

security in the relations between liberal and non-liberal societies. And in their relations with all states, liberal states have not solved the problems of international cooperation and competition. Liberal publics

can become absorbed in domestic issues, and international liberal respect does not preclude trade rivalries or guarantee farsighted collective solutions to international security and welfare.

Key points

- ❑ For more than two centuries, liberal countries have tended to maintain peaceful relations with each other. Liberal democracies are each other's natural allies.
- ❑ A fundamental postulate of liberal foreign policy is therefore preserving and expanding the liberal zone of peace.
- ❑ Liberalism contributes to the understanding of foreign policy by highlighting how individuals and the ideas and ideals they espouse (such as human rights, liberty, and democracy), social forces (capitalism, markets), and political institutions (democracy, representation) can have direct effects on foreign relations.
- ❑ But liberalism has also proved to be a dangerous guide to foreign policy, often exacerbating tensions with nonliberal states.
- ❑ The foreign policy question essential for all democracies is thus: can the liberal peace be effectively preserved and expanded without provoking unnecessary danger and inflicting unnecessary harm?
- ❑ Scholars have analysed liberalism's effects by distinguishing three key interpretations of liberal foreign policy: individualist, commercial, and republican.

? Questions

1. What characteristics identify a typical liberal state? How well does an actual liberal state that you know—USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa—match those characteristics?
2. What differences are said to distinguish individualist, commercial, and republican liberalisms? How and why do their foreign policies differ?
3. What might the citizens and leaders of liberal states do to enhance the prospects that the good features of liberal foreign policy (the liberal peace) are enhanced and the bad ones (imprudence, interventionism) constrained?
4. Under what circumstances should a liberal theorist of foreign policy support or reject international military intervention?
5. What should a liberal theorist expect to happen in US–European relations and US–Chinese relations if Europe unites in a powerful democratic federation or China both continues to grow and democratizes? Would these expectations differ from those a realist balance of power theorist would expect?

» Further reading

- Brown, M., Lynn-Jones, S., and Miller, S. (1996) (eds), *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge: MIT Press).
A valuable collection of essays by proponents and critics of the democratic peace proposition.
- Doyle, M. W. (1997), *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: W.W. Norton).
A wide-ranging survey of international relations theory, including liberalism, realism and socialism and their policy implications.

Kant, I., 'Perpetual Peace' in *Kant's Political Writings*, in Reiss, H. (ed) and Nisbet H.B. (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Written in 1795, by the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant, when there were few if any liberal republics, nonetheless, the classic source for the liberal peace.

Mill, J. S., 'A Few Words on Nonintervention [1859]', in Gertrude Himmelfarb, (ed.) *Essays on Politics and Culture* (Gloucester, Ma: Peter Smith, 1973).

The classic nineteenth-century liberal defence of both nonintervention and of liberal imperialism.

Rousseau, D. (2005), *Democracy and War*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

A thorough analysis of the quantitative assessment of the political science literature on the liberal peace, with insightful case studies.



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