoint of the behavior of individual states. This is a very important level because the basic unit of analysis in the international system is the state. We can also study the international system at the substate level, looking at ethnic conflict or civil wars and how these tensions affect the state and its ability to function at the regional and international levels. Finally, we can look at the international system through the role individuals play in moving and shaking world politics. We conclude the chapter by showing that by understanding what the state is and how it functions at these five levels, we can begin to understand the centralizing and decentralizing tendencies at work in the world today.

The State: The Basic Unit of Analysis in the International System

Identify the primary characteristics of a state. Understand how the state has developed over the past centuries and its current role in world politics.

For all the paradigms, states are the basic building blocks of the international system. Chapter 1 presented three characteristics that differentiate a state from a tribe, an ethnic group, or a nationality. To review, a state is:

1. a geographic territory with internationally recognized boundaries
2. an internationally recognized and identifiable population that lives within those boundaries
3. an internationally recognized authority structure or government

Let us look more closely at these characteristics.

The State and Its Primary Characteristics

The modern state, as we understand it, grew out of rivalry for power and wealth among the ruling dynasties of Europe from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The concept of an international system dates from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years’ War. The war had decimated large sections of Europe, and, important for our purposes, left no clear victor. Our modern understanding of state, then, is derived, essentially, from the European experience.

The treaty recognized that none of the rival European powers at war could achieve a decisive win to dominate the other powers. The treaty thus called for the
recognition of these territorial entities as states, with fixed borders, an acknowledged government, and a population identified as living within that state's borders. The treaty recognized these states as sovereign, or self-ruling, and promised that the government of one state would not interfere in the affairs of another. Relations between states would be characterized by diplomacy and regulated by international law in the form of treaties and agreements.

Definition of a State
The modern definition of state is based on the principles set forth in the 1648 treaty. Central to the definition are the concepts of legitimacy, sovereignty, and formal obligations.

- **Legitimacy** means that all states have a right to exist and that the authority of the government in that state is supreme and accepted as lawful.

- **Sovereignty** means that no higher authority than the state exists, or in Max Weber's words, the state has "a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force." The United Nations is made up of states, yet it has no authority to compel member-states to take any action or refrain from any action. It has no army of its own and must rely on the member-states to contribute their armed forces when any UN armed intervention takes place. In the last analysis, each state decides its own course of action.

- States have **formal obligations**, or expectations vis-à-vis one another. States agree to rules drawn up according to international law for declaring and fighting a war, for implementing treaties, for continuing to recognize the legitimacy of the governments of other states, and for exchanging and treating diplomatic representatives. In recent years, however, the new global and transnational issues have prompted new thinking on this front. Although at an operational level the state still retains full control over the actions of its police and military, the conditions for their use are increasingly shaped by rules and regulations receiving their legitimation from the UN and other international institutions.

  For example, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was considered illegitimate by many (but not all) because the United States failed to secure the approval of the UN Security Council for the action.

The Nation-state and the Multinational State
A discussion of the state and its characteristics would not be complete without distinguishing between two kinds of states that appear frequently in this text. The first is the **nation-state**. The nation-state is composed primarily of one ethnic or nationality group or nation. The common definition of nation or ethnic group is a group of people who have a common language, common ethnicity, common culture, common territory, and a desire for independence. Ethnic groups like the Kurds and the Palestinians in the Middle East or the Chechens in the Caucasus form ethnic nations. All demand independence in a specific territory, based on a common language and common culture. A nation-state is that nation once it has gained political independence, as East Timor eventually did. Examples of older nation-states are Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Japan.

The second kind of state is the **multinational or multiethnic state**, as it is often called. As the name suggests, the population in this kind of state is composed of two or more ethnic groups or races. Most of the world's states fall into this category. The world's largest states—Russia, China, India, and the United States—are

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**Nation or ethnic group** A group of people linked together in some manner, such as a common territory, with a shared culture that may or may not be based on religion. This culture can be monocultural or multicultural—a shared language, a shared history or understanding of the past, and a general desire for independence.

**Multinational or multiethnic state** A state—such as Nigeria, the United States, Russia, and India—that contains more than one nation and/or ethnic group within its territory. Most states are multinational in nature.
all multinational. So are some of the world’s smallest states, such as Switzerland, Belgium, and many states in Africa and Asia. Multinational states frequently suffer from the desire of the component ethnic groups to live their own lifestyle or obtain more power in the central government.

**The Vulnerability of the Modern State**

While the principles of legitimacy, sovereignty, and duty are still in force today, the forces of change discussed in chapter 1, particularly the new global and transnational issues, the inability of the state to solve problems on its own, and the technology revolution, have undermined sovereignty. Increasing state vulnerability is one of the most visible decentralizing forces in the world today. First, state sovereignty has been weakened through the growth of networks of communication and linkages among non-state actors that are beyond the state’s immediate control. These interdependent networks have grown most rapidly among non-state actors in the global economy and non-state actors such as Greenpeace and al Qaeda.

The 9/11 attacks highlighted two additional important dimensions of a state’s vulnerability: the dangers posed by *failed states* and the insecurity of even the most powerful state in the world. Not all states are successful. Some fail to maintain law and order within their borders or to provide the level of economic well-being, education, housing, food, and security their populations demand. Failed states today include Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. In each of these states, economic and political chaos reigns. Failed states, such as Afghanistan before 9/11, offer havens for criminals, terrorists, drug trafficking, and cross-border mayhem. In so doing, they promote global insecurity. The United States bombed Afghanistan in 2001 not because it had declared war on the state of Afghanistan but because this failed state harbored Osama bin Laden’s terrorist organization. In the interests of guaranteeing security at home, the United States, for the first time since the Treaty of Westphalia, declared war, calling it a war on terrorism, against a *non-state actor*, who had been given sanctuary in Afghanistan, arguably violating the internationally recognized sovereignty of that state.

The war in Iraq that started in 2003, departed from the Westphalian norms governing state sovereignty in two ways.

1. The war was billed as a preventive action, intended, according to the U.S. government, to prevent the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, from completing the development of weapons of mass destruction and distributing them to terrorist groups.

2. The declared U.S. goal of regime change in Iraq undermined Iraq’s state sovereignty, and the legitimacy of its internationally recognized government. The invasion of Iraq marked the fifth time in recent history that the United States took preventative action to force regime change in another state.

- 1961: The United States sponsored a failed attempt to bring down Fidel Castro’s communist government in Cuba.
- 1983: The United States invaded the state of Grenada to prevent the consolidation of a Marxist regime on the island.
- 1989: The United States invaded the state of Panama to replace the dictatorship of Manuel Noriega with a pro-American government. While the world community was not happy with these actions, they occurred during the Cold War.
War and, to a certain extent, could be justified by the necessity of preventing the further projection of Soviet power into the Western hemisphere.

1999: Similarly, Western Europe accepted the U.S. bombing and invasion of Yugoslavia in 1999 because of the perceived need to prevent a worst-case scenario, namely, genocide of the Kosovar population in that country.

2003: In contrast, the United States was unable to present a rationale for its invasion of Iraq that was acceptable to the other power centers of the international community. France, Germany, and Russia felt their power threatened by the prospect of the dominant world power taking military action whenever it perceived its national security to be at risk. The Iraqi invasion thus brought home the hard fact that, in the absence of a world government, the concept of sovereignty is a political football in the decentralized struggle for power among the world’s states.

The Interdependence of States

Like a two-edged sword, the three forces mentioned above as contributing to decentralizing tendencies promote centralizing tendencies as well. Some analysts of the liberal persuasion hail the increased vulnerability of states as testimony to the growing interdependence of states. These analysts consider the coming of globalization and interdependence a good thing. In their view, states that depend on other states for raw materials and export markets are less likely to go to war to resolve differences and are more likely to cooperate.

Neorealist Kenneth N. Waltz and others criticize this position as simplistic. We need to look at how states depend on one another, they say, and honestly admit that the United States can probably get along without the rest of the world better than most states can get along without the United States. Waltz argues that the low level of U.S. dependence on other countries is a primary source of its great power status and the relative facility with which a great power can unilaterally control the behavior of less powerful states. We return to this idea in chapter 4.

A third position on globalization, derived again from the liberal paradigm, is reflected in the work of James Rosenau, who sees the growing loss of sovereignty as signaling the end of the dominant role of states in the international system. The salient characteristics of the emerging post-Westphalian system, he argues, are the inclusion of non-state actors and the development of global civil society. After the 9/11 attacks, Rosenau’s perspective seems most convincing and also most terrifying. How can any state control the behavior of non-state actors whose membership is largely invisible? We talk more about the behavior of non-state actors in chapter 7.

The Origins and Development of the State—The European Experience

How did the world come to be dominated by states where ethnicity and nationalism play such a strong role? The state is both a relatively new arrival on the international scene and an old form of social organization that appeared for relatively short periods of time in antiquity. Today, the international system has outgrown its European origins and expanded to include the entire globe, with 191 states and a growing number of non-state actors.

The state derives from a diverse heritage of independent self-governing city-states in ancient Sumer in Mesopotamia, Greece, China, and classical Rome. The

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**Interdependence** The linking of states together in a web of wide-ranging interactions. These include: international finance, trade and commerce, environmental pollution, the information revolution, transnationalism, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs.)

**International system** A concept that includes a number of key actors (states, nations, IGOs, and NGOs) and the patterns of actions among them that can be explained by the distribution of power and other factors. The state plays a pivotal role within this system, because the system has no central authority to maintain order and dispense justice.
Sumerian city-states flourished at the dawn of human civilization in Mesopotamia in what is now Iraq. The city-states of Greece, Rome, and China were at their height between the fifth century BC and the second century AD.

The modern state had its rise in the Middle Ages, long after Rome fell. The history of Europe is the history of rivalry—war and conquest—among feudal chieftains, with the periodic ascendancy of a strongman. These rulers were eager to expand their domains. To do so, however, they needed to create sufficient wealth to raise an army. The medieval city was just coming into its own as a commercial power. Some cities, like Venice and Florence in Italy and Dubrovnik in modern Croatia, flourished as independent city-states. Others, like Prague, London, or Paris, accepted the rule of the prevailing strongman. Through patronage, royal subsidies, and the granting of imperial or royal charters, these cities became centers of trade, finance, and learning. In return for their liberties, the cities paid taxes to the king to support his armies. With tax money rolling in and helped along by marriages of convenience to princesses with large land holdings, the kings gradually became stronger than the feudal chieftains, whose power largely resided in their agricultural land base. The consolidation of royal power in the fifteenth century put Europe well on its way to playing midwife at the birth of the modern state. Additional factors that led to the evolution of the modern state include the following:

- **Ideology and a Common Culture:** We cannot be sure that modern states would have evolved out of this process if it had not been for the long political conflict between the rising nation-states of France, Spain, and England, on the one hand, and, on the other, the pope in Rome, who called himself Vicar (deputy of Christ) of Christendom, by which he meant Europe. Over the centuries, the royal powers challenged the temporal or non-religious authority of the medieval Church and carved out a space where they could rule independent of its control, eventually leading to the development of Protestant and Catholic sects. Each sect's acknowledgment of its king as the guardian of the one true faith led to the identification of a national leader and, by extension, the nation-state with a particular belief or ideology. Eventually, the ideology of nationalism replaced Christianity as the glue that bound European peoples together.

- **Technology and the Growth of Nationalist Sentiment:** Perhaps no other development had as great an impact on the rise of the national state and the promotion of a common language as the printing press.

  In one month, Johannes Gutenberg could turn out more German bibles than the monks could write by hand in Latin in several years. Thus, the printing press made literature in the vernacular (the language people spoke in a particular locale) easily available and readily disseminated in the form of the printed book. People rushed to learn how to read and to buy the new books. Printing thus gave nationalism a big boost. With the appearance of books in vernacular languages such as English, French, and Spanish, people began to buy only those books whose language they could understand. In the process, some languages were winners. Some were losers.

  Because the printing press made it easy to distribute the printed word and booksellers made more sales with books printed in the local language, the press prompted kings to standardize the language throughout their domains. By the sixteenth century, in part due to having acquired a set of common languages, Western Europeans had developed a strong sense of nationality, territory, and common history. The French Revolution of 1789 spread the ideology of nationalism as far as Russia with
the march of Napoleon’s armies eastward, thereby awakening the East European peoples to the possibilities of independence and the right to speak their own language, rather than the language of their German and Russian imperial masters.

Europe Becomes a Continent of Nation-states: In 1815, the European powers united to defeat Napoleon. But Napoleon’s legacy lived on. In Western Europe, England and France emerged as the two leading states promoting democracy as an integral part of their nationalist ideology. Throughout the rest of Europe, still under the rule of autocratic empires, nationalism assumed a more cultural aspect, leading to the consolidation of German states into a unified German Empire and the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, based on two ruling ethnic groups. Other nations living under imperial rule also demanded national recognition. In their push for their own separate national state, they turned to the European great powers for support. The instability and threat to the status quo posed by these developments resulted in the Triple Alliance (made up of

The Inventor of the Printing Press

Printing was actually invented in China, where the emperors disseminated their edicts and orders through a printed text composed of ideographs or picture symbols. European written languages use an alphabet representing the sounds or phonemes present in the spoken language. The advantage of the alphabet is that many combinations of sounds can be written down using a few letters. Johannes Gutenberg’s achievement was the invention of movable type. Instead of carving a font of a word or ideograph, as the Chinese had to do, Gutenberg used a line of type that could be filled with different letters, depending on the word appearing in the text. Just before the year 2000, Time-Life conducted a poll asking worldwide leaders in science, education, government, technology, medicine, and other fields to name the most important events of the last 1,000 years. The printing press was voted the most important event.
Chapter 3  Analyzing World Politics

Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Italy, 1882) and the Triple Entente (England, France, and Russia, 1907). Great-power rivalry and the fear that one European state might gain the ascendancy over all the others led to a balance-of-power game that played out in a domino-like series of events culminating tragically in World War I.

World War I marked the fall of the Ottoman and German empires and the ascendancy of nationalism as the basis of the state. These two empires were replaced with nation-states. The one remaining traditional empire was the Russian Empire. Although instability caused by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 forced the new leader, Vladimir Ilych Lenin, to give up the Baltic territories as well as Russia's share of Poland, the remainder of the empire was re-formed as the Soviet Union. In the twentieth century, the great overseas empires of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal were replaced by independent states. From 1989–1991, the last European land empire, the Soviet Union inherited from the Russian tsars and enlarged after World War II, broke up to be replaced by independent states.

The Modern International System: The founding of the United Nations in 1945, at the end of World War II, formalized the concept of a global international system composed of national states. The UN began its existence with fifty signatory states. Amazing as it may seem, most of today's states have come into being since then. Of the 191 UN member-states today, some are very small, like the African states of Sao Tomé and Principe. Others are large land masses, like the United States, Canada, Russia, and Australia. As we show in chapter 8, geography—including size, location, and shape—plays a big role in the ability of states to participate in international politics effectively.

Because most of the new states came into being as a result of the breakup of the colonial empires, virtually all their borders were drawn by the colonial powers. The citizens of the new states had virtually no say. With the exception of some island states, many of the new states contain more than one ethnic group. Some do not have a common language or a common ethnic group. As a result, a major problem is developing citizen loyalty to the new country and a sense of belonging among people who, just a generation earlier, were living under their tribal leaders in an imperial system of government imposed by rulers from far away. Nigeria is an excellent example of this kind of problem where over 300 ethnolinguistic groups were consolidated into one country by an imperial ruler.

Under the principles of international law, the new states are as sovereign and independent as the older and more established powers. The principle of equality is recognized through the mechanism of "one country, one vote" in the UN General Assembly. In practice, however, the newer states can do little to oppose the power of the major states. The best they can do is to play one power off against the other to assure they do not fall under the control of one state permanently. In addition, today's states are living in a period of U.S.—superpower dominance. It is hard for small, weak states to oppose the United States or larger regional entities, such as NATO, in their part of the world. The dynamics of the modern international system remain the same as in the days of the Treaty of Westphalia, at least in terms of the interaction between strong and weak states. Weak states must decide the merits of forming regional alliances, giving in to the superpower, or going it alone. The difference between 1648 and today is that the international action now covers the entire globe. In 1648, it covered only the continent of Europe.
What Are the Levels of Analysis?

Understand what is meant by levels of analysis and who are the primary actors that operate at each level.

How are we going to analyze the interactions of 191 states and various regional governmental and nongovernmental organizations? Because doing so is extremely complex, political scientists have developed a tool for getting a handle on the international system, its players, and how they relate to one another. It is called levels of analysis, a system for organizing the players into five levels of international activity (see Table 3.1). Let’s begin with the highest level.

The International System as a Whole

System level analysis enables us to make generalizations and predictions about patterns of interaction among the actors in the system. The basic assumptions underlying system level analysis are:

1. The international system is considered as a single whole.
2. Within this whole, actors interact with and respond to one another in ways that are predictable.

An analogy might be a forest. A forest is composed of trees, but if you’re interested in the system, you do not look at each individual tree but rather at the...
component parts of the forest, such as the deciduous trees and the coniferous trees. By identifying the behavior pattern of each component, you can classify the deciduous trees into oak, maple, larch, or birch. The coniferous trees might be pine, hemlock, and spruce. Through study of the forest, we can make generalizations about the conditions necessary for the survival of all forests—and of species of trees within the forest.

In similar ways, though with considerably less accuracy, we can consider the international system as a whole and identify its components. Among the most important components are the types of actors within the system.

### Grouping the State Actors

As you already know, the principal actors are the states. We commonly group these states into categories, based on the level of economic and political development a state has attained. As Table 3.2 presents, we categorize states into four sets:

1. The **first set** contains the *industrialized states*, such as the United States, the West European states, Japan, and Australia.
2. The **second set** consists of the *former communist countries in transition to a democratic society and market economy*: Russia, the countries of East Central Europe, and the independent states formed from the former Soviet Union and located in Central Asia and the Caucasus.
3. The **third set** comprises the *developing states*, including countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and most of Africa.
4. The **fourth set** are the *at-risk states*, or those that may not develop the economic and political institutions necessary for survival. The at-risk states include Somalia, Chad, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and other African states that are desperately poor and possess virtually no natural resources.

It is important to understand that Table 3.2 represents a classification of states, not a rank order. The second set of states are all those states that experienced communist rule in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most developing states never experienced communist rule, Vietnam and China being the most visible exceptions. And most developing states do not fail. There is an expectation that developing countries will want to develop further into developed states, but probably not all those states will do so.

This classification is far from perfect, as many states don’t readily fit into the categories, and there is no agreement among scholars on an appropriate terminology. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) assigns three categories: the advanced economies, countries in transition from communist one-party regimes, and developing countries. This set of categories uses level of economic and political development as the principal criterion. Some political scientists prefer just two classifications, developed states and developing states. But this classification lumps all the world’s states—with their wide array of incomes per capita, political systems, and economic development—into just two groups. Finally, scholars have increasingly come to refer to very poor states and those states that have either

### Table 3.1

Levels of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. International system level</td>
<td>States, non-state actors, and individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Regional level</td>
<td>States, regional NSAs, individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State level</td>
<td>States, state-level NSAs, individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Substate level</td>
<td>Interest groups, ethnic groups, individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Individual level</td>
<td>Individual people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collapsed or are in danger of falling apart because of political, social, or economic circumstances as failed or failing states. For the purposes of this book, the terms developed states, countries in transition from communism, developing states, and failing states are used.

As you can see, the groups of states are not equal in power and wealth, and some states don't readily fit into the categories. Because of its low gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, China is in many respects a developing country, but its military and the unparalleled growth of some parts of its economy put it among the industrialized states. In terms of its political system, it belongs in the second set, but not economically so, because of its extensive capitalist reforms. Although in theory all states are defined by the same characteristics, and each has one vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations, in practice we automatically assume differences based on economic and political factors. Indeed, the classification suggests a rank order, with the industrialized states at the top and the at-risk countries of the fourth set at the bottom. We thus may expect the leading states of the international system to be found in the industrialized world.

**Lead State Actors of the International System**

Lead actors or great powers at any time in history have always come from the most economically advanced regions. In the first century AD, India, China, and Rome were the most economically advanced regions and world leaders. In the fifteenth century, China, the Ottoman Empire, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain were the world leaders. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the major European powers were the movers and shakers. In the international system of that time, England, France, Germany, Austria, and Russia maintained a fragile balance of power at the top, and they divided the rest of the world between them as parts of their colonial empires.

As a result of World Wars I and II, the power position of the European countries substantially weakened. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the two superpowers, each possessing the capability to destroy each other and the world. What is fascinating to students of the international system is that neither country sought the superpower role.

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**TABLE 3.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Set One</strong></th>
<th>The states that have experienced substantial industrial development: North America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Two</strong></td>
<td>Countries in transition from communism to a free market economy: Russia, states of East Central Europe and Central Asia, and the independent states formed from the former Soviet Union in Central Asia and the Caucasus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Three</strong></td>
<td>States undergoing the process of development: Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, most of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Four</strong></td>
<td>States that are so poor that they may never be able to take the road to development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-state Actors

Realists hold that the international system level of analysis includes states only. Liberals see the arrival of non-state actors as the evolution of a new global civil society where non-state organizations and groups both complement and challenge the state system. The category of non-state actors divides into several groups as shown in Table 3.3.

- **Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs):** IGOs are those whose members are national or multinational states (see chapter 6). Examples of IGOs are the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Court of Justice, as well as regional IGOs such as the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Organization of African States.

- **Organized Crime:** The second group of non-state actors are organized crime and drug groups, such as the Mafia.

- **Paramilitary and Terrorist Groups:** Including al Qaeda, Basque terrorist groups, and U.S.-based groups like the anti-abortion Army of God, and the Earth Liberation Front. These organizations operate in a shadow world, recruiting and training volunteers to carry out acts of terrorism or protest. While it would be great to excommunicate them and put them beyond the pale of global civil society, we still have to deal with them. In both the Muslim and the non-Muslim worlds, al Qaeda exerts an almost magical influence. Some see al Qaeda as unabashedly bad, but many see it as their rescuer from the wretchedness of personal lives or the visible and extensive corruption in high places.

- **Nongovernmental Organizations:** These are generally described as not-for-profit organizations and their members are individuals rather than representatives of states. Four categories of NGOs may be identified.
  1. **Professional and scientific NGOs** whose members are professionals in their fields and address issues generally related to their professional expertise. Examples are the International Political Science Association and the International Union of Concerned Scientists.
  2. **Religious or faith-based NGOs,** whose members advocate responses to an array of topics supported by shared religious convictions. Examples include the World Council of Churches, and the American Jewish Committee.
  3. **Environmental NGOs** represent the third category. Members of Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, or Friends of the Earth promote the goals and purposes of the NGO’s charter.
  4. **Single-issue NGOs** are exemplified by women taking leading roles in not-for-profit activities and forming NGOs focused specifically on women’s issues, such as Virtual Sisterhood and the Women’s Jurist Association/Women’s Advocacy Center.

- **Transnational Corporations (TNCs):** TNCs do business in the global economy. Many of these have budgets larger than those of some states (see chapter 7). A TNC branches out internationally and may set up headquarters in one state, build plants in others, and conduct business around the globe, depending on the business climate in a given state. Its sales are worldwide.
Examples are McDonald’s, Wal-Mart, Exxon Mobil, IBM, Microsoft, Intel, General Motors, and Toyota. Because of their wealth and economic clout, TNCs have long been the target of heavy criticism by neoliberal scholars for exploiting poor countries where labor is cheap, robbing them of their resources, and maximizing corporate profits. Realists prefer to argue that TNCs are the glue of the global economy, providing jobs in one state and inexpensive, high-quality products in another.

- **International Media**: Media such as CNN and al Jazeera, the Arabic language TV network, now present broadcasts in most European languages.

- **Diaspora Communities**: Diasporas are international migrations, both forced and voluntary, of diverse ethnic groups and individuals. Members of these groups may organize to represent their group interests in the domestic or international community. An example of such an organization is the American-Jewish Public Affairs Committee, with member units in Europe, Canada, and the United States.

Opinions vary on the assessment of the activities of NGOs in the international arena. Many international relations experts, such as James Rosenau, see the emergence of NGOs as a positive development. In Rosenau’s view, they operate as active lobbying groups in a global civil society that reaches out to everyone. Others argue that these groups are not representative of any interest, as their members are non-elected individuals and, as such, merely represent themselves. In addition, some of them, like the terrorist NGOs, are dedicated to destroying the international system as we know it.

**Relations between Actors in the International System**

A first important generalization that emerges from this discussion is that relations between states and, indeed, between states and non-state actors are characterized by power relationships. At any given time in history, one or several states are on top. Pick any date in the past, and the international system may be characterized by how the powerful states relate to one another and to the rest of the world.

The emergence of non-state actors does not significantly change the power relationships between the weak and strong states. Weak states, however, can and do use both the IGOs and NGOs as advocates for, negotiators of, or simply extensions of their foreign policy.
A second generalization derives directly from the notion of power relationships among lead actors, supporting actors, and very weak actors. At the system level of analysis, the strong states may be defined as those that attract weaker states into their orbit as the system’s poles of power.

During most of the nineteenth century, several powerful European states were rivals for power. The international system of the period may thus be described as a European multipolar system. As each state sought to prevent others from acting too aggressively and disrupting the system, it entered into an alliance with what it perceived to be like-minded states (see Figure 3.1).

A so-called balance of power was produced through the alliances of two opposing groups of states. Because England was an island apart from the continent of Europe and had by far the largest empire, it saw its role as a balancer of power to prevent France, Germany, or Russia from dominating the European continent.

The European multipolar system gave way after World War II to the bipolar (two-pole) system of the Cold War, where the two poles were the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). But the latter collapsed in 1991, and entering this century, no other country—with the possible exception of China—comes close to challenging the United States either militarily or economically.

The current system could be classified as unipolar (see Figure 3.2). However, although there may be only one superpower, many regional powers are economically strong. Thus, the current system may be redefined as overall unipolar with one superpower but with a multipolar regional structure. An in-depth discussion about the balance of power and power relationships follows in the next chapter.

As mentioned, interacting with the groups of states are the increasing number of non-state actors. Since 9/11, there is some question as to whether groups like al Qaeda—and others, such as Friends of the Earth—are eroding the sovereignty of the state, as James Rosenau and other neoliberals contend. For example, the events

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**Multipolar system** An international system based on three or more centers of power (poles) that may include states or IGOs, such as the European Union. The nineteenth-century international system may be described as multipolar.

**Balance of power** A foreign policy principle that world peace and stability is best preserved by way of a basic equilibrium among the world’s major actors—typically states.

**Bipolar system** A balance-of-power system in which states are grouped around two major power centers.

**Unipolar system** When a single superpower dominates the international system.
of 9/11 entailed an attack against the United States—a member of the UN—by al Qaeda, a group whose members, numbers, and location are unknown but that can strike anywhere at any time. No member-state of the UN has these privileges. If you recall, states have formal obligations to one another. The UN was founded to keep aggressor states in line and to promote collective peace, but the UN document says nothing about protecting states from NGOs—and NGOs have no obligations to states. The fact is that a non-state actor has attacked a sovereign state and forced that state to respond as a state, not as a police power. This is a totally new event in the modern world.

Moreover, NGOs may now apply and receive formal NGO status at the UN. Every major international conference, such as the Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government held in Vienna, Austria, in June 2007, has a set of officially recognized NGOs in attendance, which lobby the UN delegates and promote their point of view. Do these developments minimize the importance of states in the international system? Many scholars argue that the international system is fast becoming a civil community of state and non-state actors recruited from all over the globe who appeal to the UN with multiple proposals for the collective resolution of world problems. In practice, however, states alone have the combined economic, political, and military authority to implement solutions to these problems.

The Regional Level of Analysis

The regional level of analysis compares one region to another, or across regions, and compares one state with another within a region. As with the systems level of analysis, the focus is on the actors that make up the system and the generalizations that can be made about them. The major regions of the world are shown in Table 3.4.

The regional level looks at the same actors as at the international level. The difference is that at the regional level—comparing, for example, economic growth in Southeast Asia with economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa—involves looking at specific states and non-state actors in those specific regions. At the international systems level, the emphasis is on how the actors behave in the overall power structure.

Comparing the combined economic and industrial capacity of states grouped as regions confirms, on further study, the hypothesis made earlier in the chapter that although the current system may be a unipolar system with one superpower, there is also a strong multipolar distribution of economic power within regions. To prove the point, compare the wealth of the European Union (EU) with that of the continent of Africa, or the per capita income of Kenya or South Africa to that of Ethiopia or Chad, in northern Africa. At the regional level, the dynamics of regional organizations—of IGOs and NGOs—in various parts of the world may also be studied—for example, the structure, organization, and activities of IGOs with similar goals but with differing ranges of function and jurisdiction, such as the EU, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Finally, a study of the international reach of regional organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU, may attempt to predict from the behavior of the most active regional IGOs a general future pattern of regional IGO behavior.
Analyzing Regional NGOs

Regional NGOs are not quite as visible as their international cousins. They seem most active in the EU, where a supranational government has the authority to make laws and regulations binding on the member-states. For example, the European Social Action Network focuses on developing coherent European policies on human rights, and the European Union Migrants Forums unite and provide representation at the EU level for some 190 migrant organizations throughout Europe. Regional NGOs can and often do influence regional agreements. Environmental NGOs such as the Union de Grupos Ambientalistas, a federation of thirty-eight Mexican environmental NGOs, and the U.S.-based Sierra Club, which unites groups in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, played a decisive role in ensuring the attachment of an environmental agreement to NAFTA, that went into effect in 1994. Regional women’s groups, particularly in Africa and South Asia, have been instrumental in making governments in those regions aware of the problems women face in agriculture and commerce both within the region and in interregional trade.

Some paramilitary and terrorist groups operate exclusively at the regional level. These include the Latin American terrorists groups operating in Columbia, Peru and Equador, and the Basque terrorists groups in Spain and France.

The State Level of Analysis

As its name suggests, the state level of analysis looks at and contrasts the behavior of individual states. But how do you compare and contrast states to understand better their position in the international system? What specific features do states have in common? The four factors most often considered are power, wealth, status and prestige, and population.

Northern Border Crossing

Trucks entering the United States from Canada at the Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan. Since NAFTA went into effect in 1994, trilateral trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico has increased. Canada and Mexico send more than 80 percent of their exports to NAFTA partners. U.S.–Canadian trade represents the largest bilateral flow of income, goods, and services in the world. Mexico is the second-largest trading partner of the United States. Ninety percent of the goods that are traded are moved by service transportation and three-quarters of that movement is by truck.
Power: The way that power is organized and distributed within a state relates to its system of government, its constitution and legal system, and its requirements for citizenship and participation in politics, such as the right to vote or the minimum age for holding public office.

Wealth: Wealth and its distribution involve all aspects of a state's economic system. Wealth factors include the quality and quantity of natural resources, agricultural and industrial output, labor indicators, external and internal trade, gross domestic product (GDP), taxation policy, public finance, and technological development.

Status and Prestige: The concept of status and prestige relates to a state's social system, health and education policies, and the distribution of justice. Comparing status and prestige among states provides an investigation of who's on top—that is, which group most influences the conduct of government.

In modern democratic states, education is a determining factor in assessing the kind of profession or job you have and your ability to exert influence in your local community or at the national or international level. Health is another determinant of status and prestige in today's world. Epidemics and serious health problems weaken a state, sometimes threatening its very existence. In determining whether to invest in a state, the international investor needs to know how healthy its population is. Statistics tell us, for example, that most of the world's AIDS cases are found in sub-Saharan Africa. If you compare the health of the population in Uganda with the health of the population in Thailand, another of the states most threatened by AIDS, you will find that Thailand has started a public health project to educate its citizens about AIDS and also has a more comprehensive public health care system than does Uganda.

Population: The last factor used at the state level of analysis, population, includes much more than the size of a state's population and its demographic characteristics. Besides such factors as the age profile, the rate of population growth, the birth rate, and age of marriage, an analysis of a state's population is also concerned with the level of unity. What is a state's ethnic and/or religious makeup? How much harmony or disharmony exists among groups? How productive are its people? What level of education do they possess?

For example, a state whose population has a very low level of literacy is at a distinct economic disadvantage in comparison with states that invest in education and require high levels of educational achievement in its people. The new technologies all require highly educated people. As the whole world participates in the technological and communications revolution, the opportunities for workers with a low education level is steadily diminishing.

Just these four factors, compared across states, can yield generalizations regarding the capability of each to be a strong and effective player in the international system. For example, one hypothesis to test is whether or not states with strong government institutions and a more equal distribution of wealth tend to be more active and aggressive players than those with weak government institutions and an unequal distribution of wealth. Or a question may be asked about the correlation between a state's level of economic development and the health and education of its population. What is the impact of AIDS or any other serious health threat on the stability of government institutions in such diverse states as South Africa and the United States? In conducting foreign policy, governments make such analyses every day. These questions are taken up later in the chapter.
The Substate Level of Analysis

Beneath the state level of analysis is the substate level. At this level are all the units that make up a state or that act as players in a regional organization. The discussion looks first at the actors at the substate level and then turns to the generalizations that can be made about them.

The Actors and Their Issues

The subunits of the United States are the fifty states. In Germany, the subunits are the Länder (Lands) similar to the U.S. states. Belgium is divided into Flemish-speaking provinces and French-speaking provinces. The United Kingdom is composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Russia is composed of a multiplicity of overlapping administrative units that are based on the uneven distribution of more than 160 ethnic groups. Until recently, scholars paid little attention to the substate level. As discussed in chapter 1, however, as the new forces shaping the planet have tended to make states more vulnerable, their central governments have come under pressure from both without and within to loosen central control. These decentralizing tendencies have given new life and power to the state’s subunits.

Increased Prominence of the Substate Level

Increased activity at the regional level has also contributed to new vitality at the substate level. For example, over the past forty years, the states of Europe have been gradually harmonizing their markets, legal systems, and monetary systems to form a European Union. The EU is a supranational authority to which the member-states have yielded some of their sovereignty in specified legal areas. If a law of one state within the EU does not meet the requirements or specifications of EU regulations, it must be revised to meet those standards. The subordination of the state governments to the institutions of the EU has, to a large degree, weakened the extent to which they can dictate to their subunits. These, on the other hand, have recognized the transfer of member-state sovereignty to the EU as an opportunity to assert their powers and privileges at the substate level.

A similar phenomenon may be taking place in the United States. The United States and Canada have an international agreement, binding on both countries, regarding the conservation and use of the Great Lakes. Initially, this agreement primarily regulated water use. In the 1970s, the agreement was amended to include the harmonization of pollution control. However, neither the United States nor Canada has taken much action in this regard. Most of the work has been done at the substate level, with U.S. states bordering the Great Lakes forming an organization and inviting their Canadian counterparts, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec to join them. Moreover, substate NGOs, such as the Great Lakes Consortium, are pursuing agendas to link the two countries in a single environmental management effort.

As you can see, the environmental paradigm is particularly relevant at the substate level. The Great Lakes basin forms a natural ecosystem. The political entities within that basin, both states (used here, in the sense of subunits of the United States) and provinces (subunits of Canada), recognize the vital importance of that ecosystem to their survival and future livelihood. They thus have a greater interest in working out cooperative arrangements than do the more distant federal governments, which have a great many international interests to address.
Decentralizing Elements at the Substate Level

China provides another interesting case of the power and importance of emerging substate actors. China is divided into rich and poor provinces. China’s rich provinces are on the country’s east coast. These provinces have been granted special rights, as free enterprise regions, to enter into agreements with foreign corporations and sell directly abroad. As foreign capital has poured into these provinces, the economies have grown by leaps and bounds, the populations have been lifted out of the grinding poverty of the rest of the country, and the provincial governments have grown wealthy through the taxation of their upwardly mobile people. One of the great fears of the central Chinese government is that these provinces will grow so wealthy that they will refuse to pay taxes to the central Chinese authorities and choose to secede from the rest of the country.

The arrival of substate actors on the international scene adds yet another dimension to the growth of international civil society. To be players in the international arena, substate entities need to attract and keep the attention of the major players in the international system. To give legitimacy to their push for greater self-rule within the state or for complete independence from the state, these substate units often turn to a superpower like the United States, a regional actor like the EU, or an IGO such as the United Nations, to request recognition and assistance. The Autonomous Republic of Chechnya in Russia is one example; Kosovo in Serbia and Montenegro is another.

In their struggle for international attention, the substate actors play on the same themes that brought the state of which they are a part into being: legitimacy, sovereignty, and the obligation and expectation to live up to international rules and laws.

Conflict at the Substate Level

Often the issue that divides a substate from its mother state (Kosovo from Serbia) or one substate from another (Dagestan from Chechnya) flows from disputes over
Chapter 3: Analyzing World Politics

Analyzing World Politics

Territory, ethnicity, language, and/or religion (see chapter 1). *Boundaries*, closely related to the issue of territory, can cause serious problems. In the nineteenth century, the colonial powers—Great Britain, France, and Germany—carved up Africa. They drew boundaries that were useful to themselves, but these had little relation to the living patterns of the inhabitants.

This situation is not limited to Africa. In Asia, India and Pakistan have clashed a number of times since the two states were created from British India in 1947. The issue is where to draw the boundary between them in the Himalayan territory of Kashmir. Neither state appears to care that a large majority of the actual inhabitants of Kashmir would probably prefer independence.

History shows that boundary lines can be very important to the people who live within them. It also shows that not everybody who lives within a set of boundary lines wants to be part of the state those lines describe. Quite often, ethnic groups are spread out beyond the confines of one state. Sometimes one state has lost territory or lays claim to territory it believes it owns. Such situations can create *irredentist* pressures upon the home state to extend its political power to include lands lying within a neighboring state, more often than not inhabited by ethnic cousins. The Italian term, *terra irredenta* means unredeemed land. For example, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up at the end of World War I, Hungarians were living in all parts of the Empire but considered Hungary their homeland. The victorious Entente powers carved up Austria and Hungary, and distributed the land to other states. Suddenly some Hungarians found themselves a minority ethnic group in another country. As a consequence, irredentist feelings ran high in Hungary in the period between the First and Second World Wars. The nationalist policy to regain lost territories, or irredentism, drove Hungary to ally itself with Nazi Germany during World War II.

When a people or ethnic group within the borders of a recognized state, like the Kurds in northern Iraq, wishes to carve out a part of the recognized state and set up its own sovereign government, we call this a movement for *self-determination*. In 1991, for example, the Kurds rose up to demand self-determination from Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi regime bloodily repressed the nascent civil war, using poison gas, bombing, torture, mass killings, and deportation. The regime's tactics forced NATO to establish a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, declaring the area off-limits to Saddam Hussein's bombers and protected by NATO troops. See Table 3.5 for an overview of substate movements.

**Ethnicity** Probably the single most significant factor in substate conflict is the presence of a heterogeneous population, meaning that a variety of ethnic groups are represented. An *ethnic group*, as discussed in chapter 1 is a group of people linked by a common bond. Most frequently this bond is language, but it may also be one of belonging to the same tribe or religion. Less frequently, *race* is a common bond. Language is the most common bond of ethnicity. If you have ever traveled to Europe, you will remember that in Paris the Americans tend to group together in one corner of a café, the Germans in another, and the French somewhere else. Language is obviously an important reason for these divisions. When you visit Switzerland, you will find that it is separated into three distinct areas, each of which is primarily populated by a different ethnic group. In each part—the French cantons, the German cantons, and the Italian cantons—the signs are in the language of the majority population.
In Afghanistan, one of the main problems in creating a national state is that each of the country’s ethnic groups speaks a different language. The largest group, the Pashtuns, would like to control the government and have their language, Pashtun, become official. The ethnic Tajiks and others disagree. And so tension between the tribes and their chieftains threatens the existence of the fragile state.

Religion
A third major reason people want to live apart is religion. Religious conflict tends to occur wherever two religions neighbor each other and where the boundaries between the two are porous (or not well defined, meaning that people can easily cross the boundary and move from one region to another). The island of Ireland is a prime example. The Irish people in the independent Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, all speak the same language or languages. The 100-year-old civil war in Northern Ireland is over religion.

- The Republic of Ireland is Catholic and wants to remain so. About half the people in Northern Ireland are Catholic, and most of these would like to join their Catholic relatives and neighbors in the Republic of Ireland. They also would like to share in the good economic times that country is enjoying.

- The other half of the people in Northern Ireland are Protestant, the descendants of English and Scottish immigrants. They are afraid that the Catholic Irish will take over the province and vote to join the Republic of Ireland. Protestants then would have, in the Protestant Irish view, no rights at all. A peace accord signed on Good Friday, April 10, 1998, promised resolution of this conflict. In 2006, the British and Irish governments and all the major political parties in Northern Ireland agreed to a permanent end of the fighting and the formation of a new Northern Ireland executive.

Religion can be a source of conflict between Muslims as it is between some Christians. Among the critical challenges to the future of Iraq are constitutional decisions relating to the sharing of power between the Shiite majority and the

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**TABLE 3.5**

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<th>Substate Movements</th>
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<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Civil War</strong></td>
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For more information see The Holy Land: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict www.BetweenNations.org
Sunni minority, in particular the sharing of oil revenues. The same is true in Kosovo, where ethnic cleansing first by Orthodox Serbia and then by Muslim Kosovars make the presence of NATO’s armed force indispensable to the area’s security.

In conclusion, when you combine territorial, religious, and ethnic issues into one package, you often discover a substate/state conflict of seemingly irresolvable proportions. This is the case with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. This conflict between Jew and Arab is now entering its second century.

History offers a rather brutal lesson. Any government that has tried to create one nation from a multiethnic population has, in the main, had to rely on force to achieve its goals. You encounter this lesson again and again when reading the history of France, Britain, and Germany or when exploring the story of white expansion across the American continent. The Native American tribes were beaten back until the few that remained were sidelined onto reservations. The United States prides itself today as a multiethnic state that celebrates cultural diversity. But its history has several chapters on ethnic cleansing, including this significant one about the people who reached the Americas first.

**The Individual Level of Analysis**

At the individual level of analysis, we examine the role individual human beings play in the international system. In reading this section, note that this role can be more important and critical than you may have expected.

**The Actors**

The first actors usually considered at this level are powerful government officials or leaders with a world reputation, such as the president of the United States, the pope, or the head of the World Bank. But inventors, artists, actors, and athletes also

**Religion with a Vengeance**

The market in the Shiite neighborhood of Sadriya, Baghdad, Iraq, April 18, 2007, after a Sunni-driven truck exploded, killing 140 people, smashing cars, and shattering buildings.
fall into this category: people like Bill Gates, the chairman of the board of a large U.S. corporation, or a famous rock or opera singer. At the individual level of analysis, any person who exerts influence on world politics may be considered an actor.

The tendency is to think of an individual's power and influence based on the role he or she plays. Anyone who becomes president of the United States exercises a tremendous amount of individual influence by virtue of the office. Individual influence is also generally associated with roles played in large established institutions.

But how would you rate the influence of the Saudi financier Osama bin Laden, alive or dead, the mastermind behind al Qaeda who organized a worldwide network of terrorists and established training camps for terrorist activities in Afghanistan? And how do you assess the influence of Mother Teresa as compared with that of bin Laden, Bill Gates, or Saddam Hussein? Would the power of the United States be more or less if the president today were Teddy Roosevelt, who led a group of volunteer soldiers known as the Rough Riders to defeat the Spaniards in Cuba in 1898? Does President Bush have the influence to persuade the American people to fight the war on terrorism indefinitely? Clearly, the personality and beliefs of a national leader have a decisive impact on both the input and the outcome of an international event. The individual level of analysis attempts to measure or assess the relative influence on world politics of one individual against another on the basis of his or her personal characteristics.

The Impact of Individuals on World Politics

It is possible to make several generalizations about the impact of individuals on world events. First is the basic proposition that individuals do have the ability to influence world affairs in a unique direction, although much depends on the time and place. At the beginning of World War II, Winston Churchill galvanized the British to fight rather than capitulate to the Nazis with his rousing speech on “blood, sweat, and tears.” As soon as the war was won, however, the British people threw him out of office at the next election. Clearly, they did not think he was the right person to be in charge of rebuilding the war-torn British economy.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton wanted to stamp his image on world history when he used force for humanitarian purposes and sent the U.S. military into the Balkans. President George W. Bush would doubtless like to go down in history as the winner of the war against terrorism. Clearly, the personality and beliefs of a national leader make a difference in the outcome of international events.

Political Psychology

The second generalization to be made about the role of individuals in world events is that their perceptions and motivations play a key role in their decisions. Political psychology, a branch of international relations, is devoted to understanding these aspects of decision making, and the field has produced testable hypotheses about the attitudes and thought processes of leading international political actors.

- Misperception and Groupthink: One of the leading proponents of political psychology is Robert Jervis. Based on his study of the Cuban missile crisis, Jervis developed a series of hypotheses on the role of misperception in the management of crisis situations. For example, he claims that “actors tend to see the behavior of others as more centralized, disciplined, and coordinated than they are,” and that “actors tend to overestimate the degree to which others
are acting in response to what they themselves do." In his analysis of the
decision-making process of the principal U.S. actors during the crisis, Jervis
expanded on another important concept in political psychology: groupthink,
earlier identified by Yale social psychologist Irving Janis in his seminal work,
Victims of Groupthink (1972). The term describes a situation where each
member of the group attempts to conform his or her opinions to what they
believe to be the consensus of the group. This results in the group ultimately
agreeing on an action, such as the Kennedy administration's attempted
invasion of Cuba, which individual members by themselves might normally
consider unwise.

- Cognitive Dissonance: Cognitive dissonance theory, developed by Leon Fest-
tinger in 1957, explains the psychological phenomenon of discomfort an
individual experiences when he or she discovers a discrepancy between what
he or she already knows or believes and new contradictory information.
Cognitive dissonance occurs when there is a need to accommodate new
ideas. When individuals are confronted with new facts that contradict what
they knew before, they tend to resist the new learning or the new reality.
Political leaders are no different. An example of cognitive dissonance might
be the Pentagon's initial picture of a swift and decisive American military vic-
tory in Iraq despite information that U.S. forces would meet a very different
kind of reception.

- Leadership Typologies: The final aspect of political psychology mentioned
here is the typologies of leadership offered to explain a leader's choice of cer-
tain kinds of decisions and actions rather than others. Some scholars like to
talk about leadership styles based on a state's political development: the tra-
ditional leadership of a prince or a monarch, the charismatic leadership of a
modernizing leader like Fidel Castro or Franklin Roosevelt, or the organiza-
tional leadership of a leader in an already operating pluralistic polity, like
former U.S. President Jimmy Carter or Helmut Kohl of Germany. Others
scholars follow Sigmund Freud's typology of three dominant personality
types: the erotic personality that needs to love and to be loved, the obsessive
or inner-directed personality, and the narcissistic or charismatic personality
that aims to change things for the better or the worse. A third typology used
by scholars is the Myers-Briggs personality model based on four personality
continua: introversion-extroversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling, and
judging-perception.

The analysis of why certain individuals exert influence or act as they do is fas-
cinating, and if you are drawn to the topic, you may want to take a course in politi-
cal psychology. Decision making is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

The Power of Individual Actors
The third set of generalizations that may be formulated about individuals has to
do with the amount of power they have. Indeed, almost all questions about indi-
vidual actors on the international stage center on power: What is it, who has it, and
how is it used?

The word power comes from the Latin word posse, meaning "to be able, to have
the ability to act or to do." In politics, power involves the ability to get someone to
do something that he or she otherwise would not do voluntarily.
The common way for individuals to acquire power is “out of the barrel of a gun,” to quote the father of Communist China and former dictator, Mao Zedong. The majority of powerful people since the dawn of time have gotten that way largely through conquest. Although rare, a few individuals are recognized as powerful for their influence on our thinking or for their example of human goodness (such as Socrates, Saint Francis of Assisi and Mahatma Gandhi). Finally, certain people become powerful through their recognized role as head of a people, a nation, or a state. For example, no matter who fills the role, the president of the United States is one of the most powerful persons in the world today. Regardless of personality, the president exercises organizational leadership over the U.S. government.

How do individuals exercise power? Throughout history, there are only two ways: through force or through persuasion. Frequently, the two may be combined. Force is customarily violent: military might, terrorism, or compelling economic means (hostile takeovers, embargoes). Persuasion may be achieved through negotiation and bargaining, propaganda or advertising, by direct one-on-one influence over someone less powerful, or by persuasive example, as in the case of Saint Francis. Political scientist Theodore White first focused our attention on the notion of power as influence in his studies of the making of the U.S. president in the 1960s. When someone easily persuades others to do something they otherwise would not do, we say that person has charisma.

Ordinary People as Global Actors
Finally, in our explanation of the role of the individual in the international system, generalizations can be made about average people. Believe it or not, many people

Two People Who Have Made a Difference in International Affairs
At the turn of the twenty-first century, two of the major players on the world scene were George W. Bush, president of the United States, and Osama bin Laden, Saudi terrorist.
whose names are unknown exert considerable influence. For example, many states agreed to give money to alleviate the suffering of the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia. Large financial institutions pledged billions of dollars in loans that have taken a long time to process. In the meantime, individuals from humanitarian NGOs, such as the Catholic Relief Organization and the International Red Cross, have long been at work, caring for the needy. Tsunami victims in South Asia, hurricane victims in Nicaragua and Honduras, refugees returning to Kosovo, famine victims in Rwanda and Ethiopia, the victims of earthquakes in Iran, and refugees in Darfur are all causes that individuals support. Some people help by sending a check, others by giving personal time to an organization that is raising money. Still others actually go to the area that needs help and volunteer their labor. In 1995, after the Fourth UN Conference on Women, held in Beijing, American and Canadian women who had heard about the murder of girl babies in China spent their own money to go to that country, adopt baby girls, and save their lives by bringing them back to Canada and the United States. Volunteers organize and manage the countless sister city programs, like the Albany/Tula Alliance and the New York City/Tokyo program, that connect local administrations, organizations, and individuals in a web of citizen diplomacy.

Without the involvement of individuals at the grass-roots level, many international projects that alleviate suffering or promote cultural dialog could not be realized. When individuals care about someone or some problem in the world and act upon their feelings, they have an impact. You too can be a player at the individual level in the world today.

Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity Building Homes in the Philippines

Dr. Robert T. Potter, along with 200 other volunteers, went to the Philippines to help Filipinos build a home for themselves. Volunteers are found in every NGO and provide home, food, and clothing to the millions of poor, sick, and homeless in our world today. The global community cannot do without them.

Source: Courtesy of Dr. Robert T. Potter.
Applying the Levels of Analysis to Understand International Relations

Understand how the levels of analysis are used to understand international relations; apply the levels to the case of Afghanistan.

The discussion of the five levels of analysis—the international system as a whole level, the regional level, the state level, the substate level, and the individual level—leads to a number of questions. What is the best use to make of them? Do analysts look at only one level at a time? Can levels be combined?

By this time in your studies of international relations, you can probably answer those questions on your own. The levels can be used in any way. Analysts focus on a particular level of analysis on the basis of three things:

1. The type of situation
2. What they want to find out
3. What paradigm or political theory they intend to use to determine what they want to find out.

True or False?

1. The levels of analysis allow us to organize international actors and events into five distinct levels of international activity.
2. Non-state actors include groups as diverse as the United Nations, al Qaeda, Greenpeace, international drug cartels and transnational corporations.
3. Because they rob the state of power, realists view transnational corporations (TNCs) as a disruptive force for the international economic system that should be regulated.
4. The most important factors used when focusing on the state level of analysis are power, wealth, and geographic location.
5. Generally speaking, there is a lack of conflict at the substate level of analysis—most conflict occurs at the international system.

Multiple Choice

6. Which of the following categories would you use to place China so that all of its attributes are accurately represented (political, economic, military)?
   a. Developing states
   b. Industrialized states
   c. Former communist states
   d. Failing or at-risk states
   e. None of the above

7. Which of the following best describes the level of analysis that focuses on organizations like the EU, OAS, NAFTA, and the AU?
   a. International system
   b. Regional
   c. State
   d. Substate
   e. Individual

8. Which of the following is NOT an example of an approach used to study the individual level of analysis?
   a. Misperception
   b. Groupthink
   c. Cognitive dissonance
   d. Power balancing
   e. All of the above
Applying the Levels of Analysis: The Example of Afghanistan

How can using the levels of analysis shed light on the problems of Afghanistan? Let us start at the state level. Only rarely in its history has Afghanistan been under the sole rule of a single leader. Its rugged geography and harsh climate facilitated the rise of tribal chieftains and helped perpetuate their hold on the local peoples. In addition, Afghanistan is landlocked, with powerful neighbors to the north, east, and west.

At the substate level, the social structure of Afghanistan is still tribal with power residing in the tribal chieftains. Seven tribes, each with its own language and belonging to its own ethnic group, form the bulk of the population. Their size and location are determining factors in the Afghan distributions of power. Each of the seven has ties with relatives of the same tribe beyond the Afghan border. Members of the Pashtun tribe, the largest tribe in Afghanistan, live across the Afghan border in Pakistan, a relatively weak country. The Taliban, defeated in the U.S.–led invasion of 2001, were from the Pashtun tribe. The relatives of the Uzbeks and Tajiks live in the new states of Central Asia, which are supported by Russia and, to a lesser extent, the United States. This support explains why the two tribes forming Afghanistan’s Northern Alliance were given three prestigious ministries in the interim Afghan government and why they will continue to exert power under the new government. While the Afghan elections of 2004 spoke volumes about progress made toward a viable Afghan state, elected officials need a power base from which to operate. With the Taliban prevented from returning to power, the Northern Alliance, with its powerful tribal chieftains, is well placed and organized to fill the power vacuum. Finally, the entire country embraces Islam, a religion that has shown a strong preference for traditional values. The United States has insisted on promoting a regime change to a democratic government based on Western experience and has a relatively free and fair election to show for its efforts. But the path to democracy is experiencing severe roadblocks. As a budding international relations expert, you immediately suspect that something is going on at the system level that is impeding progress.

Afghanistan from the Systems Level of Analysis

From 1948 to 1991, the international system was bipolar, with a cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to shore up a communist coup in the country. The United States responded by working with Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries to promote an Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation organized around local chieftains. In 1989, the Soviets were forced to withdraw from Afghanistan.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the bipolar system ended. You might think that the climate would then have been ripe for the development of a pro-Western government in Afghanistan. But in supporting the local chieftains in their fight against the USSR, the United States had been promoting an emerging new force on the international stage: militant Muslim guerrillas drawn from Arab and Middle Eastern volunteers. During the 1980s, the United States armed and trained Muslim groups in Pakistan to operate across the border in Afghanistan. Many of these groups were associated with al Qaeda. With the collapse of the Soviet Union,
al Qaeda and the militant Islamist movement emerged as a global power in its own right. The financing for the movement came from Muslim states, particularly Saudi Arabia, and Iran, a neighbor of Afghanistan.

From 1992 to 1996, Afghanistan was torn by a violent civil war between the very chieftains who had fought together to evict the Soviet army. The Taliban victory, while unexpected, was not surprising, as the Taliban came from the majority Afghan tribe with ties to Pashtuns in Pakistan. The Taliban imposed a rigid Islamic government on Afghanistan and permitted al Qaeda and other militant groups to re-form and train there. With the Russians out of the country, the Taliban and their terrorist associates thought to expand their efforts to rid the entire Muslim world of foreign influence. Once again, the Muslim oil countries, along with the lucrative domestic poppy industry, provided the financing.

The result is that even though the bipolar international system gave way to a unipolar system led by the United States, the United States cannot dictate the terms of the current or future Afghan government for a multitude of reasons:

1. Real power continues to reside in the same tribal leaders who led the fight against the Soviet Union (individual level of analysis).
2. Rivalry for power among the tribes inhibits any from making a compromise (substate level).
3. The United States alone has not the military, material, or financial resources to impose a solution while guaranteeing an ever-improving lifestyle back home. It has to seek allies (state level of analysis).
4. The existing relationship between the terrorist NGOs in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Muslim states that finance them means that no solution will be permanent unless it is Islamic (regional level of analysis, distribution of power).
5. The United States needs Pakistan to wage its war on terrorism in Afghanistan to find the perpetrators of 9/11, yet it cannot alienate the Muslim oil-producing countries upon which it relies for energy. Russia cannot meet all the energy needs of the United States and send oil to Europe at the same time (international system as a whole).

In the preceding case, we have used the levels of analysis like a lens on a camera, zooming in on the individual level, out to the system level, and moving freely between the centralizing tendencies of the system level and the decentralizing elements at the state and substate levels? With the levels of analysis as a structure and the state as the main unit, you now are ready to try to figure out what it would take for a democratic regime to emerge in Afghanistan.

This chapter has been about the building blocks or fundamental units of the international system. It thus has done more describing than theorizing. We use theory much more in the coming chapters, but these basic concepts—the levels of analysis and the way power is used within each of them—recur as essential themes. In fact, so important is the concept of power that the entire next chapter is devoted to that one idea.
Chapter 3 Analyzing World Politics

Join the Debate

The New Global Civil Society Is Great!

Background
States remain the principal actors on the international stage, but since World War II, they have increasingly been challenged by a growing set of non-state actors claiming to speak for specific interests and concerns in global society. Seven sets of actors are identified in this chapter: Among these are the international governmental actors (IGOs), terrorist and paramilitary groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and transnational corporations (TNCs). Representatives to IGOs are officially appointed by their member-states and must promote the position of their government. As such, the IGOs do not represent the global civil society but continue the tradition of state domination of the international system.

The other non-state actors are different. Drug and terrorist groups have their own violent agendas and operate in a shadowy world that is difficult for states to penetrate but whose actions serve to expose the state’s vulnerable underside. NGOs operate in the full light of international scrutiny. Some are organized around professional interests, some have religious agendas, while others are primarily service organizations that provide humanitarian aid as needs arise around the globe. Published charters or constitutions setting forth the NGOs’ goals and procedures guide most of them. Professional groups like the International Meteorological Association have members from many countries who are experts in their field and are not duty bound to speak for their country. Decisions are reached on the basis of a vote in a governing body that comprises the most influential individuals in that particular area of expertise. Humanitarian groups like the International Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders recruit large numbers of volunteers from any country or region.

TNCs have been heavily criticized for exploiting the cheap labor, widespread political corruption, and lax environmental laws of developing countries. However, it is generally recognized that globalization is here to stay. Among its benefits are cheap goods for the industrialized world and jobs for the developing countries.

Many political scientists welcome the arrival of non-state actors on the international scene. In their view, these organizations provide input into international problems that go beyond the pure national interests of any one state, speaking for the global community.

Test Prepper 3.3

True or False?

1. The state level of analysis is the most effective at explaining the situation faced by Afghanistan.

2. When looking at Afghanistan’s tribal structure we are using the substate level of analysis.

3. The international systems level of analysis cannot be used to explain the lack of democracy in Afghanistan.

4. The United States does not possess the military or financial resources to impose a solution in Afghanistan without the assistance of allies.

5. The Taliban’s role in Afghanistan can be viewed strictly from the regional level of analysis.

Between Nations Practice Test Questions
Practice Test 3.3
www.BetweenNations.org

Case Study
North Korea’s Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons
See www.BetweenNations.org
as a whole. The World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), for example, works toward the improvement of habitat for endangered species all over the world. Its scientists speak for the conservation movement as a whole, not for any one country. Others say the NGOs do not represent people but rather push their own agendas with no accountability. The WWF may demand the preservation of the Siberian tiger, for example, but only states can guarantee that action will be taken to preserve them.

What do you think? Join the debate!

Arguments for the Benefits of a Global Civil Society

- NGOs are composed of like-minded people around the globe who share an interest, a goal, and a need.
- A large number of NGOs perform vital humanitarian functions that no other type of organization is capable of performing. Without the International Red Cross, who would organize relief for victims of disasters around the world?
- States have their own agendas. Many issues would fall off their radar screens, particularly in the environmental and human rights areas, if NGOs did not speak up and make the issue public. Look at Darfur. Would the UN Security Council have made any resolution if humanitarian organizations had not publicized the terrible conditions there?
- People contacting others around the globe are able to influence actions of individual governments and bring about needed change in a peaceful, positive manner. One of the best examples is the cooperation between East European, West European, and American NGOs that challenged the existing dictatorships and contributed to their destabilization prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.
- National governments think and act only in the interests of the state they rule; nationalism and national interest destroy peace and cooperation.

Arguments against the Benefits of a Global Civil Society

- NGOs and TNCs are not elected bodies. The leadership speaks for no one and is not accountable to anybody. Being self-appointed, it acts in the interests of a small clique of individuals interested in pursuing a particular goal.
- If you know where an NGO gets its money, you know what it stands for. To a large extent, NGOs are simply the hidden arm of the major states’ foreign policy and are paid accordingly, or they are carrying out the wishes of well-endowed foundations and corporations.
- NGOs, particularly the international environmental groups, have come under criticism recently for making matters worse in the interest of making them better. The international environmental NGOs have been the most vocal opponents of the construction of large dams anywhere in the world, arguing that the electricity produced by them goes to the TNCs and not the poor people dislocated by the projects.
- TNCs may provide jobs, but they destroy local economies and local lifestyles and ruin the livelihood of local merchants who cannot compete in price with the global giants. They also exploit workers, hiring them at the lowest possible wage in developing countries, where TNCs do not have to provide benefits, such as health care, as they would in the developed states.

Questions

1. What role do you see NGOs playing in world politics? How can they promote contrasting views to problems? How do they hinder the formulation of solutions?
2. If you were the head of a Western government and wanted to spread education about diseases to a developing country, what kind of organization would you use to develop the program? Why?
3. What vital roles do states play in world politics that NGOs and TNCs cannot?

Suggested Readings


Understand what is meant by levels of analysis and who are the primary actors that operate at each level.
• The system level of analysis. The basic assumptions at this level are that the international system is considered as a single whole and within this whole, actors interact with and respond to one another in ways that are predictable.
  - The principal actors are the states with non-state actors playing a secondary role. Key non-state actors include intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), whose members each represent a participating state, and nongovernmental actors (NGOs), whose membership is global and voluntary.
  - Non-state actors have become increasingly visible in the post–Cold War world.
• The regional level of analysis enables us to compare across regions and to compare states within regions.
  - At the regional level of analysis, we can generalize about economic and political capacity across regions, the structure of power within a region and across regions, and the dynamics of regional IGOs and NGOs.
• The state level of analysis looks at and contrasts the behavior of individual states, which are the actors at this
level. Common factors to compare and contrast about individual states are *power, wealth, status and prestige,* and *population.*

- **The substate level** includes the units that make up a state (provinces, states such as those of the United States, or Länder) or that act as players in a regional organization, as well as IGOs and NGOs active at this level.
  - The issues around which substate conflicts revolve are most often of an ethnic, religious, or linguistic nature and frequently involve boundary disputes.
- **The individual level of analysis:**
  - Investigates the role individual human beings, including average people, play in world politics, based on time period, location, and power position.
  - Political psychology has produced testable hypotheses that generalize about the attitudes and thought processes of leading international political actors.

**Resources on the Web**

To use these interactive learning and study tools, including video and audio multimedia resources, go to [www.BetweenNations.org](http://www.BetweenNations.org).

- Practice Tests
- Audio Concepts
- Flashcards
- Case Studies
- Primary Sources
- Historical Background
- Current Events
- Daily Newsfeeds from *The Washington Post*
- Weblinks for Further Exploration

Understand how the levels of analysis are used to understand international relations; apply the levels to the case of Afghanistan.

- We use the levels of analysis like the lens of a camera to zoom in and out of a situation, looking at:
  - The international system level of analysis for the broadest view of power relationships.
  - Zooming in on the state or substate level for an analysis of the variables that explain why a state or substate unit acts the way it does.
  - Zooming further in to the individual level to understand the characteristics and abilities of the individuals who seem most involved with the situation under analysis.
  - And returning to the regional level for an analysis of the power relationships at the level that may support the state or substate unit under investigation.