



International System: Post World War II

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This Unit

- The last unit took us to the Second World War. We will begin this unit with the International System Post WW II and focus on two major developments of the twentieth century, the decolonization and the collapse of the USSR in our next two sessions.
- For the last session of this Unit, Tuesday, May 14, we will focus on Our World.
- I wish that we do it differently. I will suggest some ideas today and leave it to you. If I do not get support from the participants, we will keep it the way we do it now.

Our World: The Participants Speak

Tuesday, May 14, 2024.

- I propose that that participants take charge of this session and share their thoughts about:
 - What does Our World mean to me?
 - Where is Our World going?
 - What is an issue in Our World that matters to me the most, and what do I think about it?
 - What Our World might look like in the next five decades.
 - Or suggest ideas that would allow participants to have a great conversation about Our World.

International System: Post-World War II

- We ended our last unit on the Road to WWII. In retrospect, we can connect the dots and see the period beginning with Japanese actions against China marking the beginning of the War. If we focus only on the European theater of War, the Allies entered the War after Hitler smashed all hopes of appeasement with his invasion of Poland in 1939.
- If the war began in 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and a full-scale attack on China in 1937, it ended with the aggressor atom-bombed into surrender in August 1945. Before it ended, the war caused unprecedented levels of death and destruction all over the world.

In Memoriam

- We will look at the international system post-WWII but before that, we will devote a moment to all those who perished because the Great War failed to inculcate a sustainable resolve for peace in humanity.
- [Estimated number of military and civilian fatalities due to the Second World War per country or region between 1939 and 1945](#)

In Memoriam

- Estimated numbers range between 70 and 85 million people.
- The Soviet Union suffered the highest number of fatalities, between 22 and 27 million deaths.
- China lost the second-highest number of persons, at around 20 million.
- Over 80 percent of all deaths were of those from Allied countries, and the majority of these were civilians.
- The Axis Powers account for 15 to 20 percent, most of them military deaths. Nazis alone caused some 17 million deaths, including six million Jews who expired in the Holocaust.

Populations Dispossessed and Displaced

- In addition to the victims of war fronts and aerial bombing, the Second World War also displaced millions of people. [Joseph B. Schechtman](#), the historian of post-war population transfers in Europe, pointed to the revolutionary changes in the ethnic map of Europe.
- According to his research, nearly 20 million people in Europe moved for various reasons, such as fleeing their homes, being expelled, or officially transferred and exchanged during the process of sorting out ethnic groups between 1944 and 1951, both externally and internally.

Major Transfers of Populations 1944-51

Various German groups	12.5 million
Poles repatriated from the West and the USSR as well as resettlers from Central Poland	4.48 million
Ukrainians, White Russians, Lithuanians transferred to USSR from Poland	520,000
Czechs and Slovaks resettled in Border Region	1.8 million
Hungarians and Slovaks expelled or exchanged under the agreement of February 27, 1946.	120,000
Turks transferred from Bulgaria to Turkey	160,000

Populations Moved

This was not a new phenomenon in world history. In the 1920s, 1.25 million Greeks and over 350,000 Turks moved across the border.

During the five years of World War II various authorities transferred 55 ethnic minority groups between September 1939 to May 1945.

Populations Moved

- German minorities topped the list. The Third Reich had implemented wholesale population transfer. Following their defeat, they became potentially disloyal German ethnic minorities.
- Nine hundred thousand persons scattered throughout northeast and southeast Europe were transplanted from their countries of residence and brought, for the most part, to the western provinces of Poland then incorporated with Germany.
- With the retreat of the German armies in 1944-45 these resettlers fled or were evacuated to Germany proper.

Populations Moved

- The post-liberation regimes of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary immediately mobilized to remove the Germans.
- The Allied Powers endorsed the Czech and Polish schemes at their Conference in Potsdam from July 17 to August 2, 1945, Czechoslovakia transferred 2.5 million Germans. Over 6.6 million were removed from the former German provinces incorporated in Poland and 179,000 were taken out of Hungary, over and above the 100,000 Germans that had left there in 1944-45 with the retreating German armies.

International System

- Victorious Allied Powers dominated the international system during and post WWII. While the League of Nations was dysfunctional and the Allies had yet to create the United Nations, exclusive consultations among the Allies shaped the international system that revolved around them.
- The Big Three, USA, UK, and USSR met thrice, in Tehran (December 1943), Yalta (February 1945), and Potsdam (July 1945).



International System

- Within the Allied Powers' conference system, the USSR diverged its path despite being a part of the Allied setup and a contributor to the defeat of the Axis Powers.
- The United States emerged as the uncontested leader of the Western camp of the Allied Powers and made phenomenal decisions that shaped the postwar world including the creation of the United Nations.

International System

- First, we will look at the international system that revolved entirely around the Allied Powers, with declared and undeclared rules for the division of power among them.
- Second, we will discuss how the United States removed the hurdles that did not allow its first effort of creating an interstate, international system to succeed.
- Roosevelt managed to create an organization that attracted a better major power presence and a framework that allowed them to work within its Charter more flexibly.

Occupying Forces

- We begin with the Allied Power's world system.
- World War I resulted in the collapse of four empires and the German surrender. As part of the Allied forces, France had an upper hand in defining the terms of the Treaty of Versailles that imposed reparations on Germany. The Treaty also redrew the map of Europe.
- During World War II, the surrender of the two Axis Powers, Germany, and Japan, occurred differently.

Occupying Forces

- The composition of the Allied Forces had changed during the War. Until Hitler decided to invade USSR after considering that he had crippled Great Britain by using the Second World War's enhanced killing capability of the Luftwaffe, the endless aerial bombing of the civilian populations.
- Operation Barbarossa caught Stalin by surprise in June 1941. As the Soviets counterattacked, the USSR became part of the Allied Powers in July 1941.
- The Axis Powers included Germany, Japan, and Italy.

Occupying Forces

- World War I left German sovereignty intact despite imposing crushing limitations on it.
- The Allied victors of World War II decided to occupy Germany directly to enforce the peace and disarmament terms they had finalized at the [Potsdam Conference in 1945](#). The agreement among the Allies provided for the complete disarmament and demilitarization of Germany.
- The Allies also required that the German people accept responsibility for German “ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance,” and agreed to destroy the National Socialist Party and abolish all Nazi laws.

Occupying Forces

- The Allies planned and punished the War criminals, planned to purge the German education of Nazi and militarist doctrines, and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas.
- The Allies governed the sections they controlled but allowed administrative departments to function under the direction of the Control Council.
- The Allies controlled German industry and all economic and financial international transactions including exports and imports.
- The Allies collected reparations from areas under their control, but they also granted the USSR a share of the Western Zone assets.

Occupying Forces

- In the European theater, the USSR had been the key factor in defeating the Nazis. They were the first to reach East Berlin.
- As a war prize, the USSR retained gains they had initially made under their alliance with Germany and later while fighting Germany.
- The West consented to the Soviet interest in having friendly governments in Eastern Europe and the territorial gains they had made in the Baltics and Poland.

Occupying Forces

- The USSR-West paths diverged over control of Germany despite their common objectives.
- Within a year, the United States and Great Britain merged their occupation zones to enhance German economic recovery.
- Germany, however, remained divided into the Western and Soviet zones. In June 1948, the Soviet Union blocked all road access between West Germany and West Berlin.

Occupying Forces

- As a result of the Soviet blockade, the United States began an 11-month-long airlift of supplies to the stranded citizens of West Berlin.
- The blockade and airlift contributed to cementing the division of Germany and Europe into East and West.

Occupying Forces

- In 1949, the occupying powers in both East and West Germany replaced their military governors with civilian leaders, and the occupations ended officially in the mid-1950s.
- Reunification finally took place in October of 1990.

Occupying Forces

- In the case of the invaders of Pearl Harbor, the [Instrument of Surrender](#) resulted from the drastic action the United States had taken.
- The United States single-handedly governed an occupied Japan.

Occupying Forces

- The Instrument of Surrender, September 1945, required enforcement of all proclamations, orders, and directives deemed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) to be proper to effectuate this surrender and issued by him or under his authority.
- Japan also recognized that the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate these terms of surrender.

Japan Rebuilt

- Between 1945 and 1947, the United States took both punitive and rehabilitating steps. The SCAP introduced land reform, encouraged the emergence of a free-market capitalist system, and introduced a new constitution.
- SCAP-driven Constitution downgraded the emperor's status to that of a figurehead, empowered the parliamentary system, promoted greater rights and privileges for women including the right to vote, and renounced the right to wage war, which involved eliminating all non-defensive armed forces.

Japanese Occupation Ended

- During the Korean War (1950-53), Japan became the principal supply depot for UN forces and reaped its economic benefits.
- By 1950, the idea of a re-armed and militant Japan no longer alarmed U.S. officials. The final agreement allowed the United States to maintain its bases in Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan, and the U.S. Government promised Japan a bilateral security pact.
- In September of 1951, fifty-two nations met in San Francisco to discuss the treaty, and ultimately, forty-nine of them signed it. Notable holdouts included the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

The Nuremberg Trial and the Tokyo War Crimes Trials (1945–1948)

- The Allies also established the first international criminal tribunals to prosecute war criminals.
- In Germany, the International Military Tribunal (IMT) in Nuremberg, indicted twenty-two senior German political and military leaders, including Hermann Goering, Rudolph Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Alfred Rosenberg, and Albert Speer.
- In Japan, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) was created in Tokyo, Japan, under a 1946 proclamation by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in occupied Japan. The IMTFE presided over the prosecution of nine senior Japanese political leaders and eighteen military leaders.

Europe Revived: Marshall Plan

- In 1947 the U.S. Government began a massive aid program for Europe under the Marshall Plan.
- The Soviet Union prevented the countries along the Soviet border in Eastern Europe. Instead, the Soviet Union offered its own postwar program for economic aid.

Marshall Plan

- Secretary of State George C. Marshall called for a comprehensive program to rebuild Europe in 1947.
- Congress passed the Economic Cooperation Act in March 1948 and approved funding that would eventually rise to over \$12 billion for the rebuilding of Western Europe.
- The Marshall Plan revitalized European industrialization and brought extensive investment into the region.
- In recognition of this great humanitarian effort, Secretary of State Marshall was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1953.

United Nations

- During the War, the Allied Powers held three summit meetings at Yalta, Tehran, and Potsdam. These meetings took significant decisions about issues of bilateral and international nature. In February 1945, the Allied Powers met at Yalta from Feb. 4 to 11 and agreed to set up the United Nations organization.
- The Allies decided that the United States would host a conference on the proposed world organization on 25 April 1945. They also finalized the list of invitees.
- USSR secured admission to original membership of two Soviet Socialist Republics, i.e., the Ukraine and White Russia (Byelorussian USSR).

United Nations

- The participants decided that each member of the Security Council should have one vote. Five Permanent Members were the United States, USSR, ROC, United Kingdom, and France.
- PRC replaced ROC in 1971. Russia retained the USSR seat in December 1991.
- On procedural matters, the Council should decide by an affirmative vote of seven (now nine) members.
- Under Chapter VI, a permanent member party to a dispute should abstain from voting.

United Nations

- The US held a Conference in San Francisco, in April-June 1945 to adopt the Charter. Forty-six countries attended and signed.
- With a mixed record of performance, the UN has outlived the League and has a growing membership, currently 193.

Twins of Bretton Woods

- The United States also convened the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference on July 1, 1944, attended by 730 delegates.
- The Conference adopted on July 22, 1944, the Final Act of the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. It included charters outlining the goals and mechanisms of both the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- The Western European countries sought to reinforce their common defense after the war.
- In March 1948, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg signed the Brussels Treaty. This treaty provided collective defense; if any one of these nations was attacked, the others were bound to help defend it.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- The Truman Administration decided to lead a wider organization to defend Western democracies. Truman, unlike Wilson, took Republican Senators on board and had their consent to lead the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.
- Original NATO members, the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom agreed to collective defense in Article Five of its charter which considers an attack against one an attack against all.
- Later in 1949, President Truman proposed a military assistance program, and the Mutual Defense Assistance Program passed the U.S. Congress in October, appropriating some 1.4 billion dollars to build Western European defenses.

NATO

- The Korean War expedited the member states' integration and coordination of defense forces through a centralized headquarters.
- The United States bolstered its troop commitments to Europe to provide assurances against Soviet aggression on the European continent.
- In 1952, NATO admitted Greece and Turkey and added the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955. Currently, [NATO has thirty-two members.](#)
- Responding to NATO, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Treaty Organization with its satellite states of Eastern Europe as members.

George Kennan Telegram 1946

- George Kennan was the American Charge d'Affaires in Moscow in 1946 when he sent a long telegram to Washington defining who the Soviets were and how America must deal with them.
- Kennan had a deep impact on America's Soviet Policy providing the theoretical framework, perhaps unintentionally, for the Cold War.

George Kennan Telegram 1946

- Here are some excerpts from the telegram:

“At the bottom of the Kremlin's **neurotic view of world affairs** is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. Originally, this was the insecurity of a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on a vast exposed plain in a neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples. To this was added, as Russia came into contact with the economically advanced West, fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies in that area...”

George Kennan Telegram 1946

- George Kennan continues:

“It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smoldered ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for the first time in Russia. Only in this land which had never known a friendly neighbor or indeed any tolerant equilibrium of separate powers, either internal or international, could a doctrine thrive that viewed economic conflicts of society as insoluble by peaceful means.”

George Kennan Telegram 1946

- George Kennan continues:

“But I would like to record my conviction that the problem is within our power to solve--and that without recourse to any general military conflict.. In support of this conviction, there are certain observations of a more encouraging nature I would like to make:

George Kennan Telegram 1946

- George Kennan continues:

(1) Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic nor adventuristic. It does not work with fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to the logic of reason, it is highly sensitive to the logic of force. For this reason, it can easily withdraw--and usually does when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns.”

Truman Doctrine

- Kennan's message translated into the containment of the Soviet influence in whichever direction it spread as outlined in the Truman Doctrine, 1947.
- In March 1947, the Truman Doctrine established that the United States would provide political, military, and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces.

Truman Doctrine

- The immediate cause for the Truman Doctrine was that the British Government had expressed an inability to provide military and economic assistance to the Greek Government in its civil war against the Greek Communist Party. Truman asked Congress to support the Greek Government against the Communists.
- Truman also asked Congress to assist Turkey, since that nation, too, had previously been dependent on British aid.

Defining Interstate Relations

- Red threat became the defining element of security perceptions in America at home and abroad. McCarthyism of the late 1940s and 1950s internally, and international conflicts like the Korean (1950-53) and Vietnam War (1955-75) were the most tragic expressions of growing differences between two powerful states and their people.
- The arms race reinforced the notions of Mutual Assured Destruction and ironically minimized the chances of a war although the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 challenged some of those certitudes.

Defining Interstate Relations: Robert S. McNamara

- Interstate and intercultural relations are complex. This is what Robert S. McNamara had to say about the US involvement in the Vietnam War in terms of lessons learned, in his book, *In Retrospect*, 1995 (pp 321-323).
 - 1. We misjudged then-as we have since, the geopolitical intentions of our adversaries....and we exaggerated the danger to the United States of their actions.
 - 3. We underestimated the power of nationalism...
 - 4. Our misjudgments of friends and foes alike reflected our profound ignorance of history, culture, and politics in the area, and the personalities of their leaders...

Defining Interstate Relations: Robert S. McNamara

- 5. We failed ...to recognize the limitations of modern high-technology military equipment, forces, and doctrine in confronting conventional, highly motivated people's movements...
- 8. We did not recognize that neither our people nor our leaders are omniscient...We do not have the God-given right to shape every nation in our own image or as we choose.
- 9. We must act only in conjunction with multinational forces supported by the international community.
- 10. We failed to recognize that in international affairs...there may be problems with no immediate solutions.

Conclusion

- We will do decolonization next week and see a massive increase in the number of independent nation-states in the world.
- The post-WWII international system has enabled a growing number of international state actors to interact variously at the multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels.
- The UN has survived longer than the League and we have avoided a third world war so far despite different pressure points that continue to test human resolve to enhance mutual understanding and live in peace.

Email

Questions/Comments

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