Lecture 8  
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# Introduction

## Frequency of war: 5500 years of recorded history: 14,500 wars. 278 from 1480 to 1940. 224 from 1816 to 1980.

## Balance of Power theory

## World War I

## World War I

# Several causes of war (Farnsworth, 1992)

## Human nature - nature or learned, but natural, similar to argument that men are more prone than women

## Balance of power theory - imbalances cause war, equilibrium causes peace.

## Presence of arms and efforts by states to build up their own forces because they feel threatened.

## Number of states in system - both directions: some argue more equal powers equals less war; others like Waltz that fewer is better

## Demands of domestic system - capitalism: capitalist economies battle over rights to resources in periphery; economic competition: between competing economic systems; colonial wars: capitalists against the colonies;

## Nationalism - feeling of support a person feels for his or her own country and other people who live there. And excitation theory - working people into a frenzy

## Bad leadership and policy choices

# Balance of Power theory

## Theory - Three definitions of BoP:

### Description of distribution of existing power between states: assessment of each state’s relative power capabilities

### Conscious policy and set of principles intended by states to achieve BoP, provide for survival, and preserve system

#### Concert of Europe from 1815-1870 of five or six major European states consciously striving to balance power to provide for own survival. Increasing power of Germany from 1870-1907 followed by bipolar set of alliances from 1907-1914

#### Balance threat rather than power, so distance, interdependence, and ideology matter

### Unintended consequence driven by international system structure

#### Balancing occurs whenever have anarchic, self-help system and desire to survive. Balance and peace as unintended consequence of search for survival.

#### Balance results from states seeking independence, not seeking peace or preservation of system.

#### "Secondary states, if free to choose, flock to weaker side, for stronger side threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer" (Waltz, 1979, p. 127).

#### Regardless of state preferences, the system drives them to balance each other.

### Bandwagoning (not balancing) occurs if :

#### Weak neighbor state realizes balancing won’t protect, so bandwagons

#### State can find no ally with

#### Victor becomes clear (avoid being on the losing side)

## Characteristics of polarity and balancing

### Number of poles: Unipolar, Bipolar, Multipolar

### Degree of polarization: tightness/discreteness/animosity

### Relationship to war.

#### Unipolar systems make major war less frequent

#### Bipolar systems make war unlikely WHEN balance xists

#### War as likely during transitions in balance. Rising power gains strength, challenges previously superior state and, given new capabilities, war occurs because each side thinks it can win.

## How states balance

### External balancing through alliances

### Internal balancing

# World War I - Causes

## Deep causes: systemic or structural causes

### Increasing power of Germany. See Nye.

### Less flexible alliance structure.

## Intermediate causes: state characteristics and policies as causes

### Concerns about encirclement and expansionist policies

### Serb nationalism threatening to Austro-Hungary. Assassination as excuse, not cause.

### Domestic German problems lead to adventurism and expansionism

### Complacency about need to balance (as conscious policy)

## Proximate causes: individual actions as causes

### Poor leadership of Austro-Hungary, Russia, and Germany. Unskilled diplomats and executives with incompetent and ambitious advisers.

### Assassination came at bad time. If occurred few years later, stronger Russian forces might have deterred Germany from aiding Austro-Hungary. But other causes might have been found.

## Caused by unwanted spiral of hostilities, states with poor leaders and difficult domestic political problems in increasingly polarized international system prove unable to resolve conflicts peacefully and make many strategic errors that throw fuel, not water on fire.

## 15 million people die; Austro-Hungarian empire divided up.

## Use counterfactuals to sort out causes. Nye uses counterfactuals for both whether war or not and type of war that was fought.

## Not accidental war. Due to intentional acts and by structural factors.

# World War I as a cause of (or at least influence on) World War II

## Austro-Hungary divided into smaller states; Germany and Russia devastated by war; France, Britain, Italy, and U.S. begin to dominate international system. Reverts to multipolar system.

## 1919 Treaty of Versailles’ three main clauses:

### Germans guilt for all death and devastation of war.

### Germans pay $33 billion in reparations for damage; only paid off in Sept 2010!

### Limit of 100,000 troops in uniform.

## Disillusionment with balance of power as means of preserving peace. League of Nations formed to provide collective security for any state victim of aggressor state. Belief in power of intl institutions.

### Focus on intentions and policies, not capacities of states

### League would wait for aggression to occur and then would create coalition of states against it.

### League as moral conscience of the world.

### Mechanisms of League

#### Rules against aggression (but not capacity). "Indivisible peace."

#### Collective deterrence to prevent war

#### Collective sanctions (from economic to military) as response to those not deterred.

## 1925 Treaty of Locarno

## 1930: National Socialist Party or Nazis win the German elections.

## 1931: Japanese take Manchuria, violating League and 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing all war

### League doesn't respond with sanctions or force

### Manchuria clear case of aggression, but as Japan grows in power, no states respond or balance.

# 1935: Ethiopia crisis as Italy incites conflict and invades to colonize and control area. League does respond quickly, within eight days recommending that all states impose economic embargo to prevent military goods, loans, and other imports to Italy and all exports coming out. But weak response since steel, coal, and other critical elements excluded from embargo, and many major states want to remain on good terms with Italy as potential ally to respond to growing German threat. Wanted Italy to help balance German power. Despite League philosophy, states still operating under balance of power assumptions.

## 1936: Germans break Locarno treaty and move into Rhineland.

## 1939: international system once again polarized: Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan arrayed against Allies of France, Britain, Russia, and the U.S.

# World War II - History. Planned aggression vs. accidental war of WWI. See Nye

## Hitler’s four policy options in late 1930s:

### Take no action

### Diplomatic efforts to rewrite Versaille and Locarno

### Economic power as basis for imperial expansion

### Aggressive military tactics for expansion.

## Four phases of war: First phase (1933-1936 ) – Preparation: Withdraw from League; break Locarno treaty and move troops into Rhineland/Ruhr; denounce Versailles; splits Allies with British naval treaty.

## Second phase (1936-1940) - expansion into smaller neighbors and internal expansion and preparation for war.

### 1938: Germans take over Vienna and Austria / Sudetenland / Neville Chamberlain

### 1939: Hitler duplicates this in Poland. Claims German-speakers around Danzig (Gdansk) Hitler negotiates with Stalin to divide Poland up. Hitler overruns half of Poland and two weeks later, Stalin invades remaining half of Poland. British and French declare war on Germany.

## Third phase (1940): Blitzkreig one month, Germans invade Norway, Holland, Belgium, north of France and push British back across English channel.

## Fourth phase (1941-1945): overreach, tries to destroy British air force at same time as attacking Russians. If had succeeded at first, could have succeeded at second, but first failed. Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in 1941 and Germany declares war against U.S. more to keep Japan as an ally than anything else.

## Japan faces choices also. Strong nationalist and expansionist sentiments. Could expand power in region either by moving west to take over part of Soviet Union, moving south to take over Indonesian oil, or moving east against U.S. to prevent attack. Japanese decide against first because Soviets not a threat due to preoccupation with protecting western borders. US embargoed oil to Japan and increasingly felt that war with the US was inevitable and best option was preemptive attack.

## Results of war: ~50-70 million people dead, twice that of World War I. ~20 million military deaths. ~2-3% of world population at the time.

# World War II - Causes

## If WWI is undesired spiral of hostilities, WWII is failure of states to deter and balance aggressive, expansionist states before become too powerful.

## Systemic level causes:

### Effects of First World War: states "checked out" of balance of power responsibilities. Russia: Marxist ideology that wars between capitalist states were likely and good from standpoint of promoting communism. America: reverts to traditional isolationism with Atlantic protecting the immoral war-waging of Europe. Balance of power "allows for war or violations of self-determination if that is the only way to preserve independence" (Nye, 82).

### WWI treaties too harsh and too lenient: make Germans morally and economically responsible for WWI damage (incentives to go to war) but allow them capacity to rebuild strength too quickly (capacity to go to war).

## State level causes:

### Poorly planned policies. Effort to lay all blame on Germans for WWI backfired by making other European powers feel had been too harsh, e.g., British appeasement. Russians short-sighted in efforts to bargain with Hitler and allow power to grow.

### Stalin pact with Hitler without realizing downside

### Strong nationalist fervor in Germany and Japan that played important role in expansionism.

### Economic collapse of Great Depression: unemployment produced support for German nationalism and weakened power of democracies

### US isolationism – FDR and others were initially isolationist and even after that changed, the American public still wanted to stay out

## Individual level causes:

### Hitler as major cause of war: aggressive, expansionist, nationalist ideology at core of philosophy and goals for Germany.

### Appeasement and misperceptions by Chamberlain, et al., to understand Hitler.

### Poor theory of Wilson and LoN.

### Japanese miscalculation of power vis-à-vis US

## Wake of war: alliances shift to polarized bipolar system with strong, tight, disparate alliances of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

# Conclusions: war and its causes