

# THEORY AND PRACTICE

PART

I

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Scientists at the Stockholm Environmental Institute expect climate change to cut the production of sugar, coffee, and other key products dramatically in the coming years.

How might climate change threaten international, economic, and human security, and what actors will be involved in addressing the challenge?

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## 2

## THE PLAYERS AND THE PLAYING FIELD

Anarchy, States, and Non-state Actors

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to . . .

- 2.1 Summarize how the search for international, economic, and human security has evolved in a changing international system.
- 2.2 List the major types of actors and relationships of the pre-Westphalian international system.
- 2.3 Differentiate the major types of actors and relationships of the Westphalian international system.
- 2.4 Recognize the major types of actors and relationships of the neo-Westphalian international system.

## SECURITY, PROSPERITY, QUALITY OF LIFE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Since the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) first committed its signatories to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, concerns over global climate change and its consequences, costs, and challenges have increased. The rapid, historically unparalleled changes to the climate over the past half-century or so have been dramatic and, while potentially affecting all, they have impacted some disproportionately. The global community has long focused on the potential for grievous harm to human and economic security—including effects on economic activity, health, agricultural production, famine and drought, and rising sea levels, among others—but many players in world politics increasingly see the challenges of global climate change to conflict and national/international security as well.

A decade ago, an influential study in *Science* (Hsiang and Miguel 2013) concluded that even modest changes in temperatures increased conflicts and threats to security, ranging from individual violence (e.g., murder, rape) to political instability and intrastate conflict and even international wars, especially in the most vulnerable and fragile states. Since then, US intelligence agencies, the US Defense Department, and the US General Accounting Office and other US foreign policy agencies (e.g., The White House 2021; US GAO 2022) have all warned of the serious national security risks and consequences of climate change. So, too, has the European Union, the United Nations, the NATO alliance, and many others.

Non-state actors have also been central to the discussion. The United Nations has been at the forefront and, in 2018, established a “Climate Security Mechanism” as an effort of its departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and Peace Operations (DPO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to help the UN system systematically address climate-related security risks (see <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/what-we-do/disaster-risk-reduction/climate-security-mechanism>). Major transnational corporations have both lobbied for and against action on climate change, and some have taken steps to help address it. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also been heavily involved. For example, the foreign policy analysis and advocacy organization the American Security Project has a focus on the risks associated with climate security threats, which the organization describes as accelerants of instability and threat multipliers (American Security Project 2023), especially in fragile states. Their “Global Climate Security Index” shows that more than 70% of the world now sees climate change as a national security matter (see <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/climate-energy-and-security/climate-change/gsdicc/>). Many environmental, scientific, and citizen NGOs advocate for both international and domestic policies and action to combat harmful climate change and address its security risks. These include campaigns to raise awareness and change individual behavior, promote divestment and climate accountability for organizational and corporate behavior, and direct political pressure and lobbying for policy action to mitigate security threats from international groups such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund and climate-specific groups and networks like the Climate Action Network, which links more than 1,900 civil society organizations in over 130 countries on the matter (see <https://climatenetwork.org>). Prominent individuals such



as Bill McKibben, Greta Thunberg, Leonardo DiCaprio, Sir David Attenborough, Shailene Woodley, Meryl Streep, and Cate Blanchett have also actively promoted climate change policy and action.

Reflecting these concerns, at the 2022 Global Climate Change conference—COP27—UN Secretary-General António Guterres used his opening address to the plenary session to issue this warning: “Humanity has a choice: cooperate or perish. It is either a Climate Solidarity Pact—or a Collective Suicide Pact” (quoted in van der Zee and Horton 2022).

1. What are the key issues and dynamics of this issue?
2. What international actors are involved and most important in addressing this matter?
3. What roles and influence do they have?

## INTRODUCTION: THE IR GAME BOARD

The complex patterns and dynamics of international relations take place on an evolving “game board.” The players in this game engage in an international system that both shapes, and is shaped by, their actions and interactions as they seek security in its international, economic, and human dimensions. In this chapter, we take a broad look at this game board, or playing field, to lay out and assess its main features, the key types of players involved, and the patterns and trends that characterize both over time. As we set this context, we will see that the system, the players, and their roles and interactions have developed through three historical periods.

## THE SEARCH FOR INTERNATIONAL, ECONOMIC, AND HUMAN SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

You are probably familiar with different types of international actors. You’re a citizen of a country (or a *state*, as we say in international politics), you may be a member of the local Amnesty International chapter on your campus, and someone you know may work for a multinational corporation. These examples represent different types of international actors in world politics. The playing field for such actors is the international system, which consists of the players and the relationships between them. Both the players and the relationships matter. In the modern era, the players, or international actors, are of several broad types. States—such as France or Japan—are typically easy to identify, as they occupy defined spaces on maps. There are about 200 such states; the newest one is South Sudan, which became a recognized state in 2011. There are also non-state actors. Some non-state actors are actually made up of states. Examples include the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), or the African Union (AU). These are typically termed international organizations (IOs). Other non-state actors are organizations that allow individuals to join, such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, or the Red Cross. These are usually called nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Some are commercial business entities, such as General Motors, British Petroleum (BP), Apple, Alphabet (Google), ExxonMobil, or Bayer, which are commonly referred to as multinational or transnational corporations (MNCs or TNCs) when their production facilities and transactions cross the boundaries of several countries. Others are transnational advocacy networks (TANs), such as al-Qaeda or the Climate Action Network. Local or subnational actors can be identified, too. These might include *individuals* who change the world around them, like Andy Moon, Chetna Gala Sinha, Nice Nailantei Leng’ete, or Hugh Jackman; or wealthy people who take action in world politics, such as Melinda French Gates or George Soros. Other subnational actors may be *governmental units* within a state that influence world politics with their actions, such as when the Spanish city of Barcelona sends a trade mission to China. As you can see, the numbers and types of international actors are numerous, and we take a closer look at them later in this chapter.

The **international system** includes the ongoing relationships among these actors as well. International actors do not just bump up against each other randomly. There are expectations about what actors should do in certain situations. There are both written rules and unwritten norms that

condition how these actors behave. For example, the United States may still be the most powerful state in the international system at this point, but that does not mean it can do anything it wants. Other international actors prefer order, and thus they want to be able to anticipate what actors like the United States will do whenever possible. The presence of expectations, rules, and norms makes anticipating such actions somewhat easier. As you'll see, both the actors and their relationships matter.

### Anarchy and Interdependence

Let's begin with the international system and its key characteristics. One of the defining structural characteristics of the international system is anarchy. As we said in Chapter 1, formal anarchy does not mean chaos. Anarchy simply means the lack of a central, overarching authority that governs world politics and the actors involved in it. In the anarchic international system, the main players—states—have **sovereignty**, which means they govern themselves. There is no equivalent of the cop on the corner to make sure that rules and norms are followed or that expectations are met, and there is no central authority to govern the members of the system. International actors, particularly states, will often pursue their own interests with seemingly little concern about how their actions affect others, in part because no one has the responsibility, authority, and power to make them behave, and in part because the anarchic structure of the international system makes **self-help** a core motivation. In such circumstances, some international actors behave as if the only law is the law of the jungle—the survival of the fittest. Of course, among these actors, power differences exist, and such asymmetries can be important elements of what states do and how they interact. China has more options regarding what it does than do states like Moldova or Haiti.

However, anarchy is not the only significant structural characteristic. The fact that most international actors do not behave in a purely self-interested fashion suggests that anarchy is not the law of the jungle. Other features of the international system help create order. One of these important structural characteristics is **interdependence**, which refers to the mutual connections that tie states and other players to each other. No state is fully independent and able to provide for all its needs and manage all its problems, and the mutual dependencies that exist and grow link players together. Not all these dependencies are equal, and interdependence between different actors varies, but the bottom line is that what one state does often affects other states. This interdependence—in varying levels and degrees—creates significant connections between the players that force them to interact with each other and often result in greater cooperation than would otherwise be expected. Therefore, although formal anarchy is an essential feature, it does not mean that states or other players are not connected.

Similarly, although there are no authoritative central bodies—those that can enforce laws—to govern the international political system, formal anarchy does not mean there is no order, organization, or meaningful institutions in world politics. In part due to interdependence, but also due to common goals and common problems, the international system has many international organizations whose members are the sovereign states of the anarchic system. Some are global—such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund—others are regional—such as the EU or AU. These kinds of organizations provide forums for members to coordinate efforts to solve common problems. Moreover, although these organizations' authority is severely constrained by their members, they often play important roles, help develop norms and rules, and frequently have resources (provided by their members) to address problems. The international system is anarchic, but a level of structure and order exists within it, and these IOs can mitigate the effect of anarchy to some degree.

Furthermore, even for major powers such as the United States, China, Russia, or Germany, there are costs to be paid for not meeting others' expectations or not following well-established rules and norms. International actors are often concerned with reciprocity—the practice of behaving toward others as they behave toward you—and therefore follow these rules and norms to help ensure that others do as well. Violating rules and norms can result in costs ranging from international scorn to economic or military punishment. Despite the formal anarchy of the system, the international system is like a society in some ways. Those who repeatedly choose to act outside its rules, norms, and

expectations are typically seen as outlaws. So when North Korea is called out for failing to follow the rules of the system, spokespersons for the regime react to such labels because those words sting. In the anarchic international system, diplomatic communications can lessen or inflame tensions between actors as well as clarify or obscure an actor's intentions; sometimes words are substitutes for actions, and at other times they trigger the very reactions they are trying to prevent (Trager 2010). So how do we protect ourselves?

### The Security Dilemma

The most tempting response to the question of how we protect ourselves is the simplest one. As “Rule 2: Double-Tap” in *Zombieland* reminds us, in anarchy, you'd better have a gun. In an anarchic system, self-help is the norm, as states must depend on themselves to provide for their own security and protect their own interests. But how does one society increase its own security without threatening the security of others? This consequence of self-help is the **security dilemma**: Often, the things that a state does to make itself secure threaten—or at least appear to threaten—the security of other states, who respond in ways that end up creating or expanding threats to the first state. This dilemma represents a central dynamic in world politics.

When we think of rivals such as India and Pakistan or Israel and Iran, the dangers involved in the security dilemma become self-evident. India and Pakistan share a border; they have fought three major wars since 1947, all of which India has won; and they have minor border clashes virtually each year. In 1998, India detonated a series of nuclear devices, and Pakistan did the same just a few weeks later. There seems no doubt that rivals like these two adjoining states would benefit from more cooperation. Yet, as the prisoner's dilemma in Chapter 1 showed, cooperation is hard to achieve. The gains that come from both sides' cooperation are attractive, but the risks to one side if it cooperates and the other doesn't are profound—literally life-and-death in this case! Prudence suggests that each country should continue to arm itself and watch the other closely. That means the next war could be fundamentally more deadly.



*The Walking Dead*, an American Horror Drama Television Series

What happens when there is no central government to provide order?

Atlaspix/Alamy Stock Photo

For their part, Israel and Iran have not fought each other directly, but former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for the destruction of Israel. More to the point, Iran has been a primary financier of the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, which Israeli forces were unable to defeat following a series of border clashes in 2006. Israel's government is troubled by Iran's nuclear programs, fearing it will acquire nuclear weapons that would threaten Israel, but Israel is reputed to have 100 to



200 nuclear weapons itself. Each of these rivals watches the other's actions closely. A strike by Israel against Iran, or by Iran against Israel, could happen, and the state that launched the attack would probably claim it acted in self-defense.

Although core features of the international system such as the role of anarchy and the security dilemma are persistent, their nature and effects change over time. To best understand international politics, the key turning point in history came in 1648 with the **Treaties of Westphalia** that ended the Thirty Years' War and began the modern state system. Given this starting point, we can divide the international system's history into three periods: the pre-Westphalian system, the Westphalian system, and the neo-Westphalian system.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian meets Josep Borrell, high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy, and Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora at the Foreign Ministry headquarters in Iran's capital, Tehran, on Saturday, June 25, 2022 to discuss Iran's nuclear weapons programs.

Why are agreements on issues like this so hard to make and keep?

ATTA KENARE/AFP via Getty Images

## THE PRE-WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM (PRE-1648)

For most of human history, geography limited people's contact. Oceans, rivers, mountain ranges, dense forests, and deserts divided peoples and limited their interaction. Individuals might live their whole lives without traveling more than a few miles from their place of birth. Over time, innovations like domesticating plants and animals led to larger communities and thus larger political organizations. Year-round agriculture and constantly occupied communities began approximately 7,000 years ago with the Sumerian culture in ancient Mesopotamia (Kramer 1988). Around the globe, monarchies and empires rose and fell, and sophisticated and successful societies flourished in many parts of the world outside Europe. However, *modern international politics arose out of and are dominated by European history, perspectives, and experiences*. The combination of Europe's advantages—temperate climate, adequate rainfall, arable land, natural resources, navigable rivers, and multiple maritime linkages—allowed its inhabitants to expand and dominate others (Diamond 1999). Thus, we can say that the international system is Eurocentric, and non-Western perspectives, experiences, and interest have long been marginalized in both theory and practice.



This Eurocentric system evolved in many steps. The Romans used both military force and technological innovations, such as a superior system of roads, to knit together much of Europe. After the fall of the Roman Empire, a weak monarchy system evolved. That system was dominated by **feudalism**, a socio-economic-political system in which rulers would grant land to the local aristocracy in return for their loyalty and support. In return for the landowners meeting their material needs, peasants would work the land. As monarchs became militarily stronger, the territories they controlled grew larger and better integrated, becoming the bases of modern states—and modern state rivalries.

The **Thirty Years' War** (1618–1648) was the watershed event in modern international politics. It began as a religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics in the Holy Roman Empire when the pope tried to force Protestant rulers to return to Catholicism. Because the Holy Roman Empire stretched across all of Central Europe, over time virtually every European power became involved. The Danes, Dutch, Swedes, Spanish, French, and others sequentially entered conflicts that became more about power—and who would rule where—than about religion alone. When the wars finally ended with the Treaties of Westphalia, many of Europe's modern states had broken free from the Holy Roman Empire, and a new international system was created based on sovereign states and the principle of non-intervention into their domestic affairs (see Map 2.1). In short, within a state's borders, the religion of both the people and their ruler was their business, not the business of outsiders, and the modern state system was born.

MAP 2.1 ■ Europe After the Treaty of Westphalia, 1648



Source: Simeon Netchev. 2023. "Europe at the Peace of Westphalia, 1648." *World History Encyclopedia*. <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/17228/europe-at-the-peace-of-westphalia-1648/>

## THE WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM (1648–1989)

The idea of borders as barriers to political interference from outside was very important in the Westphalian system, and, as we'll see, within those borders different types of governing regimes developed.

## States and Their Characteristics

States were the primary actors in the Westphalian international system. A **state** is a political-legal unit that meets three conditions: (a) It has an identifiable population; (b) it is located within defined territorial borders recognized by others; and (c) its government possesses sovereignty, which means it is self-governing. States have great diversity in their form of government, from presidential and parliamentary democracies of many kinds to authoritarian regimes centered around individual leaders, parties, the military, and combinations of these rulers. However, one core idea of the Westphalian system was that these states all possessed sovereignty. In **Westphalian sovereignty**, *within a state's borders there is no higher authority* than the government of the state itself. Each state—regardless of its size or form of government—rules over its own territory and domestic affairs as it sees fit, and states are entitled to noninterference by other states in their domestic affairs, a principle included in Article 2 of the UN Charter in 1945. Westphalian sovereignty also has an external component. Sovereign states are free to choose their own courses of action in the world beyond their borders, and with that freedom comes the opportunity to succeed or to fail.

The roughly 200 states in the international system vary widely across many dimensions.<sup>1</sup> As shown in Table 2.1, they can be large or small, rich or poor. The smallest and poorest states usually have the least influence: Indeed, the five poorest states in GDP terms are all Pacific Island states increasingly threatened by rising sea levels caused by climate change, but they have had little luck influencing larger, wealthier, and more powerful states to address their plight, which involves their very survival. States also vary widely in how much freedom their citizens experience. As Map 2.2 shows, states can be

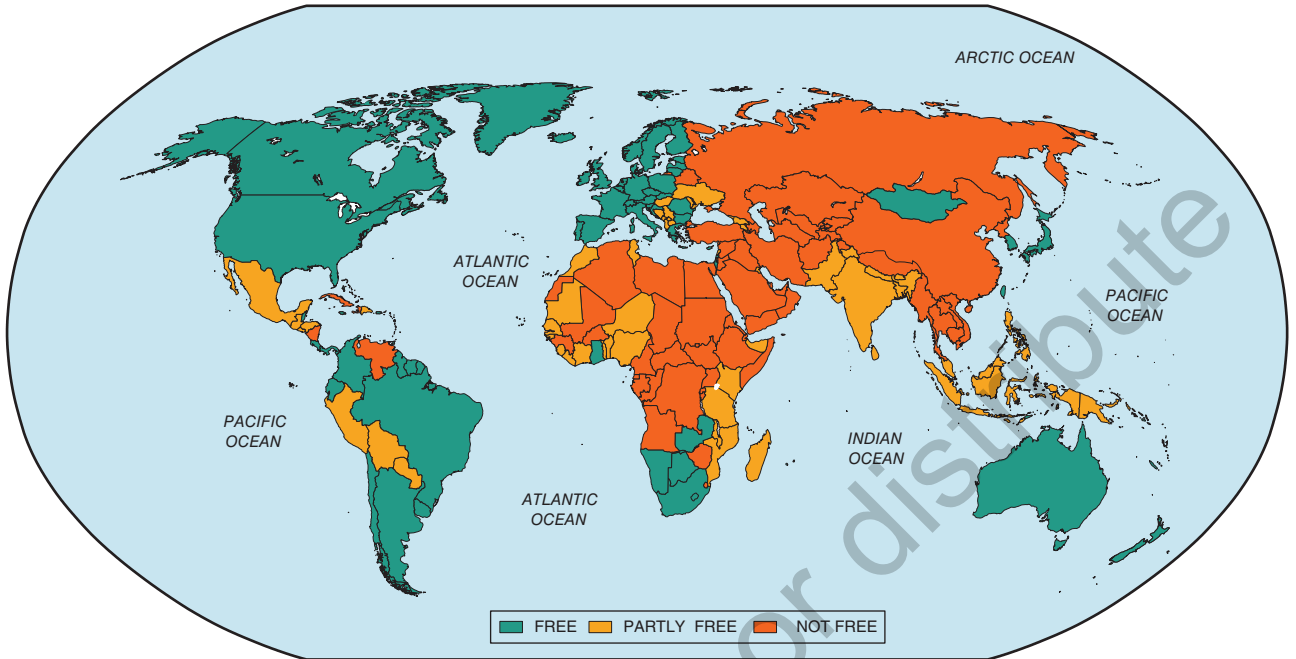
**TABLE 2.1** ■ The Range of States in the International System

Five Largest States (in square miles) <sup>a</sup>	Five Smallest States (in square miles) <sup>b</sup>
1. Russia (6.6 million)	1. Vatican City (0.2)
2. Canada (3.9 million)	2. Monaco (0.7)
3. United States (3.7 million)	3. Nauru (8.5)
4. China (3.7 million)	4. Tuvalu (9)
5. Brazil (3.3 million)	5. San Marino (24)
Five Largest States (est. population 2023) <sup>c</sup>	Five Smallest States (est. population 2023) <sup>c</sup>
1. India (1.428 billion)	1. Vatican City (1,000)
2. China (1.425 billion)	2. Niue (2,000)
3. United States (340 million)	3. Cook Islands (7,939)
4. Indonesia (280 million)	4. Nauru (9,852)
5. Pakistan (248 million)	5. Tuvalu (11,639)
Five Wealthiest States (World Bank 2022 gross domestic product in millions) <sup>d</sup>	Five Poorest States (World Bank 2022 gross domestic product in millions) <sup>d</sup>
1. United States (\$25,462,700)	1. Tuvalu (\$60.4)
2. China (\$17,963,171)	2. Nauru (\$150.9)
3. Japan (\$4,231,141)	3. Kiribati (\$188.3)
4. Germany (\$4,072,192)	4. Palau (\$217.8)
5. United Kingdom (\$3,070,668)	5. Marshall Islands (\$279.7)

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Infoplease, "The Top Ten: Largest Countries," <https://www.infoplease.com/top-ten-largest-countries>; <sup>b</sup><https://www.thoughtco.com/the-worlds-smallest-countries-1433446/>; <sup>c</sup><https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/population/country-comparison/>; <sup>d</sup>World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data>.

**MAP 2.2** ■ **Map of Freedom, 2023**

Do any of these classifications of free, partly free, or not free states surprise you?



Status	Countries	Territories
Free	84	1
Partly Free	54	4
Not Free	57	10
Total	195	15

Source: Freedom House. 2023. "Freedom in the World 2023." [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FIW\\_World\\_2023\\_DigitalPDF.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FIW_World_2023_DigitalPDF.pdf)

politically free, partly free, or not free based on their regime type and protection of political rights and civil liberties.

As Table 2.2 shows, some of the states with the strongest nonnuclear militaries may surprise you. Did you expect to find India, South Korea, or Pakistan on the list? Almost certainly the presence of the

**TABLE 2.2** ■ **Ten Strongest Conventional Military Powers in the World (comparing nonnuclear forces only, 2020)**

1. United States
2. Russia
3. China
4. India
5. United Kingdom
6. South Korea
7. Pakistan
8. Japan
9. France
10. Italy

Source: GlobalFirepower.com, "2020 Military Strength Ranking," <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>.

United States as the number-one conventional military power did not come as a surprise, but what does this number-one ranking mean? How strong is the US military, and how do others react to it? Those questions are addressed in the box “Foreign Policy in Perspective: The US Military and Its Impact on Global Armaments.”

An interesting exception to the sovereignty principle can be found in the foreign embassies in a state’s capital city. **Embassies** are properties that house the permanent diplomatic missions of other countries. They have the benefit of **extraterritoriality**. For example, that meant when WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange stepped into the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, he left the United Kingdom and entered Ecuador. While Ecuador allowed him to stay there—until 2019—the British could not execute an arrest warrant issued by Sweden against him for the alleged sexual assault of two of his Swedish volunteers or extradite him to the United States to face espionage charges brought against him there. Thus, extraterritoriality explains why some people accused of wrongdoing may seek asylum in the embassies of other states. The key officials working in these missions are professional diplomats—individuals occupying positions in the foreign policy establishments of states or the management of other organizations who represent and negotiate on behalf of their country or employer. Even when they leave the grounds of the embassy, accredited diplomats are still largely exempt from the laws of the state in which they work. Thus, if an accredited diplomat (or even an immediate family member of one) is accused of a crime, typically the most a state can do is to expel the diplomat or person from the country. Of course, the other state involved may expel one of the first state’s diplomats in retaliation, as indicated in the box “Spotlight On: Diplomatic Immunities.”

Diplomatic immunity is a pragmatic adjustment to the sovereignty principle based on reciprocity: If countries are to sustain communication—even in times of violent conflict—and try to resolve disagreements, they must have confidence that their official representatives and negotiators will be able to engage in diplomacy safely. Yet, embassies and embassy officials are increasingly the targets of state and non-state actors. For example, in 2015 and 2016, attacks resulting in deaths occurred in foreign embassies or missions in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, and Somalia. When diplomats are targets of violence, what implications do you think this holds for the conduct and future of diplomacy—especially given that these attackers are principally non-state actors?

## FOREIGN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE

### The US Military and Its Impact on Global Armaments

In the Westphalian system, states were clearly the most powerful international actors. Because power was measured in military terms, it was rational for states to seek to increase their military power. The more power, the better, right? From that perspective, what does the case of the United States demonstrate?

As Table 2.2 shows, the United States has the most powerful conventional military in the world, but that does not convey the degree of dominance of the United States in the military arena. The United States leads the world in not only conventional but also nuclear weapons. During the Cold War, the United States had more than 12,000 strategic nuclear warheads (those with the range to be launched from one continent and hit targets on another). By 2011, the New START Treaty had restricted the United States and Russia to no more than 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads per side. However, only strategic nuclear warheads were restricted. The United States also has tactical nuclear weapons with shorter ranges. Estimates of the number of these that have been deployed vary, but currently they total about 500 deployed and undeployed, according to the Federation of American Scientists and the Arms Control Association. Russia has more tactical and strategic nuclear warheads than the United States, but its ability to deliver those weapons pales in comparison to the US ability to use long-range missiles, shorter-range missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and bombers to do so. No other state can rival the United States when it comes to the combination and numbers of nuclear weapons and the multiple ways to deliver them, which may be why Russia recently began to reintroduce intermediate-range nuclear missiles to Europe



(which led the United States to abandon the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty in 2019 that banned such weapons for more than 3 decades), and why Russia maintains a much larger arsenal of tactical—or “battlefield” nuclear weapons. The United States remains the only state in the world to have used nuclear weapons in wartime.

However, the United States has also amply demonstrated its willingness to use conventional military force. From 1945 to 2000, the United States used military force 383 times, thereby averaging about seven uses of force per year. How many times has the United States used military force since then? The fact that US military spending accounts for almost 40% of all global military spending further indicates that the United States is committed to maintaining its dominance over others. Does this pursuit of military power make the United States more secure? The security dilemma suggests that other states must consider how to protect themselves from the military might possessed by the United States. How do they do that?

Some states will rely on the development of their own nuclear forces—like North Korea, India, and Pakistan. Others, like China and Iran, invest heavily in the acquisition of modern submarine forces and anti-ship missiles to keep the US Navy at arm’s length. While presumably hoping to avoid a nuclear confrontation, Russia and China have sought to develop increasingly sophisticated weaponry as well. Finally, Russia, China, and North Korea have been long suspected in the thousands of online hacking attacks that target the US military each year.

Thus, in the neo-Westphalian system (see Section 2.4), states still face pressures to defend themselves and their borders, as illustrated by the security dilemma. Consider the following questions:

1. How powerful does a state need to be to defend itself?
2. Does military spending by the US military spending encourage potential rivals to increase their own military spending?
3. How much military spending can the United States or other states afford?

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*Sources:* William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse, *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Nikolai Sokov, “Issue Brief: Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW),” *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, May 2002, <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/tactical-nuclear-weapons/>; Amy F. Woolf, “U.S. Strategic Nuclear Forces: Background, Developments, and Issues,” CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 14, 2009, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL33640.pdf>.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Diplomatic Immunities

Diplomats are normally exempted from prosecution for violating local laws in the host state, because laws vary considerably across states and—considering that diplomats represent another sovereign state—how they are treated can be seen as sending a message about that state. But what happens when diplomats or their family members do bad things? The offenses could be minor. For example, during the Cold War, Soviet diplomats had a reputation for shoplifting underwear at fine department stores. Those crimes were typically ignored. By contrast, in 1997, a Georgian diplomat drove drunk and killed a 16-year-old girl in Washington, DC. With the permission of the Georgian government, that diplomat was prosecuted, convicted of manslaughter, and served time in both US and Georgian prisons.

In December 2013, India’s deputy consul general in New York City—Devyani Khobragade—was arrested and indicted for visa fraud and making false statements to law enforcement officials. The visa fraud involved Khobragade’s claim that she was paying her Indian housekeeper \$4,500 per month, but the housekeeper said she was actually paid less than the US minimum wage. Upon her arrest, Khobragade was treated like any other criminal suspect, which included being strip-searched before being escorted to her jail cell. Incensed at her treatment, Indian officials upgraded her diplomatic assignment to the Indian Embassy, where she had full diplomatic immunity. At that point, the State Department ordered her to leave the country; she did, and subsequently a US diplomat was ordered to leave India. Lost in this exchange were any concerns about the housekeeper or her allegation that she was not allowed by her employer to return home to India.

Was this a case of India being insulted by the United States or of a human trafficking case going unpunished? How could this matter have been handled better?

## Nations and Other Players

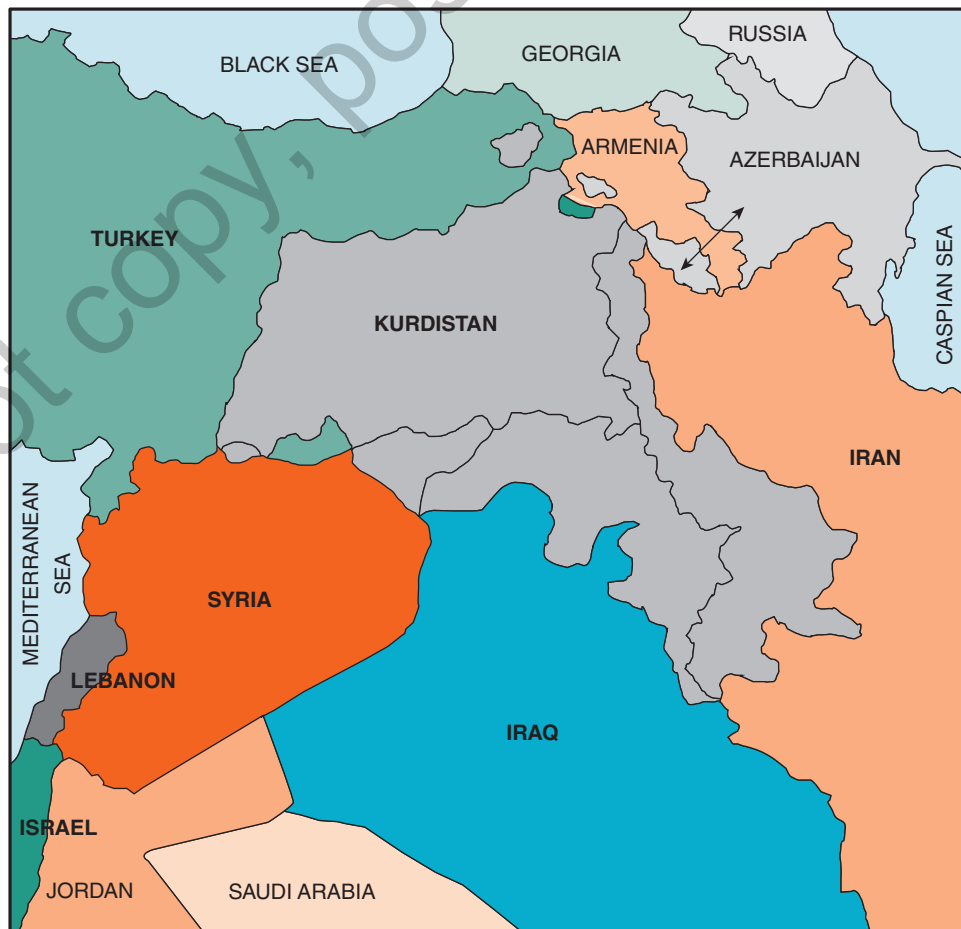
States are not the only way people organize and identify themselves in world politics. Another clarification is appropriate now. Typically, one will hear the terms *country* and *state* used interchangeably. *State* is the more legal term in international politics, but there is no real harm in using these as synonyms. However, the terms *nation* and *state* are often used interchangeably in casual conversation, and that usage is inaccurate. The word **nation** is a sociocultural term for a group of people who possess a collective identity that is a product of multiple factors. It can be something as basic as a sense of shared values that lead people to identify with each other, but in most states, collective or national identity is generally based on more visible factors, like shared ethnicity, religion, language, culture, history, and the like. In any event, the nation concept is fundamentally about distinguishing “us” from “them.” When a state’s population comprises largely members of one nation, the term **nation-state** is most accurate. So, in the strictest sense, Armenia and Japan may reasonably be called nation-states, because nearly all their population share a common ethnicity. By contrast, Kuwaitis and Qataris do not constitute even a bare majority of the populations of Kuwait and Qatar, respectively, so the term *nation-state* is much less accurate in such cases.

Challenging cases come from around the world. In the Balkans, the former Yugoslavia dissolved amid violence driven by ethnic nationalism among a number of groups. In the Middle East, a vexing issue of competing nationalisms involves the Israelis and the Palestinians. They essentially claim the same territory known as Palestine, but both cannot have it. Since 1948, the Israelis have controlled most of the territory; thus, the Palestinians have been a nation without a state. Here we have one territory with two nations.

A different example is represented by the Kurds. Kurds share a common language and history and see themselves as a single nation. However, as Map 2.3 shows, the area in which they would constitute

**MAP 2.3** ■ Kurdistan

How many states would lose territory and people if Kurdistan became independent?



the majority of the population—a potential Kurdistan—overlaps the boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and, to a small extent, Armenia. Thus, we have one nation that spans multiple states but still does not have a state of its own. Afghanistan is another example, just as complicated (see the box “The Revenge of Geography: Ethnic Geography and Conflict in Afghanistan”).

An even more compelling illustration of the differences between nations and states is found in Africa. Former imperial powers established borders based on convenience or the amount of territory they could control, usually in competition with other imperial powers. Those borders rarely corresponded with the national groupings of the indigenous people. Because African states maintained their former colonial borders when they became independent, it is little wonder that many of those states continue to suffer from a lack of a collective identity on the part of their citizenry. Map 2.7 shows how little correspondence there is between state borders and groups based on national ties.

States were not the only actors in the Westphalian system; non-state actors developed as well and existed alongside states. However, state actors were clearly the preeminent actors in the state-centric Westphalian international system. Non-state actors became more important and influential in the neo-Westphalian system, which we discuss in Section 2.4.

### The Evolution of the Westphalian System

Over the 340-year sweep of the Westphalian era, states developed and gained strength. Some got so strong that by the latter half of the 20th century, the Cold War risked the threat of global annihilation. The ending of the Cold War brought this system to a close.

### The Empowerment of States

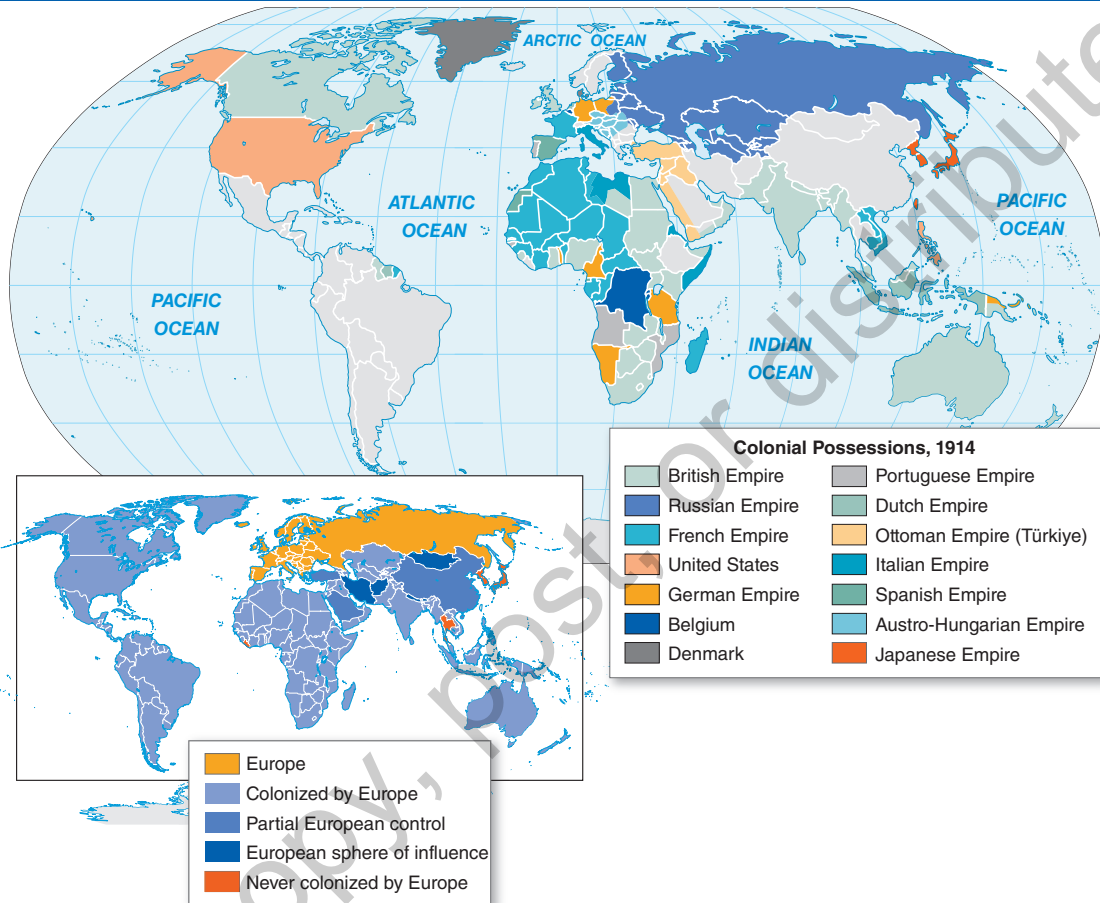
From a European-based system in the 17th century, the Westphalian system expanded globally mostly via European **imperialism**—the colonization and exploitation of other territories in multiple waves over several centuries by European states, which is why a European-based regional system is now the basis of world politics, and why those former colonies continue to struggle with the costs and consequences of colonialism and exploitation. As we also discuss in Chapter 8, imperialism by European powers like Spain and Portugal began even before the Westphalian era began. Over several centuries, European powers seized control—usually with military force—of territories around the world, claiming the land, resources, and people for themselves. VERY few countries escaped this imperialism. As Map 2.4 shows, by the early 20th century, most of the world outside Europe had felt the heavy hand of European imperialism, while much of the rest of world have faced imperial conquest and rule by other countries such as Turkey and Japan as well. It is also very hard not to detect racial and ethnic patterns in the extension of colonial rule.

The colonizers extended their rule and ransacked the exploited areas for their raw materials to send them back to benefit their home country. As they advanced into the Americas, Asia, and Africa, their domination dramatically affected these societies and shaped their trajectories for centuries to come. We will discuss these effects more in Chapter 4 when we take up a “postcolonial” lens to try to understand world politics, but let’s introduce two key consequences here. First, colonialism’s exploitation of raw materials not only damaged the resources and ecosystems of former colonies—including the exploitation, slavery, and even destruction of their people—it also destroyed many elements of their social fabric, creating economic, racial, and ethnic divides in previously harmonious societies. These results dramatically shaped their economic, political, and social paths to the present (Kriekhaus 2006).

Second, the consequences of colonialism include persistent patterns of inequality and exploitative power relationships, not only within the colonized society but especially between the colonizers and colonized. Such patterns are even present in the ways we as students of world politics try to understand international relations, as many of the dominant perspectives and interpretations are Western-centric, shaped by European history and experiences and dominated by voices and institutions of the Global North. The result? Even the study of international relations has long lacked diversity and has largely marginalized or excluded perspectives from the Global South who see (and have experienced) colonial practices and legacies quite differently.

European imperialism also led to serious competition for the new land, and the colonizers often ended up in war with each other as they sought to gain and maintain the most valuable colonies around the globe. For example, the British and French fought over North American colonies, the British and Dutch fought over Indonesia and South Africa, the British and Portuguese fought over India, the British and Russians fought over Afghanistan, and so on.

MAP 2.4 ■ Imperialism and Colonization by the 20th Century



A norm that really began in the French Revolution and spread through the Westphalian system is **nationalism**—the emotional connection of the mass public with the state. By the early 20th century, most citizens were emotionally invested in their state, taking pride in its accomplishments and being offended by any perceived slights by others. Nationalistic rivalries and ties played an important role in the origins of World War I. When a Serb assassinated Austria-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in 1914, the result was a war that spread rapidly. Austria-Hungary couldn't fail to respond to this slight, Serbia couldn't afford to knuckle under, and the Russian czar couldn't afford to disappoint the Russian public that wanted to protect their Slavic cousins in Serbia. The war quickly got out of hand, and its massive cost in lives and treasure led to an armistice in 1918 and the subsequent **Treaty of Versailles** in 1919, a peace treaty with lasting consequences.

Nationalism reached a new high point in the 1930s. Opposition to **communism** arising in the new Soviet Union led to the most extreme application of nationalism: the rise of **fascism** in Italy and Germany. Italy's Benito Mussolini and later Germany's Adolf Hitler both rose to power in part based on their violent opposition to local communists, but their fascist ideology glorified violence and viewed successes on the battlefield as proof of the superiority of their respective nations (Steger 2008). Such nationalist ambitions by Japan and Germany led to World War II, which in some ways



started as early as 1931 when Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria. In 1939, war began in Europe with the German invasion of western Poland and the later Soviet invasion of eastern Poland and Finland. The war did not end until the Germans surrendered in May 1945, and following the US detonation of atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered in August 1945.

## THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY

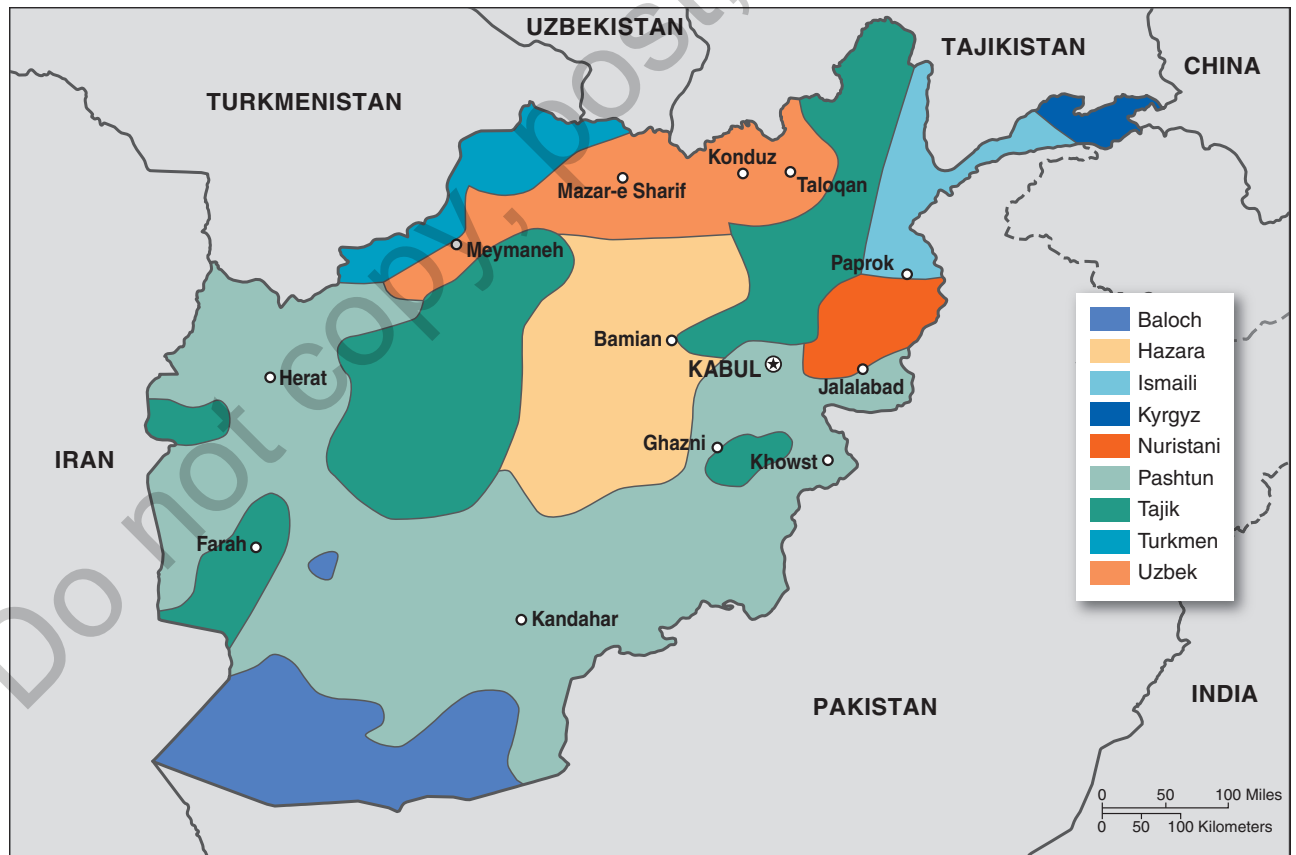
### Ethnic Geography and Conflict in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has long been difficult to govern. Part of that difficulty is physical, because mountain ranges crisscross the country, separating inhabitants from each other. Outside the major cities, Afghans tend to be suspicious of strangers, as they tend to live fairly isolated lives. But the complicated cultural identities are even more important to these challenges.

As shown by Map 2.5, Afghanistan is a land of many nations. The largest group of Afghans is the Pashtuns, at about 42% of the population, followed by Tajiks (27%), Hazaras and Uzbeks (9%), the Aimaks (4%), Turkmen (3%), and Balochs (2%). About half of the Afghan population speaks Dari—an Afghan form of Persian—and the Pashtuns speak Pashto. Both Dari and Pashto are considered the official languages of Afghanistan.

MAP 2.5 ■ Afghanistan's Tribal Areas

With these different nationalities included, is it any wonder that Afghanistan is hard to unite, much less govern?



Source: Maps of World, [www.mapsofworld.com](http://www.mapsofworld.com).

So who speaks for Afghanistan? The leaders have traditionally been Pashtuns, because they are the largest single group, but there are more combined non-Pashtuns in Afghanistan than Pashtuns. Complicating this is the fact that there are many more Pashtuns; they just happen to live across the border in Pakistan. As Map 2.6 shows, if Pashtunistan was a nation-state, it would encompass much of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Plus, we cannot ignore the fact that the Afghan Tajiks may have emotional bonds to Tajikistan next door, that Afghan Uzbeks may have similar ties to Uzbekistan, that Afghan Turkmen may look to Turkmenistan, and that even Afghan Balochs may look with yearning eyes toward the Balochistan provinces in southeastern Iran and southwestern Pakistan.

MAP 2.6 ■ Pashtunistan

If Pashtunistan were an independent state, what would that mean for Afghanistan and Pakistan?



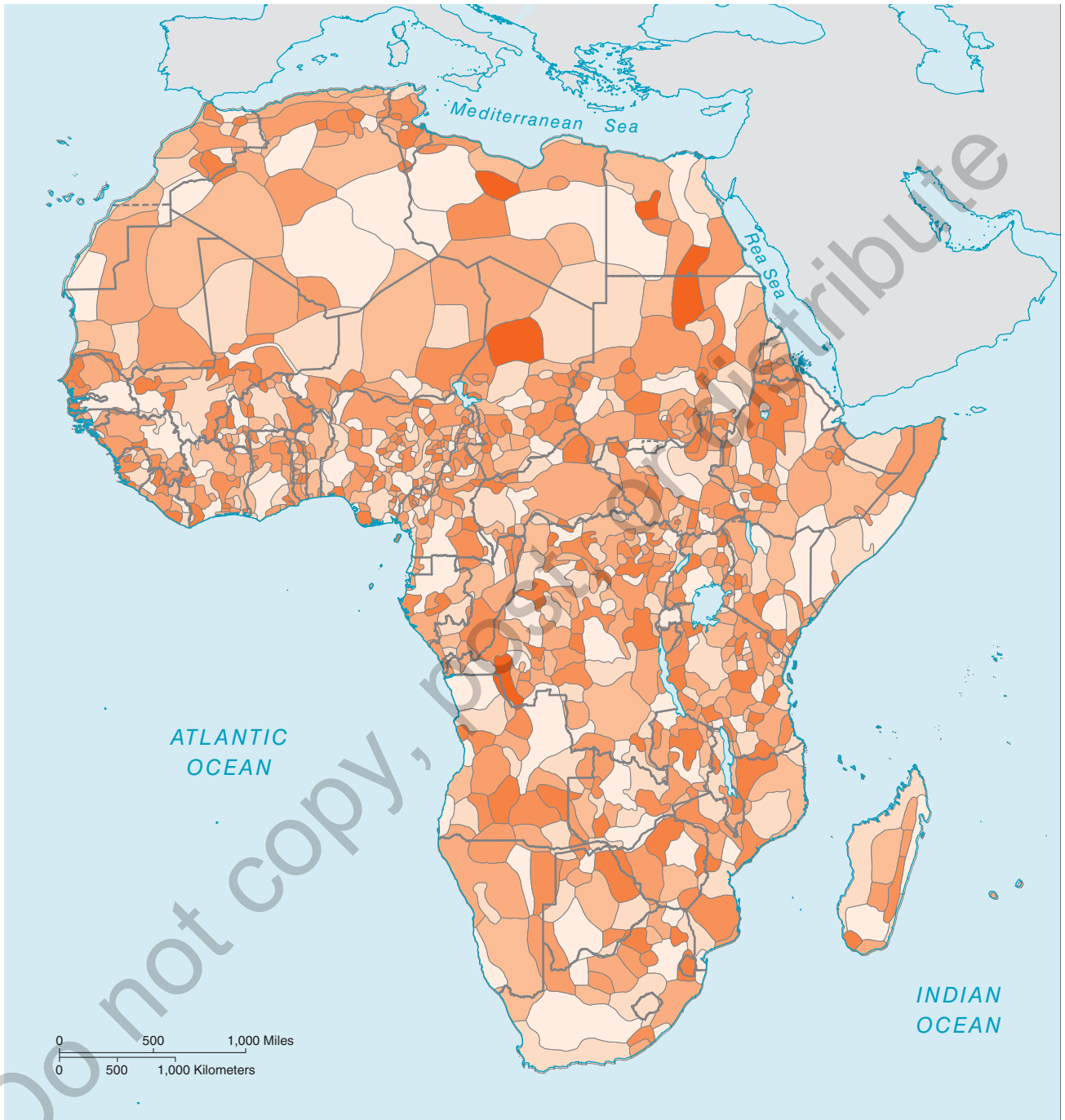
Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>.

1. What role might ethnic geography play in conflict and instability in Afghanistan?
2. What are the implications of this ethnic geography for efforts to manage conflict and instability in the region?

In other developments, the American and French Revolutions introduced the initial development of a **democracy** norm to the system. Over time, more and more states gave their citizens a meaningful role in choosing their leaders, or, if not, they at least tried to call themselves democracies. For example, North Korea's official name may be the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but that regime is unlikely to be confused with a real democracy anytime soon. In fact, no country with the word *democratic* in its name is actually a real democracy. More recently, of course, many democratizing countries have experienced great challenges in sustaining democratic rule, and illiberal and populist movements in many parts of the world have threatened democratic regimes.

**MAP 2.7 ■ Murdock Ethnic Map (1959)**

Given the divergence between state borders—drawn primarily by the colonizing powers of Europe—and the borders of human communities, is it any wonder that internal violence plagues much of the African continent?



Source: George P. Murdock, *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

### The Cold War

The last major phase of the Westphalian system was the **Cold War**, a period of intense rivalry and competition between two large blocs of states—an anti-communist bloc led by the United States and a pro-communist bloc led by the Soviet Union—which lasted from 1947 until 1989. Each bloc had its own primary military alliance: the US-led **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, which bound together the United States, Canada, and most Western European states, and the Soviet-led

**Warsaw Pact**, which bound together the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies. Although the two superpowers never directly engaged each other, confrontations involving the superpowers or their client states erupted around the world.

In 1947, communist involvement in the Greek civil war led the United States to proclaim the Truman Doctrine—the policy that the United States would help states resisting communist expansion. In 1948, Soviet leaders tried to shut off Western access to the jointly occupied city of Berlin, the former German capital. The US and Western powers responded with the Berlin Airlift, which resupplied West Berliners with food and supplies, and the crisis abated in 1949. Also in 1949, the Soviets detonated their first nuclear bomb, and the Chinese Communist Party took control of the Chinese mainland. In 1950, the communist regime in North Korea launched a surprise invasion of South Korea. The Korean War ended in a tie in 1953, but it also led to the establishment of NATO and the rearmament of the United States to a war-footing. In 1961, Berlin was the focus again as the Soviets built a wall separating the two halves of the city to prevent East Europeans from using defection to West Berlin as a way to escape communist control. The United States responded by sending more troops to West Berlin and with a presidential visit to West Berlin by President John Kennedy.

In 1962, the Soviets challenged the United States by putting short- and medium-range missiles in Cuba, which was a new communist ally after the revolution led by Fidel Castro. These missiles posed the threat of a nuclear attack on the southeastern portion of the United States with only a few minutes' notice. By placing US military forces on global alert and imposing a naval embargo against Cuba, the United States was able to pressure the Soviets to remove their missiles. Six months later, the United States removed similar missiles facing the Soviet Union from bases in Turkey. This nuclear brinkmanship led the two superpowers, along with the British, to agree to a treaty limiting nuclear testing, which served as a building block for the later nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Still, proxy wars between superpower clients continued in Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s, in Angola in the 1970s, and in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980s. By the late 1980s, the Soviet Union's economy began to fail as it reached the limits of what a command economy could order people to produce. Furthermore, the Soviet Union could not keep up with the US defense rearmament program under President Ronald Reagan, and it was shaken by the challenge to Soviet supremacy by the Polish people and Pope John Paul II and the costs of fighting a decade-long war in Afghanistan. In 1989, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev announced that Soviet client states in Eastern Europe would be allowed to determine their own policies, and East Germans quickly knocked holes in the Berlin Wall. At that point, the Cold War was over, and a new international system—the neo-Westphalian system—emerged.

## THE NEO-WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM (1990–PRESENT)

After the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed into 15 relatively weak states, new pressures emerged in the international arena. The result is an international system in which the states remain the central actors, but they are now buffeted from within and without by other actors, networks, and problems that readily span national borders. Although sovereign states are still the most powerful international actors, in the current system some non-state actors possess a considerable amount of power and influence in world politics. Wars between states (interstate wars) are less commonplace, but internal conflicts within states (intrastate wars) and between states and non-state actors are more frequent and often far more destructive, at least for those involved. Thus, we can say we have moved into a neo-Westphalian system, a new, modified version of the previous Westphalian system. As we said earlier in the chapter, non-state actors existed in the Westphalian system, but their enhanced roles are really at the heart of the shift to the neo-Westphalian system.

### The Development of Non-state Actors

States were the dominant actors in the Westphalian system, but they were not the only actors. **Non-state actors** were plentiful but played secondary roles. Significant nongovernmental organizations early in this period were as diverse as the Catholic Church and the Dutch and British East India Companies.



The leaders of the Catholic Church tried to influence what states did and how they did it. For their part, large commercial organizations such as the East India Companies often acted as agents for their respective states in the economic realm, and state leaders typically prevailed if the interests of these companies and their home governments diverged.

By the 20th century, improvements in global transportation and communication enabled the number and importance of non-state actors to rise. One significant type of non-state actor that rose in numbers and influence was the **multinational corporation (MNC)**, or transnational corporation (TNC). Such corporations, with names ranging from Apple to ZTE (a Chinese smartphone manufacturer), became increasingly notable players in the international system. **Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** were another significant type of non-state actor, and they were often devoted to particular issues. Indeed, for almost any problem you can think of in international relations—poverty, injustice, women’s rights, the environment, and any other—NGOs arose to address it. Some NGOs were so successful at humanitarian work that they won the Nobel Peace Prize, including the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Service Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, Amnesty International, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

As transportation linkages improved and international interactions became more routine, other **international organizations (IOs)** arose. Many of these IOs focused on a narrow range of international cooperation. For example, the Universal Postal Union began in 1874 to handle international mail. In 1930, the Bank for International Settlements was created to coordinate routine transactions between the central banks of sovereign states. The **League of Nations** was formed in 1920 with a broader mission: to keep the peace and institutionalize cooperation following World War I.

However, since 1945, the most prominent IO has been the United Nations (UN). Like its predecessor the League of Nations, the UN was created in 1945 to keep the peace and institutionalize international cooperation. Its principal organs are the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, UN Economic and Social Council, UN Secretariat, and International Court of Justice (or World Court). We discuss the United Nations and its principal organs in Chapter 7, where you will also find an organizational chart that shows its many agencies and offices. There are also transnational advocacy networks (TANs), which may include individuals, social movements, NGOs, and at times state actors, and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 13. They may also include other **subnational actors**, like individuals or other political entities, as discussed in Chapters 11 and 12. Table 2.3 recaps the types of non-state actors that have become prominent in the neo-Westphalian system.

**TABLE 2.3 ■ Types of Non-state Actors**

Type of Non-state Actor	Identifying Element	Examples
International governmental organizations (IOs)	Only states may be members	United Nations European Union World Trade Organization
Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)	Members include at least some non-state actors	Amnesty International Aga Khan Development Network International Red Cross
Multinational corporations (MNCs)	Commercial entities dedicated to making a profit whose subsidiaries span multiple states	Samsung General Motors Unilever
Transnational advocacy networks (TANs)	Networks of groups that press on behalf of their agendas; cannot comprise solely state actors	Refugee Research Network Climate Action Network al-Qaeda
Subnational actors	Those that normally fall within a state	Melinda French Gates City of Barcelona, Spain State of California

The shift to the neo-Westphalian system has been marked by (a) the rising importance of non-state actors, (b) globalization, (c) a subsequent relative weakening of states as actors, and (d) a new principle of responsible sovereignty. Let's address each of these changes in turn.

### The Rise of Non-state Actors

In the neo-Westphalian system, states are still the most powerful actors, but non-state actors have increasingly become important players in international politics, at times even rivaling some states for influence.

One example is the rise of multinational corporations. As Table 2.4 shows, if one compares the largest MNCs by their annual sales revenues to states by their gross domestic product (GDP; their annual output of goods and services), the top MNC in 2022—Walmart—produced more revenue (about \$572 billion) than all but 25 of the almost 200 states ranked by the International Monetary Fund. It is thus no exaggeration to say that large MNCs now rival many states in terms of their *economic* clout.

**TABLE 2.4 ■ The Top 10 Multinational Corporations in 2022 and Their Closest State Comparisons (by revenues and GDP, in billions of dollars, respectively)**

MNCs	States
1. Walmart (\$572)	25. Belgium (\$578)
2. Amazon (\$470)	33. Austria (\$471)
3. State Grid (China; \$461)	35. Bangladesh (\$460)
4. China National Petroleum (\$412)	36. Vietnam (\$409)
5. Sinopec-China (\$401)	39. Philippines (\$404)
6. Saudi Aramco (\$400)	40. Denmark (\$395)
7. Apple (\$366)	43. Hong Kong (\$360)
8. Volkswagen (\$296)	47. Chile (\$301)
9. China State Construction Engineering (\$294)	43. Czechia (\$291)
10. CVS Health (\$292)	43. Czechia (\$291)

Sources: State data: World Bank, 2023; Fortune, The Fortune Global 500, 2022.

It might not seem surprising that four of the ten largest corporations in the world are energy companies (oil companies China National Petroleum, Sinopec, Saudi Aramco and Chinese electric company State Grid), but note that 8 of the top 10 are US or Chinese (four each). Not only do these firms have considerable financial clout; at times they also face a growing set of global rivals that have the power of states behind them: **sovereign wealth funds**. Such funds that invest money provided by the government of their state are not new, but they have grown rapidly in the neo-Westphalian era. As Table 2.5 indicates, each of the top eight sovereign wealth funds has assets in excess of \$500 billion; two of these are from China, three are from the Middle East, and one is from Norway. When you compare Tables 2.4 and 2.5, it is clear that in a globalized economy, wealth is spreading far beyond North America and Europe.

Besides the examples cited here, other NGOs provide a variety of services in the global community. These include the following types:

- Humanitarian relief programs (such as the France-based Doctors Without Borders or British-based Oxfam)
- Economic development programs (such as the US-based Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or the Switzerland-based Aga Khan Development Network)

**TABLE 2.5 ■ Top 10 Sovereign Wealth Funds in 2023 (by billions of dollars in assets under management)**

Sovereign Wealth Fund	State	Assets
1. Government Pension Fund—Global	Norway	\$1,371
2. China Investment Corporation	China	\$1,351
3. SAFE Investment Company	Asia	\$1,020
4. Abu Dhabi Investment Authority	United Arab Emirates	\$853
5. Kuwait Investment Authority	Kuwait	\$803
6. Public Investment Fund	Middle East	\$777
7. GIC Private Limited	Asia	\$770
8. Hong Kong Monetary Authority Investment Portfolio	China–Hong Kong	\$514

Source: Based on Sovereign Wealth Fund Rankings, SWF Institute 2023.

- Educational programs (such as Belgium-based Education International or the Switzerland-based Foundation for Education and Development)
- Civil society development programs (such as US-based groups like the Global Fund for Women or the Civil Society Development Foundation)
- Human rights empowerment and protection programs (like UK-based Amnesty International or US-based Human Rights Watch)
- Environmental protection programs (like Friends of the Earth International or Greenpeace)

Many of these NGOs are able to accomplish things states cannot do well, or sometimes cannot do at all. For example, the use of the Internet has expanded so rapidly that state bureaucracies would have difficulty keeping up with the technological changes required to manage domains and route messages. Thus, a series of NGOs has arisen to handle these matters, including the Internet Society, the Internet Architecture Board, and the Internet Engineering Task Force. Sometimes states that need help are reluctant to accept help from or be indebted to other states for political or status reasons. However, there seems to be far less stigma linked to accepting assistance from an NGO. Aid from NGOs may be seen as having fewer strings or conditions attached. For example, communist North Korea has faced famine multiple times in the neo-Westphalian period. It will not readily accept food aid from capitalist states, so food aid must be funneled through NGOs or the United States in order to be acceptable to the North Korean regime.

Individuals can be influential non-state actors as well, particularly when they work with international organizations. Celebrities can carry a lot of media attention to an issue, such as when Hugh Jackman mobilizes money and support around the world for health and environmental causes, Bono raises money for African economic development, George Clooney raises money for victims of the violence in Darfur, or Richard Gere presses for better treatment of Buddhists by China. Angelina Jolie brought media attention to the plight of many living in camps through her role as a special envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for over 20 years, much like Audrey Hepburn did before her as a special ambassador for UNICEF. Religious leaders also get involved as key individuals, such as the Dalai Lama pressing the case for Tibetan independence from China or Pope John Paul II supporting Polish independence from Soviet control in the waning days of the Cold War.

Yet, one does not have to be a celebrity to help change the world. Jody Williams was a teacher and an aid worker before she joined the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and both she and the group

won the Nobel Peace Prize. Norman Borlaug was an agronomist working in Mexico who pioneered new types of high-yield, disease-resistant wheat to help feed the world; he also won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Finally, some individuals become famous, or even infamous, for their impact on others. Osama bin Laden was just another wealthy young Saudi until he heard the call to go to Afghanistan and join the **mujahideen** to fight the Soviet invaders of that country in the 1980s. The mujahideen's victory over the Soviets led him to believe that, if Allah willed it, even superpowers could be defeated by the devout. Thus, when the United States failed to heed his calls to leave Saudi Arabia and end its support for Israel, his transnational network **al-Qaeda** initiated a series of terrorist attacks on the United States that ultimately left nearly 3,000 dead on September 11, 2001. Bin Laden subsequently became the “most wanted” man in the world, and many around the world were relieved (and some were joyful) when he was killed in Pakistan in 2011. Before his death in 2019, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi gained notoriety as the leader of the Islamic State, the terrorist organization formed after the US invasion of Iraq that is at the center of much of the violent conflict in Iraq and Syria.



Leonardo DiCaprio, who was designated as the United Nations Messenger of Peace for Climate Change in 2014, participates in the 2017 Climate Change march.

What can a global celebrity do to affect world politics?

JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AFP via Getty Images

Networks of these non-state actors, along with some state actors, can play important roles as well, some for public goods and some for private gain/purposes. As we discuss in Chapter 13, transnational advocacy networks help create and disseminate principles and norms that contribute to the structures and institutions of cooperation. Such networks provide particularly good opportunities for non-state actors to affect diplomacy and world politics because they are so public and high profile, they gain so much media attention, and they constitute situations in which states are probably more open to the input of non-state actors.

One final feature of the neo-Westphalian system has been the general rise in the importance of identity politics—reacting to politics based on one's perceived group identity. The groups could be large, as in Christians in Europe or the United States reacting to Muslim immigrants, often creating a backlash and a move to more populist appeals to the majority community. They could also be relatively small, as in specific nations or groups of people questioning state authority. In 2017, two independence referendums passed—one in the Catalonia region of Spain and the other in the Kurdistan region of





Pope (now Saint) John Paul II Meeting With the Communist Leader of Poland as the Cold War Nears Its End

How did a pope help bring down a communist regime?

ph/Luciano Mellace/Getty Images

northern Iraq. Other examples have been seen in places ranging from Mexico and Guatemala (with Mayan peoples) to China (with Tibetans). But the rise in the relevance of non-state actors is not the only characteristic of the neo-Westphalian system. There are three others.

### Globalization and Its Effects

Along with the relative rise of these non-state actors, a second characteristic of the neo-Westphalian system is the phenomenon called **globalization**. Globalization refers to the increasing integration of global society through economic, technological, political, and cultural means. As suggested earlier, this global integration can strengthen some non-state actors, challenge traditional state identities and loyalties, and produce instances of populist backlash on the part of majority communities. Think of how the Islamic State is able to recruit violent converts globally through social media. Used by many to share their experiences with friends, social media enhanced the Islamic State while leading some citizens to use violence against their own countries. This greatly contributed to the spread of the Islamic State's influence through Islamic and Salafist movements in many parts of the world, especially Africa (see our discussion of the Islamic State in Chapter 5).

It can also help tie actors together in new and more meaningful ways. For example, citizens in China and Japan crave South Korean soap operas, a desire that brings these peoples just a little closer together. In short, it can have both positive and negative effects, depending on the situations and the actors involved.



Although trade has long tied states together, these ties have become stronger in recent years, making states and peoples more interdependent on each other than ever before. Multinational corporations long ago realized that setting up subsidiaries in other states where they did business made considerable sense, so now US autoworkers might be making vehicles for BMW, Honda, Hyundai, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Subaru, or Toyota, not for Chrysler, Ford, or General Motors.

Restaurant chains are another good example of global economic connections. Just stroll Paris's Avenue des Champs-Élysées from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde. On arguably the most famous street in France, one finds Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises. Then there's the tale of the little Japanese girl getting off the airplane from Tokyo, walking into Los Angeles International Airport, and saying, "Look, Mommy, they have McDonald's here, too!" That story might be apocryphal, but consider the facts. In 2023, fewer than 14,000 of the more than 40,000 McDonald's franchises were within the United States. KFC had more than five times more franchises abroad (about 21,000) than in the United States (just under 4,000). Dominos sells curry pizza in India and tuna pizza in Japan. Dunkin' has locations in 30 countries and will sell you a seaweed donut in China or a mango chocolate donut in Lebanon (Dazkowski 2017).

Recent technological innovations spurred the rate of such global interconnections. For more than 100 years, transportation technologies were essentially limited to how fast trains could run or ships could sail. With the development of modern jet air travel, now one can go from one side of the world to the other in about a day. Even when flying to and from non-hub airports, travel time is still considerably faster than ever before. For example, flying from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, can be done in as few as 22.5 hours—with the right flight connections—or it can take as long as 42 hours. Still, getting from the middle of the United States to the middle of Africa in less than two days would shock 19th-century travelers.

Perhaps even more important than air travel is the lower cost of moving freight on a global basis. This was first noticeable with the development of larger and larger oil tanker ships, and these were followed by the development of modern container ships. Carrying preloaded containers of a standard size lowered the



A Woman in Rural India With Her Mobile Phone

Is there anywhere mobile phones aren't found?

Exotica.im/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

cost of shipping by making it easier and faster to load and unload such cargo vessels, and the less time ships are in port, the more time they are at sea making money. As transoceanic transport ships increased in size and speed, the cost of doing business around the world dropped significantly, and firms found it increasingly cost-effective to locate their operations and sell their products in many different countries.

Communication has also been transformed. Improvements in mobile phone technologies have lowered the cost to communicate over wide distances, so most people on the planet can now afford to own mobile phones. The global population is now more than 8 billion, and there are about 7 billion mobile phones in the world, of which almost 6 billion are smartphones. Thus, it is nearly as common to see mobile phone usage in urban areas of developing states as it is in the richest societies on the planet.

Information technologies have also evolved. With the advent of cable and satellite television as well as online streaming, viewers can watch channels from all over their country, their region, or the world. For example, a family in Beirut might watch daily news programming from the Qatar-based *al Jazeera* network, family programming on French channel Cinépop, and American movies on MAX or Apple, while the teens might slip into another room to stream videos on Netflix or YouTube.

Then there are the movies. With only a few exceptions (like India's "Bollywood" or China's film industry), moviemakers now go after the global market. As the following table shows, according to IMDB, all but one of the top 10 movies in 2022 had more gross revenues outside the United States than inside it.

Rank	Release Group	Worldwide	Domestic	%	Foreign	%
1	Avatar: The Way of Water	\$2,320,250,281	\$684,075,767	29.5%	\$1,636,174,514	70.5%
2	Top Gun: Maverick	\$1,495,696,292	\$718,732,821	48.1%	\$776,963,471	51.9%
3	Jurassic World Dominion	\$1,001,978,080	\$376,851,080	37.6%	\$625,127,000	62.4%
4	Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness	\$955,775,804	\$411,331,607	43%	\$544,444,197	57%
5	Minions: The Rise of Gru	\$939,628,210	\$369,695,210	39.3%	\$569,933,000	60.7%
6	Black Panther: Wakanda Forever	\$859,208,836	\$453,829,060	52.8%	\$405,379,776	47.2%
7	The Batman	\$770,962,583	\$369,345,583	47.9%	\$401,617,000	52.1%
8	Thor: Love and Thunder	\$760,928,081	\$343,256,830	45.1%	\$417,671,251	54.9%
9	Water Gate Bridge	\$626,571,697	\$117,294	<0.1%	\$626,454,403	100%
10	Puss in Boots: The Last Wish	\$481,046,157	\$185,535,345	38.6%	\$295,510,812	61.4%

Source: Box Office Mojo. "2022 Worldwide Box Office." Box Office Mojo by IMDbPro. <https://www.boxofficemojo.com/year/world/2022/>

Thus, when people in non-Western societies complain about foreign ideas and values undermining their culture, the effects of movies and television are often cited as examples. For example, how might members of traditional societies react to the 2023 film Barbie?

The Internet clearly plays into this argument as well. In 1990, there were only 2 million Internet users worldwide, but by 2022, more than 5 billion users—over 60% of the world—were online (International Telecommunications Union 2023, <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/reports/statistics/2022/11/24/ff22-internet-use/>). A consequence of this openness is that regimes have less control over information than before. In 2011, Egypt's military-dominated regime learned that populist revolutions can be organized via online social media, and China and Google have repeatedly struggled over the Chinese regime's desire to put parts of the Internet off-limits to Chinese users.

The combination of satellite television and the Internet has revolutionized global information sharing. Now, very few places can be considered remote. International news channels, whether using broadband or satellite transmissions, can show riots in Greece or Thailand; terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels, Manchester, or London; or Russian attacks and atrocities in Ukraine in real-time or near-real-time streaming video. English-language newspapers are available online for all regions of the world and most individual states. The Westphalian emphasis on borders and preventing interventions into one's own domestic affairs has been rendered far less relevant by these technological innovations.

In short, globalization means that international interactions are easier and far more commonplace. As a result, international interdependence is clearer than ever to see. What happens in one state or region of the world influences others in ways that are hard to ignore and vice versa. The Westphalian distinction between foreign and domestic becomes harder to discern. Yet, evaluating globalization from a normative perspective is difficult, as it produces effects that are both positive and negative. As the Global Policy Forum (n.d.) notes:

The globalized world sweeps away regulation and undermines local and national politics, just as the consolidation of the nation state swept away local economies, dialects, cultures and political forms. Globalization creates new markets and wealth, even as it causes widespread suffering, disorder, and unrest. It is both a source of repression and a catalyst for global movements of social justice and emancipation. The great financial crisis of 2008–09 has revealed the dangers of an unstable, deregulated, global economy but it has also given rise to important global initiatives for change. (para. 2)

### New Stresses on States

The third major characteristic of the neo-Westphalian system is an increase in the numbers and types of stresses on states. Borders drawn on maps become less meaningful, as groups within states identify more with others based on geography, tribe, clan, or religion. In many European states, immigrants from Africa and the Middle East get pushed into ghettos and are often criticized for failing to assimilate. Their visible presence leads populist or nativist politicians and groups to push back at what they see as the “Muslimization of Europe.” In France, Corsicans press for autonomy for their island. In Russia, Chechen and Dagestani suicide bombers attack subways and train stations, seeking independence or revenge for loved ones lost in Russian counterterrorist operations. Russia uses claimed kinship with Russian speaking populations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine to justify its 2014 seizure of territory (Crimea) and its 2022 military invasion. In the eastern fringes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Tutsi militias attack non-Tutsi communities, killing or enslaving the innocent, which prompts elements of the Rwandan army to intervene in the DRC in search of the Tutsi militants. Muslim militias target Christians in both Nigeria and Central African Republic, prompting Christian militias to respond in kind. In Iraq, Sunni groups rebel against the Shiite-dominated regime and target Kurdish populations in the north, while in Syria, factions supporting the Assad regime, the Islamic State, Kurds, and other anti-regime groups are engaged in conflict. In Israel and the Palestinian territories, violent struggle continues between Israelis and Arabs. Finally, across the board, Islamist groups inspired by or networked with al-Qaeda or the Islamic State launch attacks in the United States, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, and elsewhere.

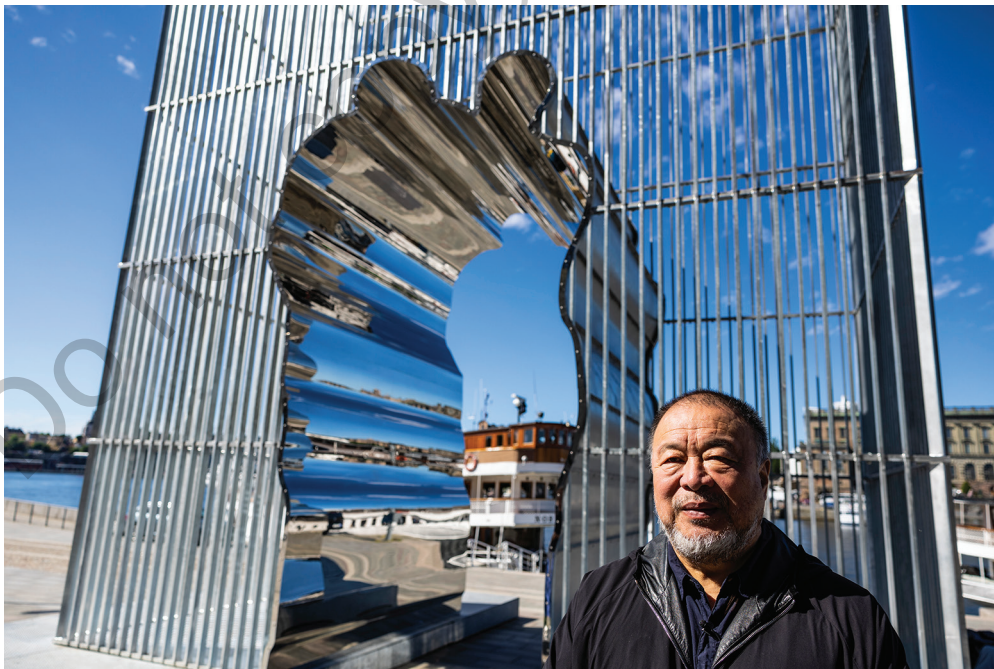
Beyond such violence, internal economic threats arise as non-state actors pursue their own agendas. In 2005, the government of the Iraqi province of Kurdistan signed a contract with Norwegian oil company DNO to develop oil fields there, even though no laws had yet been passed determining who had



the legal rights to develop Iraq's oil reserves. The contract was subsequently cancelled by the national government in Baghdad, and DNO was forced to pay damages to Iraq (Gibbs 2010). In the United States, investment firms seeking to maximize their profits in real estate and real estate derivative securities minimized or hid the risks from investors. Although a number of these firms made impressive profits, the resulting housing collapse of 2008 undermined the national and global credit markets, created the Great Recession of 2008–2010, and put both the national and the global economies in danger. Seeing oneself as a victim of economic actions taken by others can lead to more extremist political positions—and actions.

In the neo-Westphalian system, external pressures buffet states as well. Economic crises often force states to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stop runs on their currency, as did several Asian states in 1997 and Greece (as well as other European countries, including Spain, Italy, and Portugal) several times since 2010. Not only are these loans that must be repaid; they also come with conditions on what the recipients must do to put their economies on a sounder footing—steps that often generate widespread opposition at home. In Asia, the IMF ultimately put together aid packages totaling more than \$100 billion to bail out the currencies of Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand, which were rapidly becoming worthless. In 1998, the IMF lent \$22 billion to Russia to stop a similar run on its currency. In Greece, the IMF coordinated with the European Union and the European Central Bank to extend multiple loans totaling hundreds of billions of euros to address the Greek financial crisis. These lenders forced painful budget cuts in return for financial bailouts. Across the EU, resulting domestic protests over the social impact of slashing government budgets contributed to changes to the parties in power in eight states (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Netherlands).

External pressures on states may be political as well as economic. For instance, Amnesty International is often successful precisely because it focuses unwanted attention on states that incarcerate political prisoners. According to Amnesty International, for example, in 2015, the top 10 worst attacks on human rights were carried out, in alphabetical order, in China, Egypt, Hungary, Israel, Gambia, Kenya, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. All were said to be guilty of widespread violations of basic human rights, up to and including extrajudicial killings (Withnall 2016). Two years later, the Amnesty International annual report added Venezuela, Yemen, Turkey, and Myanmar, among others, to its list of human rights hotspots. Although sovereignty means that states can technically ignore outside pressures, in reality, shaming by such organizations matters and often leads to changes in a state's behavior.



Chinese Human Rights Activist Ai Weiwei in Front of One of His Iconic Sculptures ("Arch"), Part of His Exhibit Focused on the Plight of Refugees

What can human rights activists do to influence the behavior of states?

Michael Campanella/Getty Images for Brilliant Minds

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Pressures come from the natural world as well. For example, the highly interdependent and connected world was rocked in 2020 by the global pandemic that originated in Wuhan Province, China, and quickly spread throughout the world. According to the World Health Organization, by late 2023, more than 750 million people had been infected worldwide. Seven million had died. The transmission belts of the global world carry more than people, goods, money, and information.

Even well-intentioned acts can pressure states. For example, most in the West would assume that free and fair elections and the creation of *civil society* organizations represent positive advancements in a society. However, many regimes take a very different view of these groups. For example, recently in both Russia and Turkey, foreign observers to elections and organizers of civil society organizations have been harassed or arrested as enemies of the regime. In Russia, the local offices of well-known Western NGOs as well as UN-related organizations have been raided or shut down and some of their personnel ordered out of the country. In Turkey, reporters for Western media outlets have been detained or exiled, while thousands of Turks have been arrested as potential threats to the regime's survival. What Westerners see as democracy and local empowerment can be seen by authoritarian regimes as external efforts at forcible regime change, and such regimes will take extreme measures to stay in power.

### The Changing Meaning of Sovereignty

A fourth and final hallmark of the neo-Westphalian system is a fundamental change in what sovereignty means. Westphalian sovereignty was clear. Inside one's borders, there was no higher authority than the state. States had no right to intervene in other states' internal affairs. However, the results of World War II opened the door to seeing sovereignty differently. How Germany treated Jews, Roma peoples, LGBTQIA individuals, and others was sufficiently horrible to lead others to say that such actions were wrong, regardless of whether they occurred within a state's borders or not. Later events at the dawn of the neo-Westphalian period would reinforce this idea.

For example, in 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. When Iraqi forces were expelled from Kuwait, Iraqi Shi'ites and Kurds tried to break free from Saddam Hussein's Sunni-based Iraqi regime. Iraqi military forces turned on those Iraqi citizens, as Iraqi forces had previously done in the 1988 Anfal campaign in which conventional and chemical warfare attacks killed at least 50,000 Kurds and possibly as many as 180,000 ("Timeline" 2006; Wong 2006). Even though this Iraqi use of force was inside its own borders, the international community acted. In 1991, the United Nations passed UN Security Council Resolution 688, which authorized the UN and its members to intervene in Iraq to protect Iraq's citizens from their own government. That same year, the government of Somalia was overthrown; a civil war resulted, and no group was able to govern the country. Civilian refugees needed international aid to survive, and in 1992, the UN Security Council passed a number of resolutions authorizing a military intervention into Somalia to ensure that humanitarian supplies reached those refugees. In 1992, war broke out in the former Yugoslavian territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and **ethnic cleansing** ensued, whereby one ethnic group (be it the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Croatians, or the Bosnian Muslims) would purge or "cleanse" an area of its rivals by forced expulsion, violence, or death. Again, the UN declared this practice to be illegal under international law, thereby justifying intervention by outsiders. The **genocide** in Rwanda in 1994, which resulted in at least 800,000 deaths and possibly hundreds of thousands more, just contributed to this momentum (Verpoorten 2005). In short, in the early 1990s, it became increasingly clear that populations at times needed protection their government could not provide or even protection from their own government. These operations were termed **humanitarian interventions**.

As the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Internally Displaced Persons, Sudanese diplomat Francis Deng (1995) first coined the idea of **responsible sovereignty**. He argued that the Westphalian idea of sovereignty as a state's responsibility to control its borders and protect its territory had to give way to the idea of sovereignty as the responsibility of a state to protect its citizens (**neo-Westphalian sovereignty**). At the 2005 UN General Assembly meeting, world leaders agreed that if states did not meet their responsibility to protect their own public from war crimes, genocide, and the like, then others should step in and do so. Over time, the idea of protecting one's citizens evolved past physical protection from violence in the form of international security; to some, it also implied protecting one's citizens from other common threats—like economic deprivation, environmental threats, and so on—or economic and human security, as we call them in this text (Jones, Pascual, and Stedman 2009). Although some states,

such as Russia and China, continue to resist this modification of Westphalian sovereignty, the broader concept of responsible sovereignty became more firmly entrenched as a norm of the neo-Westphalian system. In short, states could no longer do whatever they wanted within their own borders without eliciting potential interventions from others in the international system.

## THEORY IN ACTION

### Responsible Sovereignty and Humanitarian Interventions

The theory of responsible sovereignty is a radical departure from prior notions of sovereignty. Under Westphalian sovereignty, state borders were to be clear demarcations separating the domestic and international arenas. As noted earlier, Article 2 of the UN Charter reaffirms that states are not to intervene in the domestic affairs of any other states. However, the end of the Cold War coincided with a number of instances in which state regimes preyed on their own people or could not protect their people from becoming victims of violence within their borders. Although a limited multinational effort helped protect some Iraqi Kurds from the Iraqi military from 1991 to 1997, the international community had little response to genocidal violence in the Bosnian civil war from 1992 to 1995 or the Rwandan genocide in 1994. As a result, in 1995, Francis Deng proposed that states should intervene when regimes will not or cannot protect their citizens.

Yet, the number of successful humanitarian interventions since 1995 arguably seems quite small. The United States and NATO intervened in Yugoslavia in 1999, Australia intervened in East Timor in 1999, the United Kingdom intervened in Sierra Leone in 2000, the African Union intervened briefly in the Darfur and Burundi conflicts in 2003 and again in Darfur in 2008 as part of a joint AU/UN force, the United States intervened briefly in Haiti in 2004, and one might consider the US-led effort to change regimes in Iraq in 2003 a successful humanitarian intervention in the sense that some saw it as a way to protect the Iraqi people from a brutal regime.

By contrast, the number of instances where citizens go unprotected and either no one intervenes, or the intervention is unsuccessful, seems quite large. Cases could be made for the need for humanitarian interventions in a variety of places since 1995. A partial list would include the DRC, Central African Republic, Burundi, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Libya, and Somalia in Africa. It could also include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, and North Korea in Asia and Haiti again in Latin America. The list could also include specific troubled regions of otherwise stable states—like the northern Caucasus region of Russia (in Chechnya and Dagestan, for example) or northern Mexico, where the government has lost control of some areas to violent drug cartels. Certainly, with the violence, destruction, and displacement of people in Syria, the actions of the Assad regime against its own people, and the refugee crisis across the region and the world that these developments have caused, a strong case can be made for broad intervention in that situation. Given the extensive evidence of Russian atrocities in Ukraine and Russia's threats to global food security by targeting Ukrainian grain exports, arguments for intervention there are also strong, and the response in support of Ukraine in terms of humanitarian and military aid (especially Western) has been substantial, though tempered by concerns of escalating the military conflict.

So, what is stopping such interventions? IOs cannot intervene unless their members provide military personnel and are willing to pay the costs of the operation. States with the wealth and military power to do so often do not define these situations as vital to their national interests, and, as such, they are largely unwilling to act. Simply put, these situations are not deemed to be worthy of their cost in lives and treasure. In select instances, the state that would be the target of the intervention rejects what it sees as external interference, as would be the case in Russia, for example, or the power of the state violating humanitarian rules and norms triggers caution and prevents more forceful and direct action.

1. Should nationalism (and national interests) trump our humanitarian impulses?
2. What is our responsibility to others?
3. Does the value of human life depend on who or where people are?
4. Is responsible sovereignty a concept whose time has not yet come?

We'll see in Chapters 3 and 4 that your answers may depend on which international relations theories make the most sense to you.

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Source: James Kurth, "Humanitarian Intervention After Iraq: Legal Ideals vs. Military Realities," *Orbis* 50 (2006): 87–101.

The bottom line is that some issues are clearly transnational now. International security, economic security, and human security matters now often transcend national boundaries. As we will see in Part IV of the text, issues in the global commons—those areas not controlled by any one state and shared by all—confound the ability of single actors to deal with them. Issues such as disease, international terrorism, crime, pollution, and humanitarian protection present complex challenges to the global community.

In essence, the neo-Westphalian system has been transformed and is still being transformed, by significant changes in the norms or rules by which international politics is conducted. For example, views on the use of force have changed. In the early 20th century, US president Theodore Roosevelt could champion speaking softly but carrying a big stick. Those who possessed sufficient force routinely threatened its use or actually used it. Today, force is viewed as a legitimate state action only if used in self-defense or as a last resort when stakes are high. Otherwise, those who violate these norms risk being viewed as aggressors, who might then face punishment from others in the international system. Consider how US president Dwight Eisenhower talked about using nuclear weapons and tried to employ a strategy of “brinkmanship” to escalate crises in an effort to force an enemy to back down. Such nuclear saber-rattling is now seen as highly irresponsible and dangerous, and most regard the use of nuclear weapons as something to be avoided. Deciding how to respond to situations in which people are at risk often depends on the theoretical approaches that decision makers employ, as the box “Theory in Action: Responsible Sovereignty and Humanitarian Interventions” suggests.

Other norms that arose during the Westphalian era have taken on new importance in the neo-Westphalian system. For example, **supranational regimes** (IOs whose rules can override those of their member states in limited circumstances) are becoming somewhat more commonplace. For example, the **Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime** is a set of rules for how states develop, maintain, and regulate nuclear power and nuclear materials. Those who have signed and ratified the **Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty** agree not to develop nuclear weapons if they have not previously done so and also agree to spread nuclear technology only under rules specified by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Another example of a supranational regime is the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, which supports and develops the free-trade regime in world politics. To promote and support free trade and more open economies, the WTO makes the rules of trade for its 164 state members, administers those rules, and authorizes penalties against states that violate its rules. While supranational regimes like these deal with a limited set of issues, others deal with an array of issues across a specified geographic jurisdiction. A good example is the **European Union (EU)**, an IO that can make decisions on a variety of issues that constrain its 27 member states. It is this ability to override state sovereignty that led, in part, to the United Kingdom’s 2016 decision to withdraw from the EU (known popularly as “Brexit”), which was finally completed in 2020.

### CONCLUSION: SAME PLAYERS BUT A CHANGING FIELD?

By and large, the same *types* of actors found in prior periods are found in the current neo-Westphalian international system: states and non-state actors like IOs, NGOs, MNCs, TANs, and individuals. However, their numbers and political significance have changed. States are still the most significant actors, but in relative terms, their ability to dominate the international system has decreased somewhat as the power of non-state actors has increased. IOs, NGOs, MNCs, TANs, and notable individuals are rapidly rising in both numbers and influence, and at times, they rival the power of some states. Under certain circumstances, non-state actors can do things that states cannot or will not do, and thus they supersede states in influence at times.

Perhaps more noticeable are the changes in relationships that constitute the international system. Norms have changed, with new restrictions on the actions of states. It is no longer acceptable for the strong to push around the weak. Genocide or crimes against noncombatants are not acceptable just because they happen inside a state’s borders. States have increasingly been held responsible for protecting their populations and for meeting their minimum human needs; thus, the concept of responsible sovereignty now exists alongside and often in contradiction to traditional Westphalian notions of sovereignty. States see



benefits in joining supranational organizations that may, at times, tell them they cannot do what they want. The end of the Westphalian international system opened the door to numerous changes in how international politics is routinely conducted and in how security is defined and protected.

So what do such changes suggest regarding the roles played by anarchy, diversity, and complexity in the current international system? How you make sense of these changes—and their meanings—may depend on the degree to which you see these events through realist, liberal, constructivist, feminist, or other lenses, the topic to which we turn next.

## KEY CONCEPTS

### 2.1 Summarize how the search for international, economic, and human security has evolved in a changing international system.

The formal anarchy of the international system means that there are no authoritative bodies above the players themselves. In such circumstances, some international actors behave as if the only law is survival of the fittest. In an anarchic system, self-help is the norm, as states must depend on themselves to provide for their own security and protect their own interests. The consequence is a security dilemma, in which the things that states do to make themselves secure often threaten—or at least appear to threaten—the security of other states. However, other features of the international system help create order and cooperation among the actors and their actions. One of these characteristics is interdependence among actors, the mutual connections that tie states and other players to each other. Others include common goals or values, shared norms and rules, and common problems to be solved. These features can lead to greater cooperation among the players, as well as the establishment of international organizations whose members are the sovereign states of the anarchic system. These organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and many others, provide forums for members to work together to solve common problems.

### 2.2 List the major types of actors and relationships of the pre-Westphalian international system.

The pre-Westphalian world was dominated by feudalism, a socio-economic-political system in which rulers would grant land to the local aristocracy in return for their loyalty and support. In return for the landowners meeting their material needs, peasants would work the land. The monarchies were weak; thus, the major actors were non-state actors—like the Catholic Church and local elites. As monarchs became stronger, the territories they could control grew larger and better integrated, becoming the basis of modern states—and modern state rivalries. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) marked a major transition. When the wars finally ended with the Treaties of Westphalia, a new international system emerged based on sovereign states and the principle of nonintervention into their domestic affairs. The power of the church was reduced, and within a state's borders, the religion of both the people and their ruler was its own business, not the business of outsiders. Thus, the modern state system—and the Westphalian era—was born.

### 2.3 Differentiate the major types of actors and relationships of the Westphalian international system.

States were the primary actors in the Westphalian international system. A state is a political-legal unit that meets three conditions: (a) It has an identifiable population, (b) it is located within defined territorial borders recognized by others, and (c) it has a government that possesses sovereignty. According to Westphalian sovereignty, within a state's borders, there is no higher authority than the government of the state itself. States were not the only actors in the Westphalian system; non-state actors developed as well and existed alongside states. However, states were the preeminent actors in the state-centric Westphalian international system. Over the 340-year sweep of the Westphalian era, states continued to develop and gain strength. Some states got so strong that by the latter half of the 20th century, the Cold War risked the threat of global annihilation. The end of the Cold War brought this system to a close.



## 2.4 Recognize the major types of actors and relationships of the neo-Westphalian international system.

As the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed, new pressures emerged in the international arena. States remained the most powerful international actors, but in the neo-Westphalian system, non-state actors grew in power and influence in world politics. Wars between states (interstate wars) have become less commonplace, but internal conflicts within states (intrastate wars) and conflicts involving other non-state actors have become more frequent. Nations, groups of people who share a collective cultural and ethnic identity, clash when their territories do not correspond with state borders. The neo-Westphalian system is marked by a comparative rise in the importance of non-state actors such as multinational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and others. The phenomenon of globalization has also weakened states with new problems and pressures. A new principle of responsible sovereignty—the idea of sovereignty as a state’s responsibility to protect its citizens—has emerged to challenge traditional state sovereignty.

### KEY TERMS

al-Qaeda	nationalism
Cold War	neo-Westphalian sovereignty
communism	non-state actors
democracy	nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
embassies	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
ethnic cleansing	Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime
European Union (EU)	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
extraterritoriality	responsible sovereignty
fascism	security dilemma
feudalism	self-help
genocide	sovereign wealth funds
globalization	sovereignty
humanitarian interventions	state
imperialism	subnational actors
interdependence	supranational regimes
international organizations (IOs)	Thirty Years’ War
international system	Treaties of Westphalia
League of Nations	Treaty of Versailles
mujahideen	Warsaw Pact
multinational corporations (MNCs)	Westphalian sovereignty
nation-state	World Trade Organization (WTO)
nation	

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the major types of actors in the international system?
2. What do key terms like *anarchy*, *interdependence*, *the security dilemma*, and *globalization* mean?
3. What made the Westphalian system different from the pre-Westphalian system and the neo-Westphalian system?
4. Why have states managed to be the most significant international actors for hundreds of years, and how might that be changing?
5. What major events or developments mark each of these three international systems over time?

## THINK ABOUT THIS

**Are States Still the Most Important Players in World Politics?**

Scholars studying world politics have long focused on the sovereign state as the main, even only, important actor in the international system. Well-known modern realist theorists such as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer place the state at the center of all that really matters in world politics. However, in the past several decades, other scholars have seen things differently. People such as Richard Rosecrance questioned the basis of state power, and others such as Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, and Alexander Wendt have increasingly focused on the role and influence of non-state actors.

Now that you have read and thought about our discussion of the playing field and actors in world politics, as well as the trends and evolution that have occurred, what do you think?

**In what ways are states still the most important players in world politics, and in what ways are they limited and challenged by non-state actors?**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

**International Organizations**

See the list provided by the staff at the Northwestern University library, available at <http://libguides.northwestern.edu/IGO>.

**Multinational Corporations**

See at least a partial listing of MNCs at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_multinational\\_corporations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_multinational_corporations).

**Nobel Peace Prize Recipients**

See the listing at <http://nobelprizes.com/nobel/peace>.

**Nongovernmental Organizations Associated With the United Nations**

See the listings and links available at <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-peace-prizes>.

**States**

Try the CIA's *The World Factbook*, which includes basic information on all states and a number of other specific territorial units (for example, Hong Kong), available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>.

## NOTE

1. Not all territories identified on maps are diplomatically recognized as sovereign by all other states. Examples include Kosovo, Taiwan, Transnistria, Ossetia, and Abkhazia. Others still have an active association with their former imperial power—like Puerto Rico (United States) or the Falkland Islands (United Kingdom), for example.

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