

Glossary of Key International Relations Terms

Written by Kevin Bloor

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KEVIN BLOOR, MAY 15 2022

This is an excerpt from *Understanding Global Politics* by Kevin Bloor. You can download the book free of charge from E-International Relations.

International Relations teaches us that the system around us is never entirely stable. There is a constant potential of new developments, creating new realities and ever-changing landscapes. Global politics is forged under a perennial current of social change. This whirligig of change gives the study of the subject matter so much of its academic stimulation, providing students with an exciting subject and one at the vanguard of change. There will always be something to debate and explore within your studies and in the words of the Buddhist proverb: 'nothing is forever except change'. Yet, that being said, we can anchor ourselves by understanding a range of key developments, as outlined below in this glossary of key IR terms, as a way of understanding elements of the world as it is – so far.

Abraham Accords – A joint agreement between Israel, the UAE and the US signed in 2020. The Abraham Accords marked the first normalisation of relations between Israel and a neighbouring Arab state since the mid-1990s.

Absolute gains – The overall benefit of a decision for a state or non-state actor regardless of the gains made by others. Actors therefore determine their actions on the basis of absolute rather than relative gains. The concept of absolute gain is rooted within the liberal perspective on International Relations.

Accountability – A situation in which those in power are held responsible for their decisions. There is a distinction to be made between horizontal and vertical accountability. The former requires a system of checks and balances between the three branches of government. Vertical accountability entails a role for citizens in acting as a limit upon the powers of government.

Adaptation – Changes made in order to accommodate different circumstances (such as living with the consequences of climate change). Strategies consistent with adaptation include the relocation of settlements in areas most at risk from climate change. Adaptation therefore entails changes within the processes, practices and structures dealing with environmental degradation.

African Continental Free Trade Area – A free trade area amongst members of the African Union. Established in 2021, the aim is to remove tariffs and increase intra-African trade. The agreement seeks to create a single market along similar lines to European integration.

African Monetary Union (AMU) – The process of deeper monetary integration within the African Union. The AMU will be administered by a central bank and result in the creation of a single currency.

African Union (AU) – An organisation consisting of member states from the African continent. The African Union was founded in 2002 and replaced the Organisation of African Unity. The regional bloc has created the Pan-African Parliament, the Commission and a semi-annual meeting of state premiers. The AU has also established a Peace and Security Council in order to implement decisions.

Anarchy – A condition in which states are free to pursue their own interests regardless of any wider obligations

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towards other members of the international community. Ultimately, there is no governing institution with the authority to resolve disputes between states and non-state actors. The realist school of thought tends to emphasise the importance of anarchy on the behaviour of states, whilst liberals claim the effects are somewhat exaggerated.

Annexation – The acquisition of another state's territory by force. Annexation is a unilateral act in which territory is seized rather than via cession (given or sold via a Treaty). Annexation can be legitimised via general recognition by international bodies (such as intergovernmental institutions).

Anocracy – A type of government that combines democratic and dictatorial features. Anocracies enable some form of democratic participation within a broader dictatorial framework. The number of anocracies has increased since the end of the Cold War.

Anthropocentrism – A worldview associated with the belief that humans are custodians of the Earth's resources. Anthropocentrism emphasises the elevated status of humans within the animal kingdom.

Anti(alter)-globalisation – A political movement that campaigns for an alternative form of globalisation to that of the Washington Consensus. Pressure groups, academics and civil society favour another world built upon concepts such as equality and social justice. The anti (or alter)-globalisation movement also seeks to promote an environmentally-friendly approach to economic development.

Arms Race – A situation in which two or more nations increase their military expenditure due to a shared mistrust. The arms race is a direct consequence of the security dilemma (or spiral of insecurity).

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – ASEAN is a regional inter-governmental organisation that encourages political, economic, and security cooperation among its members. The group has held a key role in Asian economic and, to a certain extent, political integration. Equally, ASEAN has led negotiations amongst Pacific-Asian nations to form one of the largest free trading blocs the world has ever seen.

ASEAN Way – An informal and consensual approach adopted by leaders of the ASEAN states. The emphasis is upon compromise, consultation and the avoidance of conflict. The ASEAN way is also characterised by quiet diplomacy and coordination amongst member states.

Assimilation – A process in which different cultures are absorbed within the broader culture of that society. Assimilation places social harmony above the diversity championed by integration, and therefore offers a counter to the clash of civilisations thesis.

Asymmetrical development – The disparity in economic development between the industrialised 'North' and the underdeveloped 'South.'

Authority – The legitimate right to author decisions and rule over others. When power is exercised without legitimate authority, it can lead to conflict.

Autocracy – A system of government in which a single leader or party is in possession of supreme and absolute power. Once viewed in a favourable manner, the term autocracy is often considered in a negative sense due to its association with dictatorial regimes.

Balance of power – A concept which stipulates that states secure their survival via forging alliances with other states. In doing so, an equilibrium can be maintained between rival groups. The balance of power seeks to ensure a degree of stability compared to a system in which a hegemonic power could dominate its weaker neighbours.

Bandwagoning – A situation in which a state is aligned with a stronger adversary. Bandwagoning occurs when the weaker state decides that the cost of opposing the stronger power exceeds the benefits.

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Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights – Signed in 1993, the Bangkok Declaration offers an alternative narrative to the Eurocentric approach. The Bangkok Declaration emphasises communal obligations rather than the rights of the individual. The document also emphasises the importance of sovereignty and the principle of non-interference.

Beijing Consensus – The political and economic policies adopted by China following the free-market reforms instigated by Deng Xiaoping. The phrase was coined by Joshua Cooper Ramo to highlight an alternative approach towards the Washington Consensus. The Chinese approach is sometimes referred to as a 'birdcage economy'.

Belt and Road Initiative – A global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government. It is the centrepiece of contemporary Chinese foreign policy with a target date for completion by the middle of the century.

Billiard ball model – A realist conception in which the state is analogous to an independent and unitary billiard-ball. According to this state-centric assumption, domestic politics ends at the water's edge and engagements with other states may be calculated. In contrast, liberals claim that International Relations is characterised via the cobweb model.

Bipolarity – The distribution of power within international relations characterised by two superpowers each with their own sphere of influence. The term can be applied in a global or regional sense. Bipolarity often entails proxy wars rather than direct confrontation.

Bourgeoisie – A Marxist term used to describe the owners of capital. According to the Marxist perspective, those who own the means of production exploit those who sell their labour for a wage (the proletariat). Dependency theorists adopt a neo-Marxist understanding of the global economic system.

Brazilification – The hollowing-out of the middle class combined with an increase in the level of inequality. According to Ulrich Beck, 'Brazilification' can be attributed to the process of globalisation.

Brandt line The demarcation between the developed 'North' and the underdeveloped 'South.' The line was proposed by the former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

Bretton Woods System – An economic system of governance created shortly before the end of the Second World War. The Bretton Woods system was based upon a fixed exchange rate system.

Buck passing – A situation in which a state assumes that another state (or group of states) will deal with an emerging threat.

Buffer state – A relatively weak and neutral state situated between two larger hostile countries. The buffer state therefore prevents the outbreak of regional conflict (such as Iraq acting as a buffer between Iran and Saudi Arabia).

Bush doctrine – The foreign policy strategy of George W. Bush (2001 – 2009). The main feature of the Bush doctrine was the use of pre-emptive strikes. The Bush doctrine was also characterised by a singular pursuit of American interests rather than the globally-minded multilateral approach of Bush's predecessor (Clinton) and successor (Obama).

Capitalism – An economic system based on market forces, private ownership and minimal state intervention. The end of the Cold War marked the triumph of Capitalism over Communism.

Carter Doctrine – The pledge from the Carter administration (1977-1981) to employ military force in order to defend American interests in the Persian Gulf. The aim was to deter the Soviets from seeking hegemony in a region of strategic importance to Washington.

Cession – An understanding under international law by which territory is transferred from one state to another with the consent of both parties (such as the Louisiana purchase).

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Chain Ganging – A term used to describe how, in a balance of power scenario, alliance partners must follow the lead when another goes to war. If a partner does not participate, it endangers the security of its allies.

Chauvinism – An exaggerated sense of national superiority. It is associated with jingoist rhetoric and an aggressive pursuit of the national interest(s).

Civil War – An intra-state conflict between groups, be they ethnic, political, religious, etc. Unlike conventional warfare, it is conflict within rather than between states.

Clash of Civilisations – A term associated with the American political scientist Samuel Huntington. He predicted that conflict in the twenty-first century would be characterised via tensions between rival cultures. Having said this, most contemporary warfare occurs between members of the same civilisation.

Class conflict – A Marxist term used to describe the political struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Classical realism – A theoretical perspective which offers an explanation of International Relations based upon assumptions concerning human nature. Classical realists adopt a pessimistic view of human behaviour and the primordial forces that shape us. Classical realism gained in popularity during the post-Second World War era, but has been eclipsed by the emergence of Structural (Neo)Realism.

Cleft Countries – States which contain large groups of people who identify with other civilisations (such as Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Sudan). This forms part of the broader clash of civilisations thesis.

Climate Change – Man-made changes to the natural environment that result in global warming and consequently global climate adaptations. Although there have been moves to address climate change, global governance has proved problematic.

Climate Change Denial – Those who refuse to acknowledge the scientific evidence behind climate change. Donald Trump once called climate change a 'hoax'.

Clinton Doctrine – The philosophical and strategic basis of foreign policy directed by the Clinton administration (1993–2001). The Clinton doctrine was characterised as liberal interventionism on a selective basis. Clinton's administration intervened in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo and Somalia in order to promote humanitarian aims and defend American interests.

CNN factor – A phenomenon by which the media compels decision-makers to intervene in order to address a particular issue. The CNN factor creates a mindset amongst decision-makers in which 'something must be done.' The term can also be applied towards the proliferation of new media.

Cobweb Model – A liberal notion that claims global politics can be understood on the basis of complex interdependence. The cobweb model explicitly rejects the realist contention of the Billiard Ball model. Liberals claim that relations between states and non-state actors reflect a system of mutual dependence.

Cold War – A situation in which two rival states engage in proxy wars rather than direct conflict. The term is commonly applied towards the ideological dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991. However, the term can also be applied towards current tensions between Washington and Beijing.

Colonialism – The settlement of a foreign country via an imperial power. Colonialism is characterised by exploitation of resources, and the separation of the indigenous population from settlers. The term is often used interchangeably with imperialism.

Commercial Peace Theory – A liberal perspective which claims that the spread of capitalism creates a more peaceful global system. There is a clear economic incentive for states to avoid warfare.

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Communism – An economic and political system which is based on the common ownership of the means of production. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union implemented a state-centric economic system based upon common ownership.

Communitarian View – A perspective on human rights which claims that social cohesion and communal norms should take a higher priority over the rights of the individual. The communitarian approach is more prevalent within Asian and Muslim-majority countries.

Complex Interdependence – A liberal notion which claims that states and non-state actors are interconnected via commerce and global norms, such as human rights. Whilst states remain the most significant institutions, intergovernmental and supranational bodies also play a role. Decisions are therefore reached via a process of interaction between various officials shaped by a shared space and a habit of cooperation.

Constructivism – A theoretical perspective built upon the assumption that elements of International Relations are historically and socially constructed. According to Alexander Wendt (1992), even the realist concept of power politics is a social construct. In other words, anarchy is itself a social construct of the state system and can therefore be transformed. Constructivism has emerged as a major school of thought within International Relations with a number of different strands.

Containment – A foreign policy objective implemented by the United States during the Cold War. The aim was to prevent the spread of communism. Associated often with Truman, containment was based on the assumption that the Soviet regime was expansionist (Kennan 1947).

Conquest – The acquisition of territory on the basis of force.

Core States – According to the World Systems Theory, the global economy is divided into three distinct areas: Core, Semi-Periphery and Periphery. The exploitative economic system is structured in order to maintain the dominance of core countries such as the United States over those within the periphery.

Corruption – Dishonest and fraudulent behaviour amongst those in a position of power who use their position for personal benefit. Corrupt leaders often divert economic resources towards a privileged few in order to strengthen their own grip on power.

Cosmocracy – A world government characterised by the three branches of governance (legislature, executive and judiciary). The term Cosmocracy may be contrasted with global governance in which a quasi-system of governance operates.

Cultural Backlash – Opposition towards the Western-bias of cultural globalisation.

Cultural Flattening – The process in which information, commodities and images produced in one part of the world enter into a global village. Cultural flattening is associated with a homogenising monocultural set of Western values that tends to undermine cultural differences.

Cultural Globalisation – The transmission of ideas, meanings and values around the world in a manner that extends the scope and scale of transnational relations. The process is characterised by the consumption of a common culture via the media.

Cultural Homogenisation – The decline in cultural diversity through the popularisation of cultural symbols. Cultural homogenisation has contributed towards a cultural backlash, a rise in ethnic nationalism and the spread of religious fundamentalism.

Cultural Imperialism – A process by which dominant states impose their own values and mindset. As a consequence of cultural imperialism, cultures are presented in a hierarchical manner.

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Cyberwarfare – The use (or threat) of cyber weapons against another with the intention of causing digital harm. Cyber hostilities may lead towards conventional warfare between two or more states. For instance, Israel and Iran have been victims (and perpetrators) of cyberwarfare operations.

De Facto – A Latin term meaning ‘in fact’.

De Jure – A Latin term meaning ‘in law’.

Defensive realism – The strand of realist thought which claims the anarchic structure of global politics encourages states to prioritise their own national security. Defensive realism is associated with theorists from the neorealist perspective such as Kenneth Waltz. Defensive realism emphasises the centrality of the security dilemma and that military expansionism undermines the primary objectives of the state.

De Lege Ferenda – A legal phrase meaning ‘what the law ought to be’. The term is often contrasted with what the law is.

De Lege Lata – A legal term meaning ‘what the law is’, in contrast to *de lege ferenda*.

Dell Theory of Conflict Prevention – An updated version of the commerce (or capitalist) peace theory. According to Thomas Friedman (2005), no two countries that are both part of a major global supply chain (like Dell’s) will ever fight a war against each other. Although not a complete guarantee, mutual dependence within the economic sphere tends to maintain peaceful relations between the countries involved.

Democratic Peace Theory – A liberal perspective that claims that the spread of democratic values leads towards a more peaceful, stable and harmonious international system. This is based on the assumption that democratic leaders are held to account by the electorate. Democratic countries are therefore incentivised to establish and maintain diplomatic institutions in order to resolve disputes between them.

Dependency Culture – A situation in which recipients of aid become reliant upon the provision of aid. Critics claim that the provision of financial assistance undermines individual responsibility and self-reliance.

Dependency Theory – A theoretical perspective which claims that the global economic system is characterised by the exploitation of those living in the periphery. It is a neo-Marxist perspective which claims that the imperialism of the past has been replaced by a form of neocolonialism implemented via the Washington Consensus.

Diplomatic Immunity – The legal principle in which a diplomat is exempt from certain laws within the state in which they are working.

Double Standards – Where one group (or state) is treated differently to another. Western nations ignore crimes committed by strategic allies whilst punishing those whose interests are contrary to their own. The hypocrisy is particularly evident in the context of American foreign policy in the Middle East. The US has defended Israel from the charge of violating international law and traded with authoritarian regimes that undermine human rights.

Doves – A term used to describe an individual who favours peaceful means by which to resolve a dispute. A dove is traditionally portrayed as a symbol of peace. The term is usually contrasted with a hawk who favours a militaristic approach.

Dyadic Peace – The liberal argument that democracies tend not to fight one another. Dyadic peace is a key element of the democratic peace theory.

Ecocentrism – A belief-system associated with the environmental movement that advocates an equal relationship between human beings and the environment. According to their outlook, humans are part of a wider whole with no particular elevated status. Ecocentrism is associated with deep green ecology.

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Economic Globalisation – The process by which national economies have, to a greater or lesser extent, been absorbed into an interlocking global economy. Economic globalisation is characterised by mutual dependence amongst state and non-state actors.

Emerging power – Those states recognised as rising powers on the world stage (such as the BRICS).

Erga Omnes – The principle upon which legislation is applicable towards everyone regardless of social background. Within international law, the term depicts the legal obligations of states.

Ethnic Cleansing – The forced removal of ethnic, racial and religious groups from any given territory by another ethnic group. Ethnic cleansing may occur on the basis of forced migration, ethnic dilution and intimidation. The term has become more prevalent since the mid-1990s.

Exploitation – A situation in which a dominant group manipulates another. The term is associated with dependency theorists who emphasise the role of a transnational social class, and the world systems perspective which highlights the role played by powerful states within the global economy.

Facts on the Ground – A term often employed within diplomatic circles to denote the situation as it really is. The phrase is rooted in pragmatism rather than abstract notions of justice, equity and morality. One illustration of the term is the existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Golan Heights.

Failed State – A state in which there are no political institutions that can claim sovereignty within that territory. Failed states often provide a haven for terrorist organisations and other extremist groups. Humanitarian intervention may be justified within a failed state such as Somalia in 1992.

Failing State – A state in which the government finds it highly problematic to maintain social order. This may eventually lead towards the country being classed as a failed state. Such countries are either emerging from a disruptive conflict or on the brink of an actual conflict.

Federalism – A political system in which legal and political structures distribute power between two or more distinct levels of government. The United States and Russia are both based upon a federalist system of governance. In relation to regional integration, the EU is committed to the federalist aim of the United States of Europe.

Four Freedoms – A set of goals articulated by Franklin Roosevelt during the 1940s. They include freedom of speech and religious worship alongside freedom from want and fear. The four freedoms formed the basis for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Functionalism – A theoretical perspective which recognises the common interests of states and non-state actors towards the process of integration. The term is commonly used in the context of globalisation.

Fundamentalism – An ideological doctrine which demands total obedience from its members. The term is usually applied in the context of extremist groups, terrorist activity and totalitarian regimes.

G2 – A term used to denote the political and economic ties between Washington and Beijing.

G4 – The four countries who campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The G4 consists of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India. The G4 is opposed by the uniting for consensus movement under the leadership of Italy.

G5 – The group of five nations who seek to promote dialogue and understanding between developing and developed countries. The G5 consists of the emerging economies of China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa.

G7 – An informal series of meetings between seven of the most developed economies. The G7 relies upon the

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goodwill of its members as its decisions are non-binding. The G7 is notable for the exclusion of China and as a body that represents the 'West.'

G20 – An international forum of the most advanced economies in the world, the EU and representatives from the IMF and World Bank. The aim of the G20 is to address issues surrounding global financial stability. The G20 is widely seen as a more proactive and effective institution than the G7.

Game Theory – A theoretical model which highlights the manner in which decision-makers interact to take into account the choices of other decision-makers. Conflict and cooperation can be understood via the application of game theory.

Gaza Strip – A densely-populated territory claimed in a legal sense by the State of Palestine (along with the West Bank). In 2006, the electoral success of Hamas provoked an Israeli-led economic and political boycott. In a de facto sense, the State of Israel also restricts the movement of people residing within Gaza.

Geneva Conventions – A set of treaties and protocols that provide an agreed standard for humanitarian treatment in warfare. The Geneva Conventions outline the fundamental rights of wartime prisoners, protections for the wounded and safeguards for civilians.

Genocide – The deliberate destruction of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group. The 1948 UN Genocide Convention defined genocide as 'acts committed with intent to destroy...a national, ethnic, racial or religious group'.

Global Commons – Those parts of the planet to which all nations have access. The global commons lies outside the jurisdiction of any national government. There are several examples of the global commons such as the High Seas and Outer Space.

Global Governance – The process of decision-making at the global level aimed at solving problems that affect more than one state (or region). Liberals argue that there has been progress towards global governance driven by the Bretton Woods system, international criminal courts and the G20. However, realists challenge this assumption given the continued importance of statism and sovereignty.

Globalisation – A political system characterised by mutual dependence within the political, cultural and economic realm. The significance of globalisation is a source of disagreement between the dominant theoretical perspectives within International Relations. The impact of globalisation has been greatest upon the concept of sovereignty due to the growing salience of non-state actors, and the extent to which states are interdependent.

Golden Arches Theory – A modern variant upon the commerce (or capitalist) peace theory. Associated with Thomas Friedman, the golden arches theory claims that no two countries with a McDonalds would fight against one another. Friedman argued that when a country reaches a sufficient level of economic development it becomes a 'McDonald's country'. The golden arches theory is undermined by the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon, Russia-Georgia (2008) and Russia-Ukraine (2014 and 2022).

Good Governance – A condition in which foreign aid is provided to those countries that seek to address problems such as corruption. The provision of financial assistance is therefore conditional upon improvements made to governance within recipient countries.

Great Power – A country with considerable influence within international relations. The term is used interchangeably with major powers.

Gridlock – An inability to take united and decisive action within an organisation. For instance, the UNSC has been gridlocked over the Syrian Civil War due to divisions amongst the P5.

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Guantanamo Bay – An area of Cuban territory claimed by the United States. The Cuban government regards American presence as an illegal occupation on the basis that the original agreement was a violation of international law.

Hard Power – The use of force (or coercion) to meet a political objective of some kind. Unlike soft power, hard power entails the act or threat of aggression. According to Joseph Nye, the term reflects the ability of a state to utilise economic and military might. The significance of hard power may have declined in the contemporary era.

Hawks – A term used to describe a politician or academic favourable towards warfare and militarism. The term is sometimes preceded by 'chicken' or 'liberal.' The former refers to an individual who advocates a hawkish stance whilst avoiding military service. The latter denotes a liberal who adopts an aggressive approach towards the spread of democracy and capitalism.

Hegemonic Stability Theory – An argument which stipulates that the larger the concentration of power into the hands of the pre-eminent state, the more peaceful the international order will be. According to Charles P. Kindleberger, the instability of the 1920s and 30s was caused in part by the lack of a global hegemonic power.

Hegemony – Where a single state exercises structural dominance over the rules, norms, conventions and behaviour of a regional or international system. The existence of a hegemonic power is central towards an understanding of hegemonic stability theory. A hegemonic state is able to exercise leadership and its status is expressed in structural, military and economic terms.

Hierarchy of States – A term used to describe how states are stratified within international relations. The classification of states on the basis of hierarchy casts an insight upon concepts such as polarity and the balance of power.

Horizontal Nuclear Proliferation – The spread of nuclear weapons based upon acquisition by states and non-state actors. In terms of the latter, there is the possibility of a terrorist organisation acquiring some form of nuclear weaponry.

Human Rights – Those rights based upon an entitlement by virtue of being human. They are typically considered universal and can be the basis for humanitarian intervention. Since the turn of the century, there has been an increase in the number of institutions and agreements that seek to uphold human rights.

Humanitarian Intervention – Military intervention carried out in the pursuit of humanitarian (rather than geo-strategic) objectives. Humanitarian intervention is likely to be successful when a major global or regional power is prepared to take the lead (such as the French in Mali). Successful intervention also requires an exit strategy and some consideration of nation-building. Humanitarian intervention often reflects double standards and can at times make matters worse.

Hyperpower – A state that is dominant in every domain of international relations. As such, it is of greater importance than a mere superpower. The United States has been described as a hyperpower, although this has in part been undermined by the emergence of China.

Hyper-globalisation – A theoretical perspective which claims that globalisation represents a fundamental and transformative development within international politics. The emergence of a global society may well mark the death knell of the nation-state.

Idealism – A forerunner of liberalism, idealism within International Relations assumes that states are rational actors who recognise the benefits of mutual cooperation. Idealism prescribes a normative foreign policy. According to figures such as Woodrow Wilson, idealism provides a basis for foreign policy, such as the fourteen points and the League of Nations. The academic Michael W. Doyle depicts idealism as a belief that states can trust the positive intentions of others.

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Imperialism – Extending power and dominion over territories via acquisition. The three main forms of imperialism are: colonies, protectorates and spheres of influence.

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions – An intended reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as specified under the UNFCCC.

Institutional Peace Theory – A liberal argument that the establishment of international institutions help foster peace and stability. This is closely related to the creation of a global commons. According to liberal theorists, international institutions and organisations can be used to foster a habit of cooperation between states.

International Bill of Human Rights – An overarching term that incorporates the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). None of these documents are legally binding.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) – The International Court of Justice aims to settle disputes between states in accordance with international law. The ICJ also offers advisory opinions and consists of a panel made up of 15 judges elected by the UN. The effectiveness of the ICJ, also known as ‘The World Court’, is however undermined by the fact that it cannot initiate cases and needs to gain support from the UNSC in order to enforce its decisions.

International Criminal Tribunals – Institutions established to prosecute war criminals in certain war-torn areas. For instance, the international tribunal into the former Yugoslavia brought high-profile prosecutions against Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic. The former was the first Head of State to be placed on trial for war crimes. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda also convicted its former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) – An international financial institution that lies at the epicentre of the Washington Consensus. The chief objectives of the IMF are to facilitate international trade and provide financial assistance. Funding for the IMF derives from quotas and loans.

Intra Legem – A Latin term meaning ‘within the law’.

Ipsa Facto – A legal term meaning by the act (or fact) itself.

Iron Curtain – The ideological division within Europe between the American and Soviet spheres of influence. The term was used during the Cold War and coined by Winston Churchill. In the Far East, the phrase ‘Bamboo Curtain’ was also employed to denote the division between capitalism and communism.

Isolationism – The doctrine of isolating a state from international alliances and agreements. Isolationism is characterised by non-intervention and unilateralism. It seeks to place the national interest above those obligations derived from the broader international community.

Juria Jus Non Oritur – A Latin term translated as ‘law does not arise from injustice’. Illegal acts (such as annexation) do not therefore create international law.

Jus ad Bellum – A Latin term outlining the circumstances in which a state is justified in using military force. For instance, according to the philosopher Thomas Aquinas, warfare must be justified by the appropriate authority. It could be argued that humanitarian intervention is based upon the notion of right intention or just cause.

Jus Cogens – The principle on which no derogation (or exemption) is permitted amongst sovereign states. Whilst there is no universal agreement as to its application, obvious examples include a ban on genocide and enslavement. The concept of *jus cogens* provides a foundation for international law.

Jus Gentium – A legal phrase meaning ‘law of nations’. It is a body of customary law held in common by nations.

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Jus in Bello – A Latin term that relates to the conduct of warfare. According to the philosopher and theorist Hugo Grotius, *jus in bello* is characterised by moderation. There are six main principles to consider. These include just cause, warfare as last resort, proper authorisation, right intention, a reasonable chance of success and proportionality. A disproportionate response to a violation of international law by a non-state actor would therefore be contrary to the conduct of warfare.

Jus Inter Gentes – A legal phrase meaning 'law among peoples'. It consists of a body of treaties, conventions and other international agreements.

Jus Soli – The legal principle that an individual's nationality is determined by place of birth. The term is often contrasted with *jus sanguinis* (the law of descent) in which an individual acquires the nationality of their parents.

Kyoto Protocol – An environmental agreement adopted in 1997 that committed transitional economies to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Kyoto also placed an obligation upon developed countries based on the notion of differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities.

Laissez-faire Economics – An economic system based upon market forces and minimal state intervention. In theory, the Washington Consensus is built upon a laissez-faire approach towards economic management.

Legitimacy – The right and acceptance of proper authority to rule. Legitimacy is a fundamental element of Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, and enables us to better understand the importance of international institutions. For instance, judicial bodies and regional organisations are often undermined by a lack of sufficient legitimacy.

Liberal Democracy – A synergy of liberal freedoms alongside a democratic method of electing representatives in which almost all adults are entitled to political participation. A liberal democracy is therefore liberal in the sense that the power of decision-makers is constrained, and democratic in relation to free competition for power between politicians and political parties.

Liberalism – A theoretical perspective which claims that international relations is characterised by complex interdependence, global governance and rational behaviour. In contrast to Realism, the liberal perspective adopts a normative tone. For instance, liberal figures advocate the democratic peace and the commercial (capitalist) peace theories. Liberals are also supportive of international institutions and globalisation. The liberal approach is therefore centred upon peace, prosperity and progress.

Lisbon Treaty – A Treaty signed in 2007 that sought to make the EU more democratic. It gave more power to the European Parliament, introduced a citizens' initiative and created the EU's diplomatic service.

Long Cycle Theory – A theoretical approach which depicts connections between war, economic supremacy and world leadership. George Modelski (1987) argues that there is a cyclical order that should frame our understanding of International Relations. The long cycle theory challenges the predominant view in which the international system is characterised by anarchy.

Maastricht Treaty – A Treaty signed in 1992 that prepared the pathway towards European Monetary Union, created a CFSP and instigated the co- decision procedure.

Madman theory – An attempt by the Nixon administration to persuade leaders of the Communist bloc that the President was irrational and prone to volatile behaviour.

Mandate – In the context of international relations, a mandate relates to the concept of legitimacy. States and organisations often need a clear mandate in order to confer legitimacy upon humanitarian intervention.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – A series of interlinked development goals agreed upon by the UN in the year 2000. The MDGs were the first internationally agreed goals in relation to economic and social development.

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Mitigation – A process by which countries seek to moderate the impact of greenhouse gases in order to tackle climate change (such as a shift from non-renewable to renewable energy sources).

Modernisation Theory – A theoretical perspective which emphasises the need to follow a particular path of economic development (such as Rostow's model of economic growth). Modernisation theory argues that traditional societies will only develop when they adopt practices associated with more advanced economies.

Monadic Peace – The proposition that democracies are more peaceful than non-democratic regimes. Within academia, there is less support for the concept of monadic peace than that of dyadic peace.

Montreal Protocol – An international treaty signed in 1987 aimed at protecting the ozone layer. The Montreal Protocol has undergone a number of revisions, and remains one of the most successful environmental agreements due to a relatively equitable share of the burden. The Protocol also offered effective solutions.

Multilateralism – Where states pursue foreign policy objectives via a constructive engagement with other actors. Even a military superpower may adopt some semblance of multilateralism (such as the 'coalition of the willing' during the Iraq War). Regional powers are also inclined to adopt a multilateral approach (e.g., intervention in Yemen launched in 2015 led by Saudi Arabia).

Multipolarity – The distribution of power in which more than two states have roughly equal amounts of military, cultural and economic influence.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) – An assumption that the devastation caused by nuclear weapons ensures that neither side has any incentive to launch a first-strike. Nuclear annihilation therefore provides a sufficient deterrent. There is no incentive to engage in a first-strike, which thereby ensures stability between two superpowers.

National Identity – An identification with one's nation. The extent to which members of society feel an emotional attachment towards their nation offers a counter-balance to the forces of globalisation.

Nation-Building – The construction of national identity via the agents of the state. The aim is to unify the people within a nation-state. The term has become more applicable towards humanitarian intervention in a failed (or failing) state.

Nation – A community of people who typically share a common national identity, history, religion and language.

Nation-State – A theoretical concept in which nations hold defined territorial statehood. The concept dates back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The nation-state is a fundamental concept within international relations which continues to shape independence movements throughout the world.

Neocolonialism – The process by which the developed world exerts economic control over LEDCs via exploitation. Neocolonialism is upheld by governments, multinational companies and the Washington Consensus. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with neoimperialism.

Neoconservatism – Neoconservatives advocate the promotion of democracy and capitalism via an interventionist foreign policy. Neoconservatives, who are most prevalent in the United States, tend to adopt a hawkish stance.

Neofunctionalism – A theoretical blueprint for regional integration based upon the logic of spillover. The development of the EU is consistent with neofunctionalism.

Neoliberalism – An updated version of liberalism which claims that the behaviour of states is shaped via absolute gains rather than relative gains. Neoliberals also tend to promote the spread of democratic values as a means to create a more peaceful global world order. They are also favourable towards institutions that generate the conditions necessary to ensure peace and stability. Neoliberalism is built on an assumption that states are rational entities in

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which cooperation will emerge via norms, institutions and mutual trust.

Neo-Neo Debate – The debate within contemporary International Relations between the neorealist and neoliberal schools of thought.

Neorealism – A strand of realist thought centred on the assumption that the international system is structurally anarchic and it is this structure that determines state behaviour. States are in possession of some offensive military capability and can never be entirely certain about the intentions of another state. The primary motive behind the behaviour of states is that of structural survival.

New Wars – A term associated with Mary Kaldor in order to characterise warfare in the post-Cold War era. New Wars are centred on identitarian politics between competing groups. It is claimed that the nature of warfare has shifted due to the process of globalisation.

Non-democratic State – A system of representative government in which elections take place without a choice of political parties. They are sometimes referred to as no-party democracies.

Non-Refoulement – A principle within international law that prevents a country receiving asylum seekers and then returning them to their country of origin if they would be in danger of persecution.

North Atlantic Treaty, Article 4 – A clause within the North Atlantic Treaty which enables consultation whenever the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the signatories is threatened.

North Atlantic Treaty, Article 5 – The famous clause within the North Atlantic Treaty that commits member states to the principle of collective defence, i.e. an attack on one is an attack on all. NATO first invoked Article 5 in 2001 after the terrorist attack of 9/11.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) – An intergovernmental organisation charged with implementing the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in 1949. NATO is centred upon the concept of collective defence in which an attack on one is considered to be an attack upon all. Members therefore accept the principle of mutual defence in response to an external attack. Since the end of the Cold War, the organisation has sought to rebrand itself as a more humanitarian organisation. The organisation has also expanded into the former Soviet sphere of influence and has implemented military action in response to a unanimous position adopted by the UNSC (e.g. enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya in 2011).

North-South Divide – The political and economic distinction between the developed 'North' and the underdeveloped 'South.' The interests of the former often differ to those of the latter on issues such as climate change.

Nuclear Proliferation – The global spread of nuclear weapons. The possession of nuclear weapons tends to hold certain political benefits (such as a deterrent). Furthermore, joining the nuclear club enables a country to become a great power.

Obama Doctrine – The guiding philosophy and strategy of the Obama administration (2009–2017). The principal emphasis centred on multilateralism. Although idealistic in tone, the Obama administration engaged in unilateral action in order to promote American interests where necessary. The Obama doctrine also sought to reduce overseas commitments (particularly in regards to Iraq and Afghanistan).

Offensive Realism – A realist perspective which states that the anarchic nature of global politics promotes aggressive behaviour. States therefore seek to achieve security via domination and hegemony.

Oslo Accords – Agreements reached between Israel and the PLO that were negotiated by the Clinton administration in 1993 and 1995. The PLO agreed to recognise the State of Israel whilst the Israelis recognised the

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Palestinian right to self-determination. The Oslo Accords also created the Palestinian Authority.

Pacta Sunt Servanda – A legal doctrine stating that agreements must be observed and obeyed.

Panda Diplomacy – The diplomatic practice of sending giant pandas from China to other countries. The term was popularised during the Cold War.

Paris Agreement – A UN agreement signed in 2015 that seeks to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Although there is no enforcement mechanism, the Agreement marked the first-ever comprehensive climate agreement.

Partnership for Peace (PfP) – A series of bilateral agreements between NATO and its partner states. The PfP aims to build up mutual trust between NATO and Eastern Europe, and thereby enhance the organisation's reach.

Peripheral States – According to World Systems Theory, peripheral states within the global economy are exploited by those at the core. This may be on the basis of resource extraction and the location of sweatshops. It is important to note that countries can change their status within the global economy, but the distinction between the two remains.

Plurilateral Agreement – A legal or trade agreement between a number of states. The term is applicable towards the WTO, in which an agreement requires unanimity. This makes the resolution of a bargaining round highly problematic.

Political Globalisation – The growing importance of international organisations within global politics. These organisations are transnational in that they exercise jurisdiction within a broader system of states. Political globalisation often entails moves towards a form of governance with an identifiable executive, legislature and judicial branch.

Positivism – A scientific approach towards a study of the subject matter. Positivism is built on the assumption that the social sciences should replicate the methodology employed within the natural sciences. In doing so, knowledge can be verified on a scientific and causal basis.

Postmodernism – Within International Relations, post-modernism is based on an incredulity towards grand theories. Instead, our understanding of global politics should focus on questioning rather than offering metanarratives (such as Marxism or liberalism). The key contribution of postmodernism is the observation that 'truth' is relative rather than absolute.

Post-Positivism – A reference to those theories that reject the epistemological basis of positivism. Sometimes referred to as reflectivist or interpretivist theories, post-positivism claims that the study of International Relations should include non-state actors and low politics. For instance, a study of ethnicity casts insight towards our comprehension of the subject matter (such as stateless nations). Unlike the predominant metanarratives, the focus of post-positivism is on how power is experienced. Post-positivism also claims that discourse can never be entirely free of power.

Power Vacuum – A scenario in which a government has no control, and no group has replaced them. Insurgents, extremists and organised militia may seek to fill the gap within a failed state. A power vacuum may also occur following a constitutional crisis.

Predatory Hegemon – Where the global hegemon adopts an aggressive pursuit of their own national interest(s) and disregards their obligations towards the international community. The term may be contrasted with a benign hegemon.

Precautionary Principle – A principle applicable towards environmental law. If an activity might have harmful consequences, it is better to control the activity rather than wait for scientific evidence. The precautionary principle was a core element of the Montreal Protocol.

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Pre-emptive Strikes – According to the Bush administration, Washington had the right to take military action against the threat of terrorism. A pre-emptive strike was therefore presented as a defence against a perceived future threat. The concept was used as justification for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Protectorate – A state that is controlled by another sovereign state. Protectorates are typically a dependent territory, albeit with a degree of limited autonomy. The protectorate accepts certain obligations depending on the arrangement (such as Puerto Rico in relation to the United States).

Proxy Wars – Those wars instigated by major powers without becoming directly involved. For instance, during the Cold War the two superpowers fought a number of proxy wars whilst avoiding direct confrontation with one another, such as in Angola.

Puppet State – A state that is independent in law, but not in fact. They are under the influence and control of another state due to the threat of military force (such as East Germany in relation to the Soviet Union).

Quasi-Federalism – An intermediate form of state organisation between a unitary state and a federation. It combines features of both federal and unitary government. The term is applicable in relation to the European Union.

Reagan Doctrine – A hawkish foreign policy stance characterised by an ideological and military confrontation with Soviet-backed communism. It combined a religious rhetoric with a significant increase in military expenditure. The Reagan administration provided covert support and funding towards those groups opposed to the spread of communism. The Reagan administration marked a clear departure from the détente of the 1970s.

Realism – A theoretical perspective which claims that international relations should be understood via reference to a number of central tenants. Firstly, the state remains the most significant actor. Secondly, the anarchic political system is characterised by a system of self-help. States also pursue their own national interests and are driven to doing so either as a result of human nature or the anarchic structure of the international system. The realist lens adopts a far more negative view of human nature than liberalism.

Realpolitik – A system of politics or principles based upon practical considerations. It is sometimes referred to as the pursuit of pragmatic policies.

Recognition – A process in which certain facts are accepted with legal and legitimate status. Statehood is a common illustration of recognition within international relations.

Regime Change – The replacement of one government by another. Regime change may be instigated via demands for social change, a revolution or a coup. It may also occur from the reconstruction following the collapse of a failed state. The United States has often been involved with the process of regime change (such as Operation Condor in Latin America).

Regionalism – The formal coordination of activities within a geographical region that comprises a number of states. The growth of regional bodies such as the EU both supports (and refutes) the concept of globalisation.

Relative Gains – The actions of states in respect of power balances and without regard for other relevant factors (such as economics). Relative gains is based on a zero-sum formulation of power politics. Cooperation may be necessary due to power balance considerations, but the focus of states is on relative gains. The concept is more closely associated with the realist perspective on International Relations.

Resolution – A declaration voted on by member states of the UN. A simple majority is required, although important issues require two-thirds support within the General Assembly (such as the admission or expulsion of a member state). Resolutions are non-binding within international law.

Resource Curse – An inverse relationship between a lack of economic development and an abundance of natural

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resources. It is also known as the paradox of plenty.

Revisionist States – A term used to categorise states that seek to change the present system. A revisionist state is dissatisfied with the current balance of power.

Rights – An entitlement held by an individual or group. The concept of rights is related in some manner to the notion of responsibilities or duties (such as the right to national self-determination).

Rio Summit – Held in 1992, the Earth Summit held in Rio addressed the issue of sustainable development. The main achievement of the Rio Summit was the Climate Change Convention (which later became the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement). The Rio Summit also instigated the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Rogue States – A term applied to those states that fail to adhere to the norms and conventions of international relations. Rogue states are usually characterised by authoritarian rule, state-sponsored terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Withdrawal of the term can also be used as a bargaining chip. For instance, Sudan was taken off the list of state-sponsored terrorism in return for diplomatic support for Israel. The US also agreed to lift its veto upon assistance from the IMF and the World Bank.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court – The Treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). Entering into force in 2002, the statute outlined four international crimes (genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression). The majority of countries are members of the ICC albeit with notable exceptions such as the United States, Russia, China and Israel.

Rule of Law – In the context of international relations, the rule of law is a principle of governance applicable to a wide range of actors. Individuals, institutions and entities are held accountable within the boundaries of international law. The rule of law aims to impose a system of rules and regulations that are proportionate and non-arbitrary.

Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty – Two rounds of bilateral conferences between the US and the Soviet Union on the issue of arms control. Negotiations led to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and led to the strategic arms reduction talks of the early 1990s.

Satellite State – An independent state that experiences political, economic and military influence from another state. Countries under the Soviet sphere of influence within Eastern Europe were widely depicted as satellite states.

Security Dilemma – A situation in which actions by a state intended to heighten its security, such as increasing their military arsenal, leads to further instability. It is sometimes referred to as the spiral of insecurity.

Secretary General of the UN – The chief spokesman of the United Nations. Appointed by the member states of the General Assembly, the Secretary General will seek to express the opinions of the international community. The UN Secretary General can at times drive forward the process of global governance, such as Kofi Annan in regards to developing the R2P and the MDGs.

Selective Intervention – A common critique levied against the international community when human rights violations are ignored. Selective intervention routinely highlights the problem of bias and hypocrisy held by powerful states.

Self-Determination – A prescriptive concept in which a nation or imagined community is said to have the right to form its own political structure. Self-determination claims that a nation should achieve statehood and determine how they are governed. According to the ICJ, the right to self-determination is based on *erga omnes*.

Semi-Democracy – A state that holds both democratic and authoritarian elements. A semi-democracy may be classified as a partial democracy rather than a full democracy. They are also known as hybrid regimes with a guided form of democracy.

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Shanghai Cooperation Organisation – An alliance amongst Eurasian and South Asian states (most notably Russia and China). Sometimes known as the Shanghai Pact, the aim is to promote cooperation in areas of a shared interest (such as the fight against terrorism). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of land mass and population.

Smart Power – A combination of coercion and persuasion in order to promote the national interest. It seeks to underline the importance of military force with the need to establish legitimacy and linkages with others. According to Joseph Nye, the most effective strategies in regards to foreign policy necessitate coercion and persuasion.

Social Cohesion – Those factors which bind members of a society together. Social cohesion is based upon norms, values and mores. Institutions, symbols and national anthems may also be considered within the context of social cohesion.

Soft Law – A situation in which quasi-judicial institutions lack adequate powers of enforcement. The term is associated with international law. For instance, the ICC lacks the power of enforcement when issuing arrest warrants for those convicted of crimes against humanity.

Soft Power – The use of persuasion (rather than force) in order to exert influence over other actors, convincing other states to want the same ends as one's own state. Unlike hard power, soft power operates via intangible factors such as the moral standing of that particular country.

Sovereignty – The authoritative right of a governing body to be the ultimate decision maker and exercise power within its own borders without interference from external bodies.

Spaceship Earth – An ecological concept based on the argument that Planet Earth will eventually run out of fuel. According to ecologists, we are all choking on the exhausts of Spaceship Earth.

Sphere of Influence – A spatial division over which a state or organisation has a level of exclusivity. This may occur on a formal or informal basis. In some cases, a country located within a sphere of influence effectively becomes a satellite state.

Spillover – A fundamental concept within the theory of neofunctionalism. Within the process of European integration, the practical benefits provided by supranational institutions creates an impetus towards deepening the process of integration. Outside of the EU, the economic benefits of increased trade leads towards the formation of multilateral alliances (such as ASEAN).

Stare Decisis – The legal doctrine in which judicial precedent is followed. The courts will therefore abide by a previous decision made. The principle of stare decisis is not part of international law, although judicial members of the World Court may refer to previous decisions.

START – A Treaty signed between the US and the USSR (later Russia) aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals.

Stateless Nation – A single nation that is politically stateless or territorially divided amongst a number of states. It is a value-laden term as it implies that the group should have a state. Stateless nations are usually not represented within the United Nations. A number of stateless nations have a history of statehood, whilst others have always been stateless. Multiple stateless nations can also reside in the same geographical region or country.

Statism – The realist notion that states are the principal actors within international relations. Realism offers a state-centric approach whilst the liberal perspective acknowledges the importance of non-state actors.

Status-Quo Ante Bellum – A Latin phrase meaning 'the situation as it existed before the war'.

Status-Quo State – A state that seeks to uphold the current international system of states. As the term implies,

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status quo states wish to preserve the principal features of the present system (such as the balance of power). The more powerful a state, the more likely it is that they will seek to preserve the status quo. A high number of powers seeking to preserve the status quo may contribute towards a more peaceful international system.

Stimson Doctrine – The non-recognition of those states created as a result of military aggression.

Structural Power – The level of power exercised by certain states within the global political and economic system. For instance, the US holds significant structural power within a range of international organisations.

Stockholm Declaration – An agreement reached by participants at the 1972 UN Conference on the environment. The Stockholm Declaration marked a new approach to the issue of environmental degradation.

Superpower – A term first used by William Fox to indicate those countries with a reach greater than a traditional 'major power'. Superpowers typically possess a global reach, a predominant role within their respective sphere of influence and a massive military capacity (especially in terms of nuclear weaponry).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – A set of global objectives designed to establish a more sustainable future for all. The sustainable development goals specify targets that states must adhere to. In order to ensure transparency, performance indicators are published.

Sustainable Development – Levels of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development entails an economic, environmental and generational dimension. The term has increased in salience due to climate change.

Terra Nullius – A legal term meaning 'land without an owner' (such as the uninhabited landlocked territory of Bir Tawil between Egypt and Sudan).

Territory – A geographical area usually outlined by the boundaries of a country (or nation). There are several territories throughout the world where two or more ethnic groups claim sovereignty.

Terrorism – The use or threat of action designed to influence a government or to intimidate the public. Terrorism also seeks to advance a political, religious or ideological cause. Terrorism therefore consists of the use of political violence to demand social change. As the name implies, terrorism aims to spread fear amongst the public in order to influence decision-makers.

Theocracy – A regime based upon a strong adherence to religious beliefs (such as Iran). In a theocracy, laws are divinely ordained. The creation of a theocratic regime is at times the long-term objective of some terrorist organisations, especially in relation to groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

Three C's – Conflict, competition and cooperation. The three C's are often used as a template towards an understanding of bilateral relations between states.

Tragedy of The Commons – The argument that rational actions by individuals can lead to irrational outcomes. In the words of Garrett Hardin 'freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.' The term is applicable towards an understanding of climate change.

Transformational Diplomacy – A phrase used during the Bush administration in order to promote democracy via military coercion. It may be contrasted with smart power, which seeks to combine elements of both soft and hard power.

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – A proposed trade agreement signed in 2016 amongst several states including the US, Japan and Australia. When the Trump administration withdrew from the TPP, the remaining countries negotiated a new agreement called the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. In

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political terms, the partnership seeks to reduce the economic dependence of signatory states on China.

Trump Doctrine – The Trump administration was characterised by a mix of populist measures with a nativist ‘America first’ approach. The Trump doctrine was a blend of hawkish rhetoric and selective intervention. It therefore represented a rejection of globalism, multilateralism and liberalism. Examples of the Trump doctrine include the raid on Yakla, recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and a drone strike killing the high-ranking Iranian official Qasem Soleimani.

Unilateralism – A foreign policy approach in which states pursue their own interests without any diplomatic or military involvement from others.

Unipolarity – An international system in which there is only one pre-eminent state. In a unipolar system, one dominant state has the capacity to act as a hegemon. Some theorists argue that unipolarity ensures stability. The dependent factor is the intentions of the dominant power; as a benign hegemon will act in a very different manner to a predatory hegemon.

United Nations (UN) – Founded after the Second World War in 1945, the United Nations is an intergovernmental organisation which chiefly endeavours to maintain international peace and security, international cooperation, and be the centre of the harmonisation of state activity – following the aims set out in its founding document, the UN Charter.

United Nations Charter, Article 42 – The clause within the UN Charter that allows the organisation to utilise military action. This may entail a role for peace-keeping operations.

United Nations Charter, Article 51 – The clause within the UN Charter that enables states to engage in military action on the basis of self-defence.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – An environmental treaty that seeks to address climate change. The UNFCCC has resulted in a number of salient environmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – A document that enshrines a set of universal rights and freedoms. The UDHR recognises that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights regardless of social background. In historical terms, it marked the initial step towards the International Bill of Rights

Uti Possidetis – The legal principle that territory remains with its possessor at the end of the conflict unless otherwise provided for via a treaty. Each side retains whatever territory it holds at the end of the war.

Vertical Nuclear Proliferation – The accumulation of nuclear weapons by established nuclear states.

Veto – To vote against or refuse to ratify. In the UN Security Council, members of the permanent five hold a technical veto, as resolutions may only pass if the P5 vote unanimously. However, there is a so-called ‘sixth veto’ whereby the seven non-permanent members vote against a resolution.

Victor’s Justice – A term that refers to the double standards often employed by the victorious side. Crimes committed by the defeated party are therefore subject to punishment, but those committed by the winning side are not. For example, the UN Tribunal into the Rwandan genocide only convicted Hutus.

War on Terror – A concerted attempt by the United States and other key allies to defeat those groups considered responsible for 9/11. The War on Terror differs from conventional warfare in that the latter was fought against a distinct state and a uniformed organisation, the former is not. It is also characterised by an attempt to deal with rogue states and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, critics claim that the War on Terror is almost exclusively directed at militant Islam.

Washington Consensus – A series of policy prescriptions promoted by institutions based in the American capital.

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It entails a package of measures such as privatisation, deregulation and marketisation. The Washington Consensus is often contrasted with the Beijing Consensus as a potential pathway towards economic development.

West Bank – A landlocked territory under Israeli occupation since 1967 (including the contentious area of East Jerusalem). The West Bank is divided between illegal Israeli settlements and the remit of the Palestinian National Authority. The Oslo Accords created administrative districts with varying levels of Palestinian autonomy.

Westernisation – A term often used by critics of globalisation to emphasise the extent to which Western governments and Western-based companies export a set of norms and values to other countries. Westernisation is closely associated with the process of globalisation.

Wisconsin School – A school of thought which claims that American foreign policy can be understood as the search for markets abroad. Economic factors are therefore more salient than other possible explanations (such as the balance of power).

World Bank – An international financial institution that provides grants and loans to governments of middle and low-income countries.

World Economic Forum – An international non-governmental organisation in which prominent political and economic stakeholders meet in Davos, Switzerland. The organisation provides a platform to promote a shared capitalist agenda with no democratic accountability or transparency.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) – An intergovernmental organisation created in 1995 in order to replace the GATT. The WTO seeks to regulate international trade in goods, services and intellectual property. It also provides a framework for negotiating trade agreements, resolving disputes and avoiding discrimination between trading partners.

World Systems Theory – A theoretical perspective which emphasises the world system (rather than nation-states) as the main focus of analysis. Associated with the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, the chief feature of the world systems theory is its focus upon the transnational division of labour between core, semi-peripheral and peripheral states. It also claims that the global economic system is highly exploitative.

Zone of Peace – A discrete geographical region of the world in which states have maintained peaceful relations amongst themselves for a period of time. The European Union has sought to create a zone of peace on a war-torn continent. Former rivals have placed their historical enmity aside in order to build a more peaceful continent.

About the author:

Kevin Bloor is an author, Principal Examiner and teacher. He has over twenty years of experience in the social sciences and is the author of several texts and educational resources such as *Understanding Global Politics*, *The Definitive Guide to Political Ideologies*, *Understanding Political Theory* and *Sociology: Theories, Theorists and Concepts*. He holds a BA in Politics and International Relations and an MA in International Relations, both from Staffordshire University, and an MPhil in Government from Manchester University.