CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORY OF INTERSTATE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Relations between states date back to the time of the creation of first states. For more than 5,000 years, the world and societies within it have been undergoing an almost indescribable transformation. The economic situation, technical knowledge, religious-ideological background and communication facilities have considerably defined the relations between states and interstate relations in all ages. The emergence and creation of the most basic institutions and concepts of international relations and international law, such as state, sovereignty, nation and international organization, were all formed because of historical circumstances. The antecedents of the modern international legal and political system are to be found fundamentally in the Western civilization starting out of Europe, so the purpose of this chapter is to review the history of interstate relations to better understand the challenges of the 21st century.

2.1. THE ORIGINS AND ANCIENT ROOTS OF RELATIONS

A prerequisite for the establishment of interstate relations was the creation of relatively developed cultures that were close to each other under then-existing traffic conditions. Historical science puts the beginning of the civilized society around 3,000 BC and, based on our knowledge, it was established by the people called Sumerians living in Mesopotamia in the territory of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Initially, Sumerians lived in city-states, not in a single state, and their relations were settled based on international law. The oldest known **international treaty** was concluded between the two Sumerian city-states, Umma and Lagash around 3,000 BC.[1] This treaty established the border between the two city-states, resolving border disputes going or for centuries, however, it was not very successful as it was soon infringed by Umma. As a result, violence re-escalated between the two city-states.[2]

The Definition of International Treaty

> International treaty is an agreement between two or more states or other competent parties of international law, establishing, amending or terminating their respective international rights and obligations.
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> In more detail, see: Szalai 2018b.

This story is a testament to ancient relations: there was a relationship between neighboring states, often governed by law (as well), and typically it was characterized by **war** with each other.

Between 3,000 and 1,500 BC, several states were established in the Middle East and North Africa regions, such as the Kingdom of Akkad, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Persia. The peaceful forms of cooperation including trade relations and alliances started to be forged.

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[1] Nagy 1995, 7.
[2] Sulyok 2014, 479-488.

In the 1,500-1,000 years BC, such states were formed that provided the direct foundations for today's civilization, such as the Hellenistic (Greek) city states, Israel and Judea, Chinese and Indian states, the Mayan empire in Central America and then the Roman Empire. In addition to increasing **trade**, envoys had been delegated, treaties of friendship and non-aggression or military alliance agreements had been concluded, arbitration had been applied. Also peace treaties have been signed along with the rules of law of war appearing, such as announcing the declaration of war or the exchanges of prisoners-of-war.[3] Peaceful cooperation, however, was usually temporary and the realignment of power was realized through war.

As for the development of interstate relations and international law, the more prosperous periods were when the states of similar size and power existed 'in proximity', however, the formation and existence of the great empires was not favorable to them. The emperor of the unified Chinese Empire created in 221 BC from the Chinese chiefdoms, for instance, considered himself the ruler of all mankind and, since everyone remained subordinate to him, cooperation or peaceful relations with the neighboring states or farther regions was impossible.[4] Great empires do not need the international system or balance of power with other states.[5] (At the same time, it is also true that anarchic periods following the fall of great empires, such as in the 9th or 10th centuries in Europe, or the periods of uniform domination of the great dynasties in China, did not promote international cooperation and development. These periods meant re-establishing the balance of power, mostly through wars.)

Four out of five major **world religions** were created during this period, Judaism (Jewish religion), Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. (Islam only developed in the 6th century AD.)

2.2. Interstate Relations in the Middle Ages – From the Decline of the Roman Empire to the Thirty Years' War

Europe was almost completely centralized until the beginning of the early Middle Ages when it gradually began to decentralize. The Roman Empire was torn in two parts in 395 AD and the Western Roman Empire collapsed 81 years later in 476 AD due to the constant attacks of German tribes. German tribes created new states in its place, such as the Frankish Empire (Francia) and the Gothic Kingdoms. However, there were only a few states that existed persistently for centuries. The strongest between them was the Frankish Empire (482-843 AD), in which the feudal system, also called **feudalism**, was created for the first time. The emergence of feudal ties and feudalism was in response to the lack of a strong and central authority, since entitlements were placed into private hands that otherwise would have been in the 'hands of the state' in a strong and centralized system (e.g. entitlement to collect tax and legislative powers). As a result, a stable order was established, and this economic and social organization affected the lives of Europeans until the 1800s. (However, we must also add that in China there were conditions similar to feudalism already in the 3rd-4th centuries.)

In the 900s AD, migration came to a close, leaving a period of relative peace in Europe and land ownership started to be the dominant factor of power relations. Royal power was weak at this time, the landlords fought against each other to obtain central power, while the kings tried to preserve their power and gave away lands for which vassals owed allegiances and fidelity to the king. With the decline of the Roman Empire, long-distance trade ceased to exist and the road network was not maintained, therefore it was necessary to produce all goods locally. As a result, cash flow was significantly reduced and most of the lease payments were paid to the liege in crops and not in cash (cash allowance was only possible during the far advanced feudalism).

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[3] Nagy 1995, 8-15.

[4] Nagy 1995, 9.

[5] Kissinger 1998, 21.

The more intricate vassal system influenced international relations and the **hierarchical system** appeared among the rulers of different states. For example, the English kings were the vassals of the French king for two hundred years from the end of the 1000s (until *John Lackland*, King of England was divested of his lands – hence the nickname – by the court of the French king due to a breach of his oath of fealty). It resulted in vassal dependency even when the British kings had more lands in the territory of the French Kingdom than the French king himself.[6]

For centuries, the Pope, as head of the Catholic Church, was at the top of the hierarchy. The struggle between secular and ecclesiastical power, and deciding whether the (lay) rulers or the Pope's have greater power, lasted for centuries. The debate over the supremacy of their reign was controversial, because the Pope and the ruler often mutually needed each other to keep their power. Charles the Great, the King of the Franks (768-814 AD), for instance, was a major supporter of the Western Church, therefore the Pope crowned him as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. In return, he promised to protect the Pope and unite Western Europe in the name of Christianity. In reality, however, the creation of a unified centralized power failed, and the dispersed ethnic groups formed smaller units against the needs of the Church for universalism and centralism.[7]

Meanwhile, the Eastern Roman Empire, known as the Byzantine Empire, survived in Eastern Europe from the 7th century and existed until 1453 when, due to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, it ceased to exist. In the Byzantine Empire, the Greek language was used instead of Latin, functionally with the continuation of Roman traditions in the operation of the state. It was Christian, with Christianity being the state religion from 380 AD throughout the Roman Empire.

In 1054, the **Christian church** split up into two parts, and thus the Orthodox Catholic Church headed by the Byzantine Patriarch existed in the Eastern part of Europe, while the Latin Church headed by the Roman Pope existed in Western Europe. The power of the Patriarch was far less than that of the Pope, and the Roman Catholic Church involved far more European states than Eastern Christianity.

While Christianity became generally accepted in Europe, Islam, the fifth major world religion developed in the Arabian Peninsula in the 6th century. The vast majority of world population nowadays exercise one of the five world religions and it basically defines cultural identity. Today, instead of political ideologies, civilizational features based on culture and religion are decisive and according to some scholars such as *Samuel P. Huntington*, this also leads to the clash of civilizations, as a change in the balance of power between civilizations is currently under way.[8]

Rivalry and even warfare between religions and cultures has a long history, and we can see its two major historical examples in the period between the 1000s and 1500s. One of these was the Crusades, when European Christians tried to prevent the Islamic invasion in the Middle East, and the other was the persecution of Jews in Europe, such as the one in German territories in the 1300s.

From the 1300s to 1500s, due to the fragmentation caused by the feudal system, there were still significant obstacles to free land transport and overland trade. Customs were generally collected both on roads and rivers, which made transport, already carried out under bad circumstances, much more expensive. This hindered economic development and also favored coastal states as **maritime trade** could freely evolve. This is evidenced by, e.g., a number of books on international maritime law and sovereign orders from the 1400s and 1500s. In addition, the expansion of the Turks and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire made Levantine trade between Asia and Europe considerably more

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[6] Bloch 2002
[7] Mingst 2011, 32.
[8] Huntington 2004

difficult, which also favored seeking new maritime trade routes by the Mediterranean states (Venetians, Spaniards and Portuguese).[9]

The hundreds of years of undisturbed maritime trade development delivered a number of results. An international trading community (as a transnational network) emerged, with financial interests were no longer limited to the territory of a single state, who gained significant wealth. The protection of the trading community's interests led to the emergence of consular relations and protection. States became acquainted with other cultures and gained broader secular knowledge than the knowledge acquired only from the Church, which provided exclusive education in the vast majority of Europe. They rediscovered Ancient ideas, classical literature and philosophies, which influenced the development of Renaissance culture and humanism. In this era, we can already find the roots of individualism and the relativization of the moral order branded universal by the Church (e.g. *Machiavelli*'s The Prince, in which he posits that the ruler must always behave in the interest of the state and not with regard to the Church or some other universal value system).[10]

The development of maritime transport and trade has led to the **discovery** of territories further and further away. From 1470, Portuguese sailors wanted to find the sea route to India. In 1487, *Dias* circled the Cape of Good Hope, the south-westernmost point of the African continent. In 1492, *Columbus* discovered the American continent when he headed west, and in 1498, *Vasco de Gama* succeeded in circling Africa and getting to the west coast of India. Due to these discoveries, colonization began, first by Spain and Portugal. About a hundred years later, the British, the Dutch and the French joined in. The **colonies** were established on the Central and South American continent in the 1500s, but they also benefited from the discovery of the African continent: they took workforce to the colonies from there. The abduction of Africans was extremely violent and it is estimated that for one slave who was transported to the American continent unharmed there were three slaves slaughtered or dead due to horrible transport conditions.[11] The colonists considered the colonies as being part of their respective empires; thus, the region where European and Christian international law prevailed has grown considerably. In addition, wealth from the colonization resulted in rapid technical and economic development that had a social impact: feudalism has gradually been replaced by a more centralized monarchy.

While in the 1500s, the exploration of seas and the power to control them occupied the attention of the states in proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, in the substantial part of the continental territories of Europe two important parallel phenomena went present: one was the expansion of the Turkish Empire and its continuous attacks from the south-east, and the other was the weakening of the Catholic Church. **Reformation** began in 1517, and the proclamation of *Luther*'s doctrines and the establishment of the Protestant church made it very popular among monarchs. Therefore, the rulers converting to Protestantism could rid themselves of the supreme authority of the Pope, which was what also the rulers remaining Catholic (e.g. the French king) also wanted to achieve.

The religious division in Europe and the associated rearrangement of power led to wars. In 1618, the one covering the significant part of European states started as a religious war and lasted for thirty years resulting in a substantial power shift. From 1452, German Prince-electors elected the emperor from the Habsburg family. Although this title ensured the supremacy of power, yet significant rights and power remained in the hands of the leaders of certain electorates. In the 1500s, many Prince-electors converted to Protestantism, and although effective Counter Reformation began from the Austrian and Bavarian territories, by 1555 (Peace of Augsburg) the Evangelical religion became equal

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[9] NAGY 1995, 26.
[10] MINGST 2011, 34.
[11] NAGY 1995, 27-28.

to the Catholic religion. In the context of the Peace of Augsburg, the Habsburg Emperor accepted that the electors themselves may choose their religion and practice that religion within their respective territories (the principle known as *cuius regio*, *eius religio*). However, the Habsburgs had strong centralization demands by the beginning of the 1600s and the Protestant electors formed an alliance called Protestant Union in 1608 in defending their rights to freedom of religion and protecting their interests. In 1618, however, the Imperial Electoral Council banned the exercise of Protestant religion in the Czech Republic (part of the German Roman Empire at that time). In response to this, the Protestant Czech nobles pushed two members of the Electoral Council out the window of the Castle of Prague (the well-known Defenestration) and the anti-Habsburg rebellion began also meaning the beginning of the Thirty Years' War.

However, the fights within the German-Roman Empire soon became European, since almost all European states have intervened on either side. England, the Netherlands and France supported the Protestant Prince-electors against the Habsburgs and financed them, while Denmark, Sweden and the Principality of Transylvania ruled primarily by the Hungarian *Gábor Bethlen* participated in the fights with their own armies on the Protestants' side. The Habsburgs were supported by the Pope, the Venetians and the Catholic German Prince-electors, especially the Bavarians and Spain's Habsburg king. The war was not only in the territory of Europe, as the Netherlands and Portugal also fought with each other in South America and East India for colonial power.[12]

In the first 18 years of the war, the Catholic alliance proved to be stronger, but in 1635 France ruled by King *Louis XIII* and Cardinal *Richelieu* declared a war on Spain that was led by the Habsburgs (the king of which was *Philip IV*, the brother of *Anne of Austria* who was the wife of *Louis XIII*). The French troops crushed Northern Italy, acquired the Rhineland and part of Saxony involving the Swedes back into the fight, with whom they had allied themselves. From 1642, the French and Swedish forces were successfully fighting and they defeated the Spanish, Austrian and Bavarian armies. By 1648, their superiority over the Habsburgs became clear.[13]

In the Thirty Years' War, all Europe suffered heavy losses and it is estimated that one third or quarter of the then European population was lost. This is based on several reasons, e.g., these battles were no longer similar to the chivalric battles in the Middle Ages, they were much more like modern, total wars. The most famous example of this was the plundering and destruction of the Protestant city of Magdeburg in 1631, where about 25,000 people burned to death in the town lit on fire, while 300 souls were lost among the Imperial army and the forces of the Catholic League responsible for the act. Another reason for the civilian population's destruction was typhoid fever, epidemics of the plague and the lack of food. The possibility of making peace emerged several times during the increasingly chaotic war, but it was proceeding extremely slowly. In 1641, the first preliminary agreement was reached on the location of the peace negotiations, however, the actual talks only began in 1645, and it took 3 years to actually conclude the peace treaty.[14]

In 1648, peace treaties were signed on two locations, in Osnabrück and Münster, both in Westphalia, hence the name: **Peace of Westphalia**. The peace treaties fundamentally dealt with three issues: the question of religion, territorial issues and the power rights of the German-Roman emperor and its relations with the Prince-electors.

Regarding religion, the peace treaties stated that there shall not be any distinction between the Catholic, Evangelical and Reformed realms and that some of the achievements of the Peace of Augsburg

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[12] Csikány 2005
[13] Ibid.
[14] Lázár 2009, 28-45.

have been strengthened. It was declared that there is tolerance in **freedom of religion** in private life and that the electors shall not use force against people of other religions (except that they could be banished from the area within five years after the conclusion of the peace). (However, this did not apply to the dependent Austrian provinces where only the Catholic religion was recognized.)

Just as religious rules, the territorial provisions also had an impact on the relationship between the Emperor and the Imperial orders. The German-Roman Empire was broken into 296 independent principalities and several free cities, with Switzerland and the Netherlands splitting, recognized as independent states. Some German principalities have become strengthened, especially Brandenburg-Prussia acquiring significant territories due to the peace treaties. Through the Peace, the Habsburgs were obliged to admit that the title of German-Roman emperor did not imply superiority and the regime of the royal hierarchy failed. The German Imperial orders were given the right to freely cooperate with external powers and to pursue independent foreign policies, and the Emperor was only able to conclude international treaties or declare wars only with the consent of the Prince-electors. The Peace restored commercial freedom within the Empire and ordered the abolition of customs borders established due to the war. The Empire formally existed until 1806 (when it was dissolved by *Napoleon*), but it rather became an **alliance of independent states** and it was no longer a major power. Instead of the centralized German state desired by the Habsburgs, following the Thirty Years' War, more than two centuries of fragmentation started, the consequences of which can be traced until the 20th century.

France, as the winner of the war, became a great power and received Alsace and occupied Piedmont (Northwest Italy). The defeat of the Habsburgs led to the **decline of papal influence**, and – through the peace treaty – the Pope's supremacy terminated even over the Catholic rulers. By then, it became clear that even Catholic rulers did not consider the interests of the Church.[15] With the dissolution of the equal and separate German principalities and the supremacy of the Church, the independence of state power and sovereignty over its territory and its secular nature have been put into practice.

The explicit territorial, religious and political provisions of the Peace of Westphalia listed above had a significant influence on international relations, which is why we consider this event the beginning of **modern international relations**, modern diplomacy and several international legal principles applied to this day. From here, we derive the principles of sovereignty and equality between states, which are determinative **principles of international law** also at the beginning of the 21st century. In Europe, the politics of seeking balance has become decisive for hundreds of years in international relations. As a result of the Peace of Westphalia, a group of states has emerged that dominated the world until the 1800s. This was a peaceful compromise, the goal of which was not to get revenge on the enemy, but rather to achieve lasting peace (following the suggestions by many philosophers of the era such as *Grotius*, *Erasmus*, *Machiavelli* and *Bodin*). The fact that the conclusion of peace was in the interest of about two hundred states (most of which were small German principalities) played a significant role in the development of **modern diplomacy**. During the peace negotiations, about a hundred representatives of these states appeared. The negotiations were typically conducted through envoys not directly between the rulers and they lasted for years.[16]

The Results of the Peace of Westphalia

- freedom of religion
- every state has equal right to sovereignty
- beginning of modern international relations
- beginning of modern diplomatic relations
- doctrine of the balance of power

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Hadfi–Kolozsvári 2009

Despite the end to the Thirty Years' War and philosophical approaches underpinned by peace, there was no peace in Europe. Taking advantage of the weakening of the German-Roman Empire and the estrangement of the alliance between the Austrian and Spanish branches of the Habsburgs, France did not seek to preserve the European balance of power, but to increase its own in the second half of the 17th century. This was achieved by the state of *Louis XIV*, as – resulting from the countless wars waged – he seized Belgium and successful fought against Spain and the Netherlands for decades. Meanwhile, the Habsburg branch of Austria was bound by the war against the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the expulsion of the Turks from the Hungarian territories and in 1699, and the Habsburgs making peace with the Turks (Treaty of Carlowitz). In the western and eastern part of Europe the centralized and absolutist state became typical in the second half of the 1600s and the early 1700s.

The Thirty Years' War was still raging on the continent when the Revolution broke out in England. The **English Civil Wars** were a series of peaceful periods and armed conflicts between 1640 and 1688. After several decades of parliamentary debates, wars, religious intolerance, anarchy and *Oliver Cromwell*'s authoritarian republic that lasted for a few years, a more relaxed era dawned in 1688. After becoming king, *William of Orange* accepted the Bill of Rights, which set the stage for a constitutional monarchy in England. This became the first example of non-absolutist exercise of power, where the parliament had a significant role. An important result of the English Civil Wars of the 1600s was that the subsequent European revolutions (the French Revolution in the late 1700s and the pan-European revolutions in 1840s) have not resulted in similar events in the UK. In addition, the unification of England and Scotland in 1707, also brought economic growth. This lasting internal peace and the balanced exercise of power have led to the development of the industry, economy and technology and to the fact that the **industrial revolution** began in the mid-1700s. It was the time when *Adam Smith*, the Scottish philosopher renowned as the father of modern science of economics, wrote "The Wealth of Nations", in which he explained the theories of labor as value and division of labor, as well as the importance of trade and economic liberalism free from state interference.[17] What has been described by *Smith* had an impact on the economic decisions of states and on the establishment of international cooperation such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), which supported the globalization of free trade without customs in the 20th century.

The Industrial Revolution

> The Industrial Revolution is a complex phenomenon including technological development, raising of capital, scientific development, development of advanced trade networks, termination of feudal constraints, and the existence of free workforce, and, finally, the richness of resources originating from the expanding colonies. One of the far-reaching achievements of the Industrial Revolution was the establishment of the first intergovernmental international organizations in the second half of the 1800s. The industrial revolution went down in more waves: in the 1700s, and then in the second half of the 1800s, and it received renewed impetus in the second half of the 1900s.

While in England the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries brought about peace that has been expected for many decades, for most of the other European powers it was about starting more wars: the War of the Spanish Succession between 1701 and 1714 affected the countries of the continent again. As the house of the Spanish Habsburgs died out, the war ended with the Treaty of Utrecht and with the French Bourbons ending up with the Spanish throne. By this time, the English obtained

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[17] SMITH 2011

Gibraltar from the Spanish and some colonies in South America and the exclusive right or maritime slave trade. The balance of power established by the Treaty of Westphalia therefore prevailed only within the territory of the German-Roman Empire while outside of it there was a constant realignment of power relations as power struggles were 'transmitted' to other continents. **Wars for** the acquisition of more **colonial territories** were recurrently present among the English, Spaniards, French, Dutch and Portuguese in North America, Asia and Africa. While the British Empire in India started in 1760 (and lasted until 1947), France at the same time lost significant colonies, such as Canada, favoring mainly the British.

The era characterized by the balance of power established by the Treaty of Westphalia and by smaller and geographically transferred power struggles brought about significant changes by the 1770s thanks to the more open and violent power struggles. The importance of Prussia has significantly increased because of the First Partition of Poland (with Poland ceasing to exist by the end of the century, with statehood being re-established only in 1918). The Russian Empire has undergone a significant strengthening of power over the decades prior to this period, gaining strategically important territories from the Turks, among others the Crimean Peninsula, therefore it became possible to build the fleet of the Russian Navy in the Black Sea (which territory is still important in the early 21st century, let's just mention the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in early 2014).

Among the events of the second half of the 1700s two appears significant: one is the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and the other is the French Revolution (1789). The ideas of the Enlightenment arguing against the centralized and absolute power played a significant role in both. Many philosophers and writers such as *Locke*, *Voltaire* and *Montesquieu* argued on the importance of limiting government power. They explained that state power should derive from the individuals and society, and between the individuals and those who exercise power a so-called social contract should exist. This agreement ensured the legitimacy of power; that the individuals accept the rulers and the laws they have adopted. The ideas of the **Enlightenment** were born in response to the rulers with absolute power who failed to have sufficient regard to the interests of the people. Therefore, the ideas of – still influential – political liberalism have appeared in addition to the economic liberalism described by *Smith*. These ideas were incorporated into the Constitution of the USA rising from the American Revolutionary War, enabling the emergence of a world power.

The ideas of Enlightenment, the financial and social failure of Absolutism, the significant increase in the numbers of European population and conflicts of interest between the increasing number of citizens and the privileged orders all contributed to the outbreak of **the French Revolution**. The French Revolution remained an internal affair not for long, as two years later, Austria and Prussia became involved, then after the decapitation of *Louis XVI* in 1793, the first international coalition was formed against the French First Republic. England, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the German-Roman Empire and the Italian city-states have cooperated partly in favor of restoring stability in the French monarchy, but mainly for territorial purposes. This coalition was not particularly successful and resulted in the expansion of the French territories thus breaking up after four years. A year later, in 1798, the second coalition was established, in which the Turkish Empire, Portugal and even Russia participated for a short period of time in addition to the states bordering France. This alliance failed to achieve its goals in the so-called **French Revolutionary Wars**, with all members making peace with the French one by one, the last one being England in 1802. Territorial disputes nonetheless remained unresolved, thus the wars continued in 1803. This period is generally referred to as **the Napoleonic Wars** (although *Napoleon* had already been the leader of France since 1799) and ended in 1815 with *Napoleon*'s defeat. During these 12 years of war, five different international coalitions were established against *Napoleon*, primarily under the leadership of the UK.

The was ended by the First (1814) and Second (1815) Peace of Paris; however, it was agreed that all states of Europe would hold a general congress to determine issues of territorial settlement and conditions for lasting peace. Thus, in 1814-1815, the international conference convened in Vienna, also known as the **Congress of Vienna** reflected the Pan-European agreement.

The Results of the Congress of Vienna

- formation of the cooperation known as the Concert of Europe and conference diplomacy
- favoring multilateral international relations over bilateral ones
- new international rules on diplomatic relations
- restoring the balance of power in politics
- idea of popular sovereignty
- idea of nationalism
- development of fundamental human rights

The Congress of Vienna largely restored France to its frontiers prior to the Napoleonic wars, but there were also territorial gains, e.g., Russia, Austria and Prussia gained parts of Poland, England gained Malta and several Dutch overseas territories, the Netherlands gained Belgium and Luxembourg and Sweden was given Norway from Denmark (as a compensation for the 'loss' of Finland benefitting the Russians in 1809). Austria gained Venice and much of northern Italy (Lombardy–Venetia). It was declared by the states that the neutrality of Switzerland, which was recognized as a sovereign state by the Peace of Westphalia, shall be guaranteed, which remains respected by all states ever since.

The agreement accepted in Vienna restored Bourbon power and recreated the balance of power among European states settled by the Peace of Westphalia in a slightly altered form. To establish a lasting peace and balance of power in Europe, it was agreed that the UK, Austria, Russia, Prussia and France will jointly manage major European affairs. This cooperation is known as the **Concert of Europe**, which was conceived to be implemented through regular multilateral diplomatic negotiations. Obviously, there has already been lasting cooperation between more states, but organizing this regular congress forecast both the world of international organizations (such as the League of Nations founded in 1919) as well as multilateralism, which will become greatly significant in the 20th century. At the Congress of Vienna, a further step forward from the negotiations of the Peace of Westphalia was that the representatives of the states negotiated collectively at one location and not only by envoys but at the highest level of state leadership (e.g. *Frederick William III*, King of Prussia, *Alexander I*, Russian tsar, Emperor *Francis I* and Austrian Chancellor Prince *Metternich*, *Talleyrand*, Prime Minister of France, and foreign ministers of several states).

The conduct of multilateral diplomatic negotiations was facilitated by the **new international rules on diplomatic relations** adopted at the Congress of Vienna. In medieval Europe, the envoys representing each state were ranked in a strict hierarchy, which was constantly disputed by certain states in an effort to gain a position reflecting their presumed or actually increasing power. This constantly led to disputes and made it difficult to conduct multilateral negotiations. Moreover, it would have been less fortunate to concentrate on the formation of a complex hierarchy at a Congress whose aim was to restore the balance of power. Therefore, a reform of the previous practice was decided on. Thus, in determining the ranking of envoys, sovereign equality became the principle not perceived or real power. Certain diplomatic rules laid down by the Congress, such as rules on permanent embassies and diplomatic relations, are still applicable today.

Three countries of the Concert of Europe, namely Austria, Prussia and Russia also agreed on a closer coalition, which was called the **Holy Alliance**. This political and military alliance had a decisive

influence on international politics until 1848, and its main aim was to maintain feudalism and absolute monarchy. The result of the Concert of Europe and the Holy Alliance was that it prevented the European powers from future wars with each other for almost forty years.

Although only 23 years passed from the outbreak of the Revolution to *Napoleon*'s defeat at Waterloo, these events still have had an effect we can sense even today. Similarly to the results of the Peace of Westphalia on German territories, the power of the Catholic Church declined in France and throughout Europe. The idea of **popular sovereignty** and the idea of national unity emerged. Nation-states and people as the bearers of sovereignty came to the forefront instead of rulers of the absolute power as embodiments of state and sovereignty. People were no longer tied by belonging to families or whether they were subjects of a certain monarchy, but it was also important to participate in the political life as a group, and in fact the common historical past, common traditions and language were of the greatest importance. In the development of the demand for community-based awareness of the nation, social bonds transformed by the industrial revolution have also played a significant role. Mass migration motivated by employment opportunities did not strengthen family relations in the absence of good options of communication, it rather helped the formation of new communities based on other principles. Apart from family ties, national and ethnic identity became the most important and **nationalism** emerged. This resulted in the definition of political and cultural nationalism and the concept of the nation-state.[18]

One of the most significant works of the French Revolution was the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen adopted in 1789, in which **fundamental human rights** were declared. This was a significant step from the direction of absolutism towards the constitutional monarchy, and we typically refer to this document as the point of origin of fundamental human rights, despite the text being inspired by many earlier documents, such as the Bill of Rights (1689), the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776). The declarations listed above are all internal laws and on the level of international law it was only by the middle of the 20th century when similar and comprehensive human rights regulation was adopted (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR 1948). However, the first domain of human rights where international regulation was adopted is linked to the Congress of Vienna and it was the abolition of slave trade. This international prohibition focused only on trading with slaves, and no new aspects emerged in the development of international human rights law in the following hundred years. The prohibition of slavery and forced labor as well as the improvement of working conditions were in the focus of international human rights law until the 1940s.

2.4. The Events of the 19th Century and the Road to World War I

There was an initial enthusiasm for the idea that the Congress of Vienna shall preserve European peace through multilateral diplomatic conferences; however, the momentum was quickly lost. Between 1818 and 1822, the annual consultations were organized within the framework of the Concert of Europe (between the five great powers), but after this, only when major revolutionary events took place or when it was considered necessary to resolve the outbreak of wars. Nevertheless, until the outbreak of WWI, more than thirty meetings took place which clearly demonstrated the presence of politics seeking balance and consensus.[19]

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[18] Glatz 1993
[19] Mingst 2011, 40.; Nagy 1995, 35-39.

The development of the principle of nationalism and popular sovereignty in the philosophical writings of the 1700s and then during the French Revolution scared the rulers of the Holy Alliance, and the greatest motivation for cooperation was to prevent events like the French Revolution in other states. One of the results of the Congress of Vienna was the renewed balance of power, thus fear was justified that a change of government resulting from a revolution or a secession of a territory would significantly upset this balance of power. Conventions were held by the participating states when revolutionary movements emerged somewhere, and they have successfully prevented the revolutions of the 1820s and 1830s (such as the uprising against the absolute power of the Spanish king, the Naples uprising or the Polish national uprising in the territories directed by the Russians). The last joint action of the Holy Alliance was quelling the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–49.

One of the major achievements of the decisions of the Concert of Europe in the 1820s was the **Monroe Doctrine** adopted by the United States in 1823. In 1810, conflicts broke out and the war of independence began in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of South America. A revolution started in the European territory of Spain in 1820, making the position of the Spanish king even more difficult, leading to the abolition of the absolute monarchy and the introduction of a new constitution. Under the Concert of Europe, it was agreed that France would intervene and restore the power of the Spanish king. This was achieved in 1823 and the Spanish king requested the European states to assist him in restoring his power also in the colonies of South America, most of which have already declared independence (e.g. Argentina in 1816, Chile in 1818, and Colombia in 1819 from Spain, then Brazil in 1822 from Portugal). However, England disagreed with this request and so did the USA that has then been independent for a few decades.

In 1823, US President *James Monroe* declared in a statement that the American continent was free and independent and that European superpowers must not interfere there. This statement was not only an ideological protest the repression of absolutism, but rather the designation of the power of the USA and its intervention zone. Thanks to this fact too, the other name of the Monroe Doctrine is "America for the Americans". President *Monroe* also stated that the USA would not intervene in European affairs and this policy had basically been pursued until 1940.[20] Even though the USA intervened in WWI in 1917, the impact of the principle was apparent in that the USA had never become a member of the League of Nations. Entering WWII and overcoming of the Monroe Doctrine made it possible for the USA (among other things) to become a world superpower.

In the first half of the 1800s, the Holy Alliance successfully fought against the principles of nationalism, enlightenment and constitutional governance, but they spread in most of Europe regardless. In 1848, there was a revolutionary wave in Europe also known as the "**Spring of Nations**", generally characterized by the need to abolish the absolute and feudal exercise of power of and to propagate the right of nations to self-determination. Among these, the longest fights for freedom were fought in Hungary.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy emerging from the 1867 Compromise was a result of integrating nations into a larger unity, though far less significant internationally, while the unified Italian state established in 1870 and the German Empire founded in 1871 were of greater international importance. The German fragmentation sealed by the Peace of Westphalia thus ceased to exist after more than 200 years and Europe's most powerful state was established. Similarly, because of the idea of nationalism, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire began, which led to the secession of Greece in 1829, the acquisition of ever greater autonomy by Serbia, Montenegro and Romania from the 1810s, which ended with their secession in 1878.

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[20] Nagy 1995, 37-38.

After 1814-15, the first major war between several European great powers was the **Crimean War** breaking out in 1853. The conflict itself was one between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, where England, France and the Kingdom of Sardinia were involved on the side of the Turks, while Prussia and Austria mostly stayed out of the war. The Russian Empire grew steadily during the 1700s and 1800s and expanded quite remarkably on the European continent, especially by the acquisition of Polish and Finnish territories. Along with its increased presence in the Baltic Sea, the Russian Empire wanted to have an exit through the Black Sea to control the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and to expand its power on certain areas of the Balkans (mainly Moldovan, Bulgarian and Serbian territories). The Ottoman Empire has already begun to decline by then, with several major powers hoping to be able to expand their own territories as a result. The Russians launched the attack in 1853, and initially they were successful, for instance, in the Black Sea they managed to sink the entire Turkish fleet. In response to that the combined forces of Great Britain, France and the Kingdom of Sardinia landed on the Crimean Peninsula, which then became the major battlefield. With a siege going on for about a year, the Russian Sevastopol was overtaken and the Russians were forced to capitulate in 1855.[21]

The 1856 Treaty of Paris ended the Crimean War. The peace clearly stopped the Russian expansion in Europe and the Czar had to accept that the Black Sea was declared a neutral zone. Russia was forbidden by the peace treaty to station warships in the Black Sea, and all the contracting states accepted that warships shall not transit the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. These rules not only marked a severe setback to Russian and Turkish influence in the region, but also increased the British interests. However, against the Russian Empire a functioning Turkish Empire was in the interest of England and France who supported the Ottoman Empire to be admitted into the Concert of Europe. Thus, the **international community** of solely Christian nations, admitted a member from of Islamic religion. As a result of the peace, the Turkish territories in the Balkans gained greater autonomy, which was regarded as a buffer zone between the Turkish and Russian territories. These processes explain why it is important for Russia to have influence over the Crimea, Ukrainian, Moldavian and South Slavic, mainly Serbian territories in the 21st century.

The Definition of International Community

Historically, the definition of international community did not typically refer to the community of all states on Earth but to the Christian European states that controlled international relations and regulated international law. Therefore, in the Middle Ages, it only meant the European states, and from the middle of the 1800s, they included the Ottoman Empire where Islam was the official religion. Those who were not part of the international community were typically regarded as subordinate territories, which can be most easily subdued. The already independent American colonies were the only exceptions; however, the 1899 and 1907 Peace Conferences in The Hague were the first international legislative conferences where non-European states, such as the United States, were invited. The Covenant of the League of Nations and the UN Charter both referred to the "civilized nations" which meant that at the beginning of the 20th century only the non-independent, non-colonial states were considered as members of the international community, albeit no association with Christianity was relevant any longer. The widening of the international community completed with the independence of former colonies, and nowadays it is considered that all universally recognized states are members of the community, regardless of their religion, political and economic structure and geographic location.

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[21] Vadász 2011

Austria, the leader in the Vienna Congress, had to accept the fact that the Russian Empire which was an ally for the previous few decades, became weakened (lost the Crimean War in 1856, went bankrupt, and to resolve its problems, sold Alaska to the USA). They also needed to concede the loss of its Italian territories first in the Franco-Austrian War in 1859 and then in the 1866 Austro-Prussian War. In addition, this latter war also resulted in the termination of Austrian influence over German principalities, where only Prussian influence remained. A few years later in 1870, a unified Italian state was formed and the unified German Empire in 1871. Austria's power was further weakened by the fact that in 1867 it had to compromise with the Hungarians and transform the monarchy from the Austrian Empire into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Twenty years after the Crimean War, in 1875, the **Russian-Turkish conflict** flared up again, focusing on the Russian influence in the Balkans which became ever more independent from the increasingly weakening Turks, and on the formation of a great Bulgarian state under Russian patronage. As the Russians won the war, the Turks accepted these conditions in the San Stefano Agreement (1878). However, the British worried about that Russian power over the Black Sea Straits being too strong, so they sent their navy fleet and – in agreement with the Austrians – forced a decision to be made on the situation of the Balkans by a pan-European Conference. This took place in Berlin in 1878, where the Balkan territories lost by the Turks were divided by the relevant superpowers. It was decided that the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary, Great Britain acquired Cyprus, Russia took Bessarabia; Serbia, Romania and Montenegro became independent states, but Bulgaria was left as an autonomous territory of the Ottoman Empire.

Against the objectives of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the balance of power clearly shifted by the 1870s, the Turks, Russians and Austrians have weakened and the British, Germans and Italians have strengthened. A general European war did not take place for more than 40 years (until the 1914 outbreak of WWI). This can be explained by several factors. On the one hand, there was a **balance of power** in policymaking to avoid that one European state become too strong (a hegemonic power). The ad hoc association of states reacted flexibly to internal and external changes. As they were afraid of the revolution of the masses, they pulled together and tried to prevent a state from gaining too much power. This balancing was mainly done by the English and the Russians in Europe in this period. (The weakening of this balance of power led to the solidification and strengthening of formerly flexible alliances and alliance systems, which eventually led to WWI.)

Another factor affecting peace was concentration on acquiring territories outside Europe. Colonization rapidly accelerated in the second half of the 1800s and, while in the first half of that century, Europeans largely lost their South American interests, they increased them in Asia and Africa during this period. Data characteristic to colonization shows that only 10% of Africa was under formal European control in 1876, but 14 years later in 1890 it was already 90%. The European states involved held the so-called **Congo Conference** of 1884–85 in Berlin, where they practically divided entire Africa among themselves. This conference also served to maintain the balance of power and it was hoped to be achieved by giving major colonies to the German Empire in Africa. By the end of the 1800s, European and American influence in Asia was apparent with Japan and Siam (also known as Thailand) being the only exceptions.[22] Consequently, rivalry and subsequent military conflicts were often transferred to another continent, although there was no major war between the European superpowers for the colonies. By 1914, four fifths of the world's territory were under European rule.[23]

The industrial revolution was the third factor that promoted European peace. Great Britain was at the forefront of production and development of technologies, it was a leading exporter of manufactured

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[22] MINGST 2011, 42., NAGY 1995, 42-43.
[23] MINGST 2011, 42.

goods, had abundant raw materials from the colonies and, consequently, became the center of monetary capital and a world banker. As a result of technological development, the first intergovernmental **international organizations** were established from the 1860s, such as the International Telegraph Union (ITU 1865), the Universal Postal Union (UPU 1874) and the International Meteorological Organization (IMO 1873). These intergovernmental and expert organizations with a permanent institutional structure tried to find international solutions to the challenges of technological development, and therefore their decisions were less affected by the actual power groups.

The spread of **pacifism and humanitarianism**, in various forms, can be mentioned as the fourth factor influencing peace. The battle of Solferino (now in Northern Italy) fought during the above-mentioned Franco-Austrian War of 1859 was one of the bloodiest battles of the 1800s. Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman, decided to establish the International Red Cross when he saw the horrors of the battle and the lack of care for the wounded soldiers. Today, this organization is one of the world's largest humanitarian aid organizations and has a major role in developing international humanitarian law, which protects the wounded people, prisoners of war as well as civilians during armed conflicts. The need to avoid wars and to ease their horrors has led to international conferences held in The Hague in 1899 and 1907. The two conferences regulated the rules of law of war under 13 treaties and they agreed on the prohibition of armaments and methods of warfare and on peaceful settlement of international disputes through establishing the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the first permanently operating international judicial forum. This was the beginning of international efforts to avoid wars and to regulate the law of war, which led to dozens of international agreements in the 20th century. The two major achievements of this process were the prohibition of the use of force in the UN Charter of 1945 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 regulating international humanitarian law.

2.5. The Thirty Years' War of the 20th century – from 1914 to 1945

Efforts to establish the balance of power described in the previous chapter failed when the alliance systems became stronger as a result of attempts at gaining more and more power and economic rivalry. Since the 1880s, the alliances had no longer been volatile, flexible or balancing but alliance blocks were forged. Two alliances were created; one of them were the Central Powers, i.e. the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Italy and Turkey, led by Germany; whereas the Entente Powers, i.e. France, Russia and Great Britain were against them. Although the direct reason of the outbreak of **World War I** in 1914 was the assassination of *Franz Ferdinand* in Serbia, yet there were several other factors. From 1912 to 1913 there was a war in the Balkans between the Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians because of which the Ottoman Empire lost its last remaining European territories and Bulgaria and Albania were born. Moreover, the interests of Serbia were violated also by the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina were occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Germany wanted to obtain even more colonies, which was against the interests of Great Britain. France wanted to regain Alsace-Lorraine that was lost in the war against the Germans in 1871. However, the Russians wanted to have more influence over the new-born countries in the Balkans and they supported the desires of their main ally, Serbia. Because of the assassination, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia and, based on the alliance agreements concluded in the previous 20 years, Germany, Russia, England and France were also drawn into the war within a few weeks. Further states entered the war in the next years, in several cases on the opposite side than it was previously agreed in the alliance agreement (e.g. Italy and Romania joined the war on the side of the Entente and Turkey on the side of the Central Powers). In 1914, most people thought that this would be one of those small and rapid wars, however, this was not the case.

The war ended in 1918 and caused the death of almost 15 million people. The fights transferred to most parts of the world due to colonial interests. Wartime conditions were worsened also by the fact

that because of the spread of nationalist and other ideas (e.g. Bolshevism) since the French revolution, a revolution broke out in Russia in 1917 and overthrew the power of the tsar. The USA entered the war on the side of the Entente in 1917 because of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany, thereby they practically put an end on the Monroe Doctrine (although the USA remained isolated in foreign policy after WWI until 1940).

The **Paris Peace Treaties** (1919-1920) ended WWI, leaving behind numerous unsatisfied states. Germany lost its colonies, Alsace-Lorraine and its Polish territories, Russia lost Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and its Polish territories. The Polish territories were united and Poland was reborn. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy dissolved and the independent Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were born, Romania and Serbia won huge territories and Serbia transformed to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The peace treaties were not only specifically strict in the field of territorial provisions, but also enormous amounts of war reparations were part of the retribution.

This peace was no longer like the Westphalian and Viennese attempts at establishing a balance of power. The sense of cohesion of conservative monarchies disappeared, the European community was made up of several nationalist states instead, organized based on several different ideologies, which relentlessly took advantage of the possibilities of gaining more power in case of the weaknesses of others. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the liberal political and economic way of thinking was quite popular especially in the USA, which provided an ideological background to the settlement after the war through *Wilson*'s Fourteen Points. However, the real results and consequences of the peace were far from liberal ideas, and from the 1930s, politics later labeled as realism has definitely dominated international relations.

Albeit the **League of Nations** was created in the pattern of 1800s international cooperation through a system of conference s, it was basically unsuccessful. The great powers were not members at the same time and the USA chose to completely stay out of it. Due to its weak legitimacy and international law-making powers, it was incapable of preventing even smaller conflicts. Once the cooperation with the League of Nations became uncomfortable for a state, it could just easily exit (just as Germany did in 1933 when *Hitler* came to power). Although the organization failed, it must be acknowledged in its favor that it had been the first international organization created with the purpose of coordinating events on global level and preventing 'unlawful' wars. Thus, it was an important precedent and sample for the UN created after WWII.

The spread of the Russian revolution and leftist ideologies led to the creation of another international organization important from the aspect of the development of human rights in 1918. Even today the main purpose of the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) is to improve people's working conditions and standards of living. The founding states thought that revolutions were caused by the dissatisfaction of people and, in case the work and life conditions were improved, people would not support revolutions and extreme ideologies. Within the framework of ILO, several international conventions were concluded between the two world wars including the prohibition of night work of women, prohibition of child labor, convention on weekly rest and workers' medical care.

After the war, it was not easy to recover the economy and the Great Depression further increased the spread of extreme ideologies, especially fascism and communism. Based on these it is not surprising that peace did not last long and **World War II** broke out in 1939. During WWII, a common ideological background can be found (fascism) behind the cooperation of the Axis Powers (especially Germany, Italy, Hungary and Japan), however this is not true for the Allies, who fought together solely for mutual interests (just think about the alliance between the communist USSR and USA, or the relationship between China and Great Britain). WWII was a global and total war, around 80 % of the world's population was affected. In contrast to the provisions of international humanitarian law and the law

of war, it claimed around 60 million victims among which 20-25 million were soldiers and the rest of them were civilians. Among them around 6 million were the victims of Holocaust. In addition to this, the estimated number of victims dying from starvation and epidemics caused by the war is 20 million.

From a historical perspective, the two wars can be regarded as a unity; therefore, they are usually called the thirty years' war of the 20th century. At the end of WWII in 1945, the world experienced a huge change compared to 1914. Since the Allies have won the war, which basically included the same states that had won WWI, certain issues were decided for good. The realignment that started some decades earlier has led to unexpected results, such as the USA and the USSR becoming leading world superpowers coming out of the war. France kept its relative power due to its historical position, however Great Britain lost its leading place. Germany had ceased to exist for some years and it was born as divided into two parts in 1949 which ended in 1990. Japan was totally destroyed by the two atomic bombs, and in most parts of China *Mao Zedong*, the leader of the communist party came to power.

The USA and Great Britain started to plan world order after WWII already in 1941 with the **Atlantic Charter**. It declared that they imagine a world after the war where all states would be able to participate in the world economy with equal conditions, all nations may elect their state's forms of government and all states would be sovereign and equal and renounce the use of armed force when managing their international relations. These principles were reaffirmed during the war in several documents, such as the Declaration by the United Nations which called the cooperation UN for the first time. The Allies also agreed that although the League of Nations failed, a universal international organization was necessary, and within its framework international relations can be coordinated. Based on the above principles and name, the Organization of **United Nations** (UN) was born already before the end of WWII, in the summer of 1945.

2.6. The Cold War

During WWII, the USA and the USSR representing completely opposing ideologies could cooperate with each other because of their mutual interests; however, this came to an end as well when the war ended. They did not fully agree on the situation of the defeated states either. While Japan was occupied by the USA, Germany and Austria were divided by the USA, Great Britain, France and the USSR into four occupation zones. The winners also occupied the territories of other countries and they tried to essentially influence the progress of internal politics. This was especially true for the territories occupied by the USSR, such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany. As a result of Soviet support, Communist parties came to power everywhere and the idea of Western states representing liberal ideas and the states following Soviet schemes on how the world ought to be was more and more diverse. Along its borders, the USSR tried to extend its influence by creating a buffer zone. In 1946, *Churchill* already described it as an Iron Curtain, which was being put up in the middle of Europe. The aggressive Soviet foreign policy forced the USA already in 1947 to try to control the spread of the Soviets by following the principles of containment. Therefore, preventing the spread of leftist ideas and communism in any part of the world became the central element of US foreign policy. With the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, the western military alliance against the USSR was formed and the **Cold War** began.

> The period between 1947 and 1990 was characterized by the opposition of the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR. There was no direct ("hot") war between the two states, however, the rivalry extended to ideological, cultural, social, economic and political issues and manifested in alternative (proxy) wars in other continents. The central issues were the principle of containment, the arms race and the idea of mutually assured destruction.

The expression 'Cold War' referred to the lack of actual and direct confrontation between the two superpowers, despite their relationship remaining strongly hostile. Crisis came after crisis and the superpowers participated in outsourced and so-called proxy wars to protect their interests. Such wars were the Korean War (1950-1953), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the Vietnam War (1965-1973) and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989).

The two world wars completely changed previous warfare, masses of technological innovations were introduced, which affected other areas of life, just to mention two examples: aviation and atomic energy. The knowledge of atomic energy and of the production of atomic bombs played an important role in the two superpowers not engaging in a direct war. This is called the idea of **mutually assured destruction**, when peace is ensured by the fact that the accumulated nuclear arsenal would cause the complete destruction of both parties and therefore neither party shall win. This leads to an arms race and a situation of high tensions but at the same time it also results in peace between the parties.

It was also the profit of the two superpowers that **decolonization** sped up and colonial territories became independent after WWII. These colonial wars on the one hand made the colonial states preoccupied, especially Great Britain and France, and on the other hand essentially caused setbacks to their economic conditions and positions as superpowers. The other consequence of decolonization was that the international community has been massively enlarged. While in 1945, there were around 70 independent states, in 1960 there were 100, in 1977 there were 150 and in 2018 there are more than 190. While in the beginning of the 1800s, only the European states were considered members of the international community, it includes around 200 states nowadays, which can be in any part of the world.

The independence of colonies was accompanied by bloody wars and border disputes, therefore, the period after WWII cannot be considered peaceful at all. The only thing that is true that there were no wars in Europe and between the superpowers. The peaceful circumstances created in the Western developed countries have favorably affected the economic, industrial and technical development; therefore, the second half of the 20th century brought them accelerated improvement, high standards of living and a high human level of evolution. Following a capitalist and liberal economic policy, the states in alliance with the USA created a worldwide free trade network (see GATT and WTO).

Consequently, in a few decades the economic dominance of the USA became more and more obvious over the USSR which became weak by the end of the 1980s. Between 1989 and 1990, the Communist-Socialist state system fell in several states (e.g. in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland). The Berlin wall came down and the two German states were united again in 1990. The weakening of Communist power resulted not only in a **transition** in the USSR but also the total disintegration of the state (1990-1991). The USSR broke up into 15 states and its successor was Russia. These changes did not go peacefully everywhere, in Yugoslavia a bloody civil war broke out (1991-1995, 1999), which has unresolved consequences to this day, like the situation of Kosovo. Ethnic conflicts surfaced also in other continents, a particularly cruel example of which being the Rwandan genocide (1994) or the conflicts between the post-Soviet states (for example the Russia-Georgia wars or the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict (Nagorno-Karabakh War between 1988 and 1994).

With the falling apart of the USSR, the former bipolar world order (centralized around the two superpowers) became unipolar. In the beginning of the 1990s, the USA was the world leader power that had bigger power alone than the other superpowers put together. This however lasted only for some years.

From the beginning of the 2000s, we entered the new, global and **multipolar world order**, in which Russia – besides the USA – has again become a superpower, as well as China for the first time in history. The USA is still the world's leading power; however, the strengthening of China and Russia contributes to the balance of power. In Europe, France keeps its superpower position, while Germany is strengthening rapidly. In contrast, the superpower position of Great Britain will likely decrease further when it exits the European Union. Besides them, there are clearly identifiably regional leading states, such as Turkey, Iran, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Global Challenges

> By the 21st century, states are more closely connected and dependent on each other than ever before. The world is a "global village", thus states not only enjoy the benefits but share the responsibility to resolve the problems. Terrorism, migration, climate change, environmental degradation and population growth are all challenges that members of the international community can only resolve jointly.

The international community shall face new and global challenges, among which **terrorism**, migration and climate change are the most significant. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2011 opened a new chapter in the fight against terrorism, making it possible for the willing and able states to conduct a global war against terrorism with the leadership of the USA. As a result, a war was declared on Afghanistan and Iraq destabilizing the whole Middle Eastern region. Destabilization escalated not only because of the American intervention but the so-called Arab Spring also contributed to it when, during 2010-2011, protests, revolutions and even civil wars broke out in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Consequently, several state systems have collapsed and societies have been dragged into permanent conflicts like in Syria and Libya. States may only act jointly in the face of these global challenges, therefore international cooperation in the 21st century is more necessary than ever.

There are spheres of interest and spheres of influence also in the multipolar world order, which the superpowers are constantly trying to secure (e.g. Russia in Ukraine and the post-Soviet states, or China in the surrounding states and on the sea). The new balance of power is partly developing and partly changing, and sometimes it becomes apparent behind the political decisions of the states. However, it remains a question until when this world order, functioning since the end of WWII and considered on a superpower level, will exist.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-CHECK

1. What is the significance of the Peace of Westphalia in international relations?
2. List three examples of international cooperation already existing in Ancient times!
3. What is the international community?
4. What is a treaty?
5. What are the results of the humanist and pacifist thinking of the second half of the 1800s?
6. What does the multi-polar world order mean?
7. Describe the characteristics of aiming at a balance of power through historical examples!
8. What is the strategy of mutually assured destruction?
9. Name an example of proxy wars!
10. When was the Cold War?

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