DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY AND MILITARISM: THE UNRELATED CONNECTIVITY

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Abstract: Democratic Peace Theory is a pivotal trend in International Relations theory and particularly in post Cold-War international politics. The analysis will support the view that Democratic Peace Theory is a hegemonic ploy and is the primary cause of militarism in the 21st century as the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq fully reveal. The article supports the view that the Democratic Peace Theory differs from the Kantian Perpetual Peace. Kant argued for Republicanism rather than war-prone Liberal Democracy. However, it is important to note that the phenomenon of war has systemic origins and is not related to any particular system of government. As a final conclusion, the article supports the view that the Democratic Peace Theory is the main source of militarism in international system of the 21st century, primarily due to the fact that it is being used as a Trojan Horse to implement hegemonic schemes.

Introduction

Peace is the most desirable socio-political prerogative for human societies [1]. This is probably why it is a rather more complex achievement than war [2]. Therefore, it is necessary to meticulously assess every theory that guaranties peaceful co-existence among the states in the international system, even though the concept of peace dictates multiple approaches [3].

It is of high importance to thoroughly examine a theory that advances the idea that democratic states should not fight each other and, therefore, Democratic Peace Theory [4]. will be the focal point of our analysis, thereby contributing to the wider theoretical dialogue regarding this specific topic. The theoretical and philosophical origins of Democratic Peace will be presented first. Secondly, it will be shown that the implementation of the D.P.T is an alternative source of militarism to the international politics of the 21st century [5]. More precisely, it will be argued that the theoretical application of D.P.T is highly controversial because it fails to present a rational interpretation of the origins of War, since it approaches the perplexities of this phenomenon through a controversial pattern. It will also be argued that the main objective of a leading state at a sub-systemic level is to endorse and promote D.P.T in order to reinforce its status on international level. This is connected with what I call the Great Powers’ systemic syndrome anxiety, or as Mearsheimer argues ‘...but the desire consider peace to be a synonym for stability, without considering that in most of the historic cases the preservation of the status quo may be the product of military dominance and not a question of preference such as the Ottomans’ rule in the Arab peninsula and the Balkans. See inter alia: D. C. Kang, ‘Stability and Hierarchy in East Asian International Relations, 1300-1900 CE’ in S.J. Kaufman, R. Little and W.C. Wohlfirth (eds.), The Balance of Power in World History, London, Palgrave Macmilan, 2007, pp. 199-227.


5. Militarism is a direct product of the maximalist aspirations of every peripheral hegemony which targets states’ ontological existence by pursuing the homogenization of the international system. Perhaps the most characteristic definition of militarism in I.R. theory comes from Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 210: ‘“...the conclusion of one hegemonic war is the beginning of another cycle of growth, expansion and eventual decline. The law of uneven growth continues to redistribute power, thus undermining the status quo established by the last hegemonic struggle. Disequilibrium replaces equilibrium, and the world moves toward a new round of hegemonic conflict. It has always been like this and always will be, until men either destroy themselves or learn to develop an effective mechanism of peaceful change”.'
for more power does not go away, unless a state achieves the ultimate goal of hegemony’ [6]. By employing D.P.T. a state covers its systemic hegemonic goals behind a verbalized aura of idealistic good intentions and vague political commitments to pacifistic perpetuity.

The Philosophical Origins of Democratic Peace Theory
Despite D.P.T’s illustrious status, it does not constitute a philosophical breakthrough since its thematic roots lie in Immanuel Kant’s theory of Perpetual Peace. However, while on the surface Kant’s influence is clear at its roots [7]. D.P.T moves away from the theoretical context of Perpetual Peace. Kant’s theorem is not a manifestation of his liberal beliefs, but an analysis of the republican ideological interdependency that existed as a political linkage between the main state actors of the European continent during that era [8]. Kant was the first to combine the concept of the ‘state of nature’(status naturalis) with the fundamental principles of Perpetual Peace. As he argued: ‘The state of nature (status naturalis) is not a state of peace among human beings who live next to one another but a state of war, that is, if not always an outbreak of hostilities, then at least the constant threat of such hostilities. Hence the state of peace must be established. For refraining from hostilities does not guarantee a state of peace, and when one neighbor does not guarantee the peace of the other (which can occur only in a juridical condition), the other neighbor who called upon the first to do so can treat him as an enemy.’ [9]. His philosophical opus was published in 1795 and was deeply influenced by the thought of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Kant elaborates on the view that the state of nature functions as the primary regulating principle in the way human societies are organised. He then advances a new modus operandi for the administrative organization of the states, similar to a League of Nations, which will share the same moral values concerning political and economic relations. With this type of collaboration, Kant maintains that war will be rendered as a less possible scenario.


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among the states that endorse common principles. According to Kant, such a development would spark off an evolution in humankind and would result in human morality in the way states function [10].

Peace is not a systemic outcome. It is as a citizen’s choice. In Kant’s theory, citizens choose not to resort to war in order to preserve public prosperity and progress, which are the result of domestic political stability, economic growth and prosperous commercial interdependency with other similar states. Perpetual Peace Theory is based on the construction of common political foundations that are able to support stable channels of communication among the states. Consequently, this high level of communication generates not only a framework of peaceful co-existence but also thriving economic and commercial relations. Thus, peaceful stability becomes the well-expected outcome through the combination of all the aforementioned factors. Kant’s theory had been covered in the dunes of time but once again became a relevant theoretical alternative at the end of the 20th century when Michael Doyle established his thesis that, in general, liberal democracies do not wage war against one another. However, military engagement remains an active possibility for non-liberal democratic states [11].

A thorough comparative analysis between Kant’s Perpetual Peace and contemporary D.P.T is beyond the aims of this article. However, at this point it is necessary to show the extent to which D.P.T draws from certain elements within Kant’s theory and on what points it evolves autonomously.

Both Kant and the advocates of the D.P.T. consider the governing system of each sovereign power as the main link between them, and as fertile ground for inter-state communication [12]. Nonetheless, when Immanuel Kant talks about a common sys-

12. Regarding the impact of ideology on state behavior in the international arena it has to be noted that there is a variation in the theoretical approaches. While the realists dismiss the argument that domestic ideology affects the way a state behaves in its foreign policy actions, others insist that ideology plays a vital role in its international route. For example, Alexander Wendt in ‘Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics’, International Organization, 1992, 46(2), pp. 391-425, argues that, since world politics is socially constructed, ideas actually do indeed matter in the international sphere. Nevertheless, his theoretical stance disregards the materialistic nature of the states and the primacy that power holds for them as the main method for their survival. In addition, for Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993 or Andrew Moravcsik, ‘Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics’, International Organization, 1997, 51(4), pp. 513-53, ideas represent beliefs that are shared by

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Democratic Peace Theory in Theory and Practice

D.P.T considers the existence of a democratic infrastructure to be a central prerequisite, thus giving the governing system the ability to erase the phenomenon of war from international politics. The conceptual origins of DPT can be found in Woodrow Wilson’s era. Nevertheless, this is not the case. Although the American President is presented as a fervent supporter of international idealism since he tried to establish a moral etiquette for the exercise of international politics. Nevertheless, it has to be said

tem of governance between the states as a source of peaceful co-existence, he focuses on the element of Republicanism, a type of government that is respectful of people’s basic freedom and not that of Democracy which is defined as the absolute rule of popular will. Kant’s Perpetual Peace Theory does not advocate that democracy is the long awaited solution to the war conundrum; nor does he consider the democratic system of government to be capable of becoming a stimulus for the promotion of peaceful co-existence between the states [13]. On the contrary, Kant associates Republicanism with Perpetual Peace primarily because, in this particular system of governing, the political elite plays the primary role in deciding the main directions the state adopts, both at a domestic and international level. In a Republican state, the political elite is the main source of sovereignty, while the will of the majority plays a secondary role. Therefore, the probability for the establishment of peaceful co-existence between Republican states is increased considerably for different reasons other than those that are widely understood. Kant does not exclude the possibility of a violent dispute among the states. He develops a theory which seeks to find a way to eliminate states’ tendency to resolve their disputes violently. This is of great significance. Kant’s theory neither evolves in a normative manner, nor does it support the utopian view that a governing system can automatically bring peace and prosperity to all humanity. It is a focal point in the theory of Perpetual Peace that peaceful co-existence is the outcome of the close association among the Republican states, since their ruling elites construct an apparatus of political understanding and co-operative economic activities. Therefore, in the context of the Perpetual Peace Theory, one should see peaceful co-existence as a result of the interconnection between the states, and not as deriving from the qualitative modus vivendi of a governing system.

Therefore it can be supported that the theory of Perpetual Peace is based on the open channels of communication that are developed between the ruling elite of the Republican states. This is mainly due to ideological solidarity and the need to protect and promote common political values and beliefs.


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that his method of dealing with major crises such as Haiti in 1915, the Dominican Republic in 1916 (when American troops occupied the islands), or the way he dealt with the uprising of General Victoriano Huerta in Mexico in 1913 reveal a rather follower of power politics [14]. In 1917, the American President, in a message to the American electorate concerning his decision to place the United States in the Entente alignment, distinctively stated: ‘a steadfast concert of peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations’ [15].

Undoubtedly, Wilson’s words must not be examined as an explicit ideological stance, but rather as a clear effort, aimed directly at the hearts and minds of the American public, to morally justify the United States’ entry into World War I. Such an interpretation can be vindicated by the following: The United States decided to ally itself with the despotic regime of Tsarist Russia despite the fact that Germany enjoyed a more liberal type of governing system compared to the Russian one. The same can be said for the two, almost identical, political systems of Germany and Britain of that period. Therefore it can be said that the substantial reason for the entry of the United States in WWI had to do with the American interests and not to an alleged solidarity the United States felt towards the liberal democracies of Europe.

During the Cold War era, D.P.T received broader recognition within the western world, not only as a structural element of political differentiation from the Warsaw Pact states, but also as an indirect way of attributing militaristic predisposition to Marxism-Leninism. As Bruce Russet supports: ‘Despite rhetorical statements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fact that most – but not all – members of the newly formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization were democracies, democracy was seen more as a binding principle of the Cold War coalition against communism than as a force actively promoting peace among democracies themselves.’ [16].

Apparently, fear towards the notorious menace of the Iron Curtain was, evidently, the main component that kept the western bloc unified. During the Cold War, the western states, in order to confront Soviet pressure, produced an efficient state of peaceful co-existence along with close military and economic collaboration. During the Cold War era the United States implemented a policy based on the theory of Primus inter Pares. This means that the U.S. maintained a moderate stance towards its western allies. Washington held the primary position in the western camp by gaining the approval of its allies. This was in contrast to the so-called Iron fist policy implemented by the Soviet Union toward its allies. These Soviet allies resembled puppet states more than autonomous ones [17]. Therefore, due to the Cold War era’s sui generis status D.P.T was upgraded from an ideological doctrine to both a political thrust

and a social stance in the western nucleus [18]. This was directly influenced by the geopolitical interdependence of western states that the Soviet Union provoked.

The end of the Cold War, and the prevalence of the socio-political values of western liberal democracy, reinforced D.P.T.’s impact both as an intellectual argument in academic dialogues and as a political choice destined to signify the opening of a new chapter in international politics. Accepting the principles of a liberal democratic system nowadays is not solely considered to be simply a question of political choice influenced by the domestic political developments of a state. Today, accepting liberal democratic principles is considered to be a one-way politically correct behaviour. Liberal Democracy is being conceived as an apparent doorway for every state that aspires to play an active role in the post-Cold War world order, and as a post-historical necessity that will offer the opportunity for every state to gaze steadily, and with the utmost certainty, into the future, without be troubled anymore by the quakes of historical evolution. Such an aspiration describes the notorious strife regarding the end of history. This strife is the cessation of the systemic collisions that place nation state’s survival claims in the centre of International Relations.

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18. There are two main schools of thought regarding the sui generis image of the Cold War era. On the one hand, there are the analysts who support the view that the era of bi-polar conflict was more a period of co-operation rather than discord between the US and the Soviet Union in order to maintain supremacy in their systemic poles (for example R. E. Kanet, and E. A. Kolodziej (eds.), The Cold War as Cooperation: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management, Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991). On the other hand, the bi-polar era is unique due to the fact that despite the high level of antagonism between the two poles of influence, the USA and the Soviet Union did not fight each other because of the Mutual Assured Destruction effect (for example H.D. Sokolski (ed.), Getting MAD: A nuclear mutual assured destruction, its origins and practice, Carlisle, Strategic Studies Institute, 2004).
state’s survival claims in the centre of International Relations. It is a purely ideological aspect of political imposition regarding Liberal Democracy in the 21st century’s realities. Beyond any doubt the end of the Cold War marked a new political reality that resurfaced from the ruins of the Berlin Wall; a new Respublica Christiana, only this time its main theoretical corner stone was to be Liberal Democracy [19]. In the case of Republica Christiana, when Christianity, as a spiritual and doctrinal concept, had to be conveyed to humanity either through peaceful preaching or violent force [20], Liberal Democracy appears today to be a political concept that ought to be conveyed by any available political means. This particular dimension of the new political reality that arose in the international system at the end of the Cold War is summarized by Bill Clinton’s stance in the UN General Assembly in 1993 that democracies rarely wage war on one another.

It has also been observed in the statements of various U.S. officials, such as former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and former Secretary of State James Baker, who both stated their confidence that liberal democracies do not fight each other [21]. Consequently, the fundamental issue regarding Democratic Peace is not if and to what extent it can actually produce a peaceful environment for the states that aspire liberal democratic values, but, rather, who it benefits. As Robert Cox speculates about: ‘for whom and for what purpose has democratic peace theory been constructed?’ [22].

19. Although there was a post-Cold War optimism regarding the expected stability of the international system, there were voices that disagreed with this point of view (for example J.J. Mearsheimer, ‘Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War’, The Atlantic, 1990, 266(2), pp. 35-50). Optimism had been expressed mainly by the majority of those who belonged to the neo-isolationist approach and believed that the United States had nothing to be afraid of after the collapse of the Soviet Union (for example D. Bandow, Politics of Envy: Statism as Theology, New Brunswick, N.J: Transactions Publishers, 1994, pp. 91-106. E.A. Nordlinger, Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1995). Alan Tonelson for example in ‘Super Power Without a Sword’, Foreign Affairs, 1993, 72(3), p.179 argued that: ‘few international conflicts will directly threaten the nation’s territorial integrity, political independence or material welfare’.


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Democratic Peace: A Feasible Solution or a Political Trojan Horse?

At this point we will concentrate our analysis on a theoretical review of the D.P.T. The majority of theoretical studies on D.P.T follow either a historical course of analysis or they base their conclusions on various statistical and empirical results. Nevertheless, is it possible to reach widely accepted conclusions through the above-mentioned routes of theoretical analysis?

The perplexing phenomenon of war troubled humanity well before the establishment of the Westphalian system, which studies the human presence on earth from the first organised societies until today. Nevertheless, the above assertion is not enough by itself to prove the pivotal significance of war in the formation of contemporary structures, in both domestic and international organizational processes. On the contrary, our argument is supported by the fact that a large number of scholars from classical antiquity until the present day approach war either as a phenomenon able to alter the systemic balance of power [23] or as an operational instrument, which can reinforce state’s sovereignty [24].

Research on War has become the search for the Holy Grail in the discipline of the I.R. theory [25]. The traditional paradigm sees war as a direct outcome of human

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23. Thucydides’ Peloponnesian War is the not only the historical narration of a major conflict between Athens and Sparta, but rather a theoretical approach over the perplexities of hegemonic war upon systemic balance of power. The Peloponnesian war influenced, directly or indirectly, every city-state of the era, thus greatly modifying the socio-economic and political evolution of the Hellenic sub-system in the decades that followed the Spartan victory over the Athenian democracy. See also R. Gilpin, ‘The Theory of Hegemonic War’, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 1988, 18(4), pp. 591-613.

24. Machiavelli supports the view that it is the task of the sovereign to decide about fundamental questions of the state’s existence, such as war or peace. War, he suggested, is essential to sovereignty either as a mean in order to protect it or as an apparatus in order to expand it over other territories. See for example: F. Maiolo, Medieval Sovereignty: Marsilius of Padua and Bartolus of Saxoferato, Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2007, p. 109.

nature. Human beings are, by nature, antagonistic and aggressive, hence the socio-political structure, resulting from human achievement, which favours discord and combative readiness. Hans Morgenthau, a central figure in the school of classical realism, suggests that ‘politics like society in general, are governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature’ [26]. He also shares the Nietzschean view that human nature is fundamentally evil and driven by the lust for power [27]. Additionally, when it comes to the interpretation of the war phenomenon, the traditional paradigm also goes beyond anthropological characteristics. It lays the foundation for a wider theoretical dialogue regarding the role of the state, its continuous quest for power, its ontological existence and survival etc. This can be clearly seen by analysing the theoretical legacy of Thucydides. Thucydides’ most significant contribution in the theory of International Relations is the security dilemma. For example, the fundamental cause of the Peloponnesian War was Sparta’s resentment at Athens’ strengthening [28]. All kind of measures that are taken by a state in order to reinforce the level of its power automatically reduces another state’s level of power [29]. This discordant correlation arises from the fact that a state cannot possibly obtain an absolute amount of power in the international arena. Rather, the amount of power a state secures is analogous to the level of power that another one holds. As Kenneth Waltz characteristically states: ‘Power is estimated by comparing the capabilities of a number of units. Although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not. The distribution of capabilities is not a unit attribute, but rather a system – wide concept.’ [30]

Through this lucidly given description of the relative nature of power the only valid option that is given to a state whose power is threatened is war. War involves the violent cessation of the strengthening of an opponent. It was in this specific situation that it has been used frequently in the past, such as in the Peloponnesian War, the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, or the well-known Six-day War. It can be thoroughly supported that the security dilemma is based on the anarchic and antagonistic nature of the International System. This dilemma is compounded by the fundamental principle of uncertainty, which determines the behaviour of a state towards the political


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agenda and objectives of another one. In this case we accept the Thucydidian argument that the security dilemma is the main origin of war; and if we consider that the security dilemma is the outcome of the international structure then these can only lead us to the following conclusion: the type of government a state chooses to adopt cannot be a counterpoise to the systemic structure of the international arena. Additionally, it cannot lead a state, especially a Great Power, to halt its aspirations regarding the maximization of its power. As long as war continues to be the continuation of politics by other means [31] then a collision between two states remains an issue of the redistribution of power on the international level; a political phenomenon that has a systemic rather than domestic reasoning.

At this point it is critical to mention that direct democracy, as was adopted in the city-state of Athens during the classical era, functioned as a source of amplifying Athenian involvement in the Peloponnesian war [32]. However the Athenian hegemonic aspirations against Sparta were not formed by the style of governing but by the idiosyncratic tendency of every Great Power to maximize its power. Direct democracy, that is, the equal involvement of all male citizens in the daily political life of Athens, enhanced and reinforced Athens’ hegemonic prospects. Nevertheless, it did not cause the Peloponnesian war because, as we have already seen, the primary reason for this systemic war can be found in the security dilemma created by Athens toward Sparta’s impulsiveness.

The security dilemma is the main source of the war phenomenon. It occurs when a Great Power, in its effort to accumulate more power, challenges the existing balance of power in the international system. In this context, the Great Power functions purely as a revisionist element. The violent response of other states comes as a habitual task of safeguarding their own ontological existence. Revisionism, a behaviour that distinguishes Great Powers’ sense of fundamental insecurity, is not the product of the post-Westphalian balance of power, but a constant reality of International

31. The conceptual framework of this well-known phrase of Carl von Clausewitz should not be seen only as a rational evolution of strategic analysis. This phrase can be linked with the Aristotelian dialectic regarding morality in peace and war: ‘if virtue is the capacity of conferring benefits, then the greatest virtues must be those which are the most useful for the others, and, for this reason, justice and courage are the most honoured; for the latter is useful to others in war, and the former in both war and peace.’ E. Garver, Confronting Aristotle’s Ethics: Ancient and Modern Morality, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 89.

Politics since the dawn of time [33]. This is why its consistent objective is self-prevalence in the face of other antagonistic elements in the international arena.

Another fundamental factor regarding the origins of war is the anarchic nature of the international system. This is not a morphological feature of the international arena but rather a lack of the constant capable of resolving the disputes arising in interstate relations. According to Kenneth Waltz: ‘Wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them...In the absence of a supreme authority there is then the constant possibility the conflicts will be settled by force ’ [34].

War also plays an instrumental role for the survival of the states. Clausewitz’s commonly known phrase that war is merely a continuation of politics through other means is not an indication of so-called militarism, but the most convincing proof that states are rational actors, adjusting themselves to the systemic conditions of the International environment. For the war to maintain its functional role, it is important to serve, in a pragmatic way, the political interests and necessities of the state, rather than an ill-considered and utterly unnecessary hyper-chauvinistic ego. The primary political aim of every state in the international arena is its survival beyond any form of material or immaterial sacrifice.

Since the war phenomenon is not the outcome of domestic political developments and socio-political ideologies, how then can D.P.T generate its pacifist objectives? If there is agreement that the governing system could begin or prevent war, then we should ask ourselves why a war between Britain and Germany, for example, did not break out in 1933 when Adolf Hitler and his party rose up in power with the declared political objective of abolishing the Weimar Republic. Additionally, if we assume that the governing system of a state is the driving force behind the formation of friendly or unfriendly relations among the states [35] then we should also question the Sino-American rapprochement during the Cold War era. Finally, if we embrace the view

33. For example Jason Davidson defines revisionism as a preference for changing the international “distribution of goods”—including, but not limited to, territory. It is also the willingness to incur costs in pursuing that preference. J.W. Davidson, ‘The Roots of Revisionism: Fascist Italy, 1922-1939’, Security Studies, 2002, pp. 125-26. Similarly, see also J. Legro, Rethinking the World, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 10. On the other hand, Mearsheimer holds the argument that every Great Power is a revisionist element since, in order to survive, it has to strive for becoming at least a regional hegemon. For example this position becomes apparent in Mearsheimer’s approach regarding China: ‘a wealthy China would not be a status quo power but an aggressive state determined to achieve regional hegemony. This is not because a rich China would have wicked motives, but because the best way for any state to maximize its prospects for survival is to be the hegemon in its region of the world’. J.J. Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, p. 402. See also an approach that explores the interconnectedness between status quo revisionism of the Great Powers and the realist paradigm: St. Chan, ‘Realism, Revisionism and the Great Powers’, Issues and Studies, 2004, 40(1), pp. 135-72.
34. K. Waltz, Man, the State and War, p. 232.

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that the governing system can function as a corner stone for the formation of an alliance, then we should wonder how it is possible for Saudi Arabia, a state that promotes Islamic theocracy from the Sunni doctrinal point of view and bases its sovereignty on Sharia Law, to be the closest ally of the United States inside the Arab World [36].

From the aforementioned, there is a general conclusion that should be considered as a crucial methodological boundary between the disciplines of political science and International Relations theory. It is indisputable that the governing system of a state has the ability to determine its own bureaucratic system and deeply influence the social structure, economic capabilities, and domestic political stability, among other things. On the international level, however, the governing system cannot surpass the systemic limitations of the anarchic structure of the International arena and the antagonistic state of affairs that prevail between the states. The main reason for this inability has to do with the different nature of the implementing policies on the domestic and international level of analysis, respectively. In this case, the governing system emerges as a key factor in formulating international relation. This is a clear and perilous attempt to destroy the ontological existence of the state and it evolves into a revolutionary objective for the establishment of a global homogeneity, according to the well-known revolutionary tradition analysis of Martin Wight [37].

It is both an empirical and theoretical fact that the governing system cannot affect the economic interdependency among states. This is based solely on the reinforcement of national interest and does not take into account either political ideologies [38] or the notion of collective security, which is mainly based on a state’s capacity to obtain hard power [39]. More specifically, the governing system of a state cannot substitute, or serve as an alternative for the most important aims of a nation-state in the international arena. Those aims are the acquisition of power and the guaranteed survival of the state. At this point, it is important to open a parenthesis in order to note the impressive reappearance of the term ‘national interest’ in the western political vocabulary of the 21st century. In spite of various constructivist efforts to argue that national interest is of no importance in 21st century international politics, during the

current international economic recession, leaders of powerful Western states have contradicted these constructivist views and have made use of theoretical arguments from the realist approach. For example, in a 2009 New York Times interview, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that: ‘International policy is, for all the friendship and commonality, always also about representing the interests of one’s own country.’[40]

From a theoretical perspective, D.P.T seems incompatible not only with the systemic features of the international arena but also with the structural functioning of states. However, in a case where a Great Power applies this theory as foreign policy doctrine, then D.P.T is no longer a mere theoretical fallacy, but a political instrument used to maximize influence within the international arena. This form of implementation can be achieved by one of the two following ways: either a state will voluntarily adopt D.P.T theory, as a direct result of the implementation of a bandwagoning policy or as the product of a violent coercion coming from the side of the powerful element towards the less powerful one. This is the ultimate manifestation of a revisionist political agenda that pits a more powerful faction against a weaker one. In this second example we come across an apparent case of animus dominandi which shapes the behaviour of every state in the international arena, while it also dictates the international political agenda of every Great Power accordingly [41]. We have already mentioned that the D.P.T. is an invention primarily developed by American I.R. theorists. Throughout its history, the United States has made extensive use of moral arguments to create a sense of idealistic superiority from the rest of the international system. Henry Kissinger’s view concerning the way in which the United States understands its presence in the International System offers a good example. He states that the United States’ foreign policy is characterised by idealistic interventionism that appears as an ethical crusade for the enforcement of American values throughout the world [42]. At this point it is vital to mention that efforts to construct a framework of moral superiority in the collective conscience are not an American innovation. Almost every hegemonic power developed a similar stance, both as an instrument to achieve domestic political legitimization for their expansionist aspirations, and as a

moralistic ploy to diminish any possible reaction toward their aspirations from the international sphere. For instance, Napoleon’s France projected the ideology of anti-aristocracy in order to justify the advancement of the French army in the European continent [43]. Britain projected the conviction of being the global civilizer and a fair ruler by insisting that all its colonial subjects enjoyed a protected and prosperous life. This was done to justify and then maintain an imperial status on which the sun never sets [44]. Nazi Germany projected the horrendous ideology of Aryan superiority in order to veil German aspirations for global domination [45]. Last but not least, the Soviet Union promoted the ideological myth of the ‘social harmony’ of the proletariat in order to justify expansion into the Caucasus after the overthrow of the Tsarist regime in Russia. This same ideology was also promoted by the Soviet Union in Central Europe after World War II [46].

D.P.T represents the American version of those attempts. Nevertheless, it is necessary to differentiate the theoretical approach of American academia from that of the American politicians. For example Bruce Russet and John Oneal argue that Liberal Democracy, interdependence [47] and international organizations promote the peace-

47. Interdependence is a systemic phenomenon and this can be analyzed through a series of defining approaches. Peter De Wilde defines interdependence as the existence of ‘independent social actors, who wish to preserve their identity, but who are also structurally affected by one another’s behavior’ (P.J. De Wilde, *Saved from Oblivion: Interdependence Theory in the First Half of the 20th Century*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1991, p. 17). Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Jr. define it as referring to situation characterized by reciprocal costly effects among countries or among actors in different countries (R. O. Keohane and J. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2001, 3rd ed.). Andrew Hanami describes interdependence not as structure but as ‘a manifestation and result of structure. What has been considered as the recent rise in interdependency around the world is actually the rise in worldwide interactions, which frequently lead to interconnectivity. Increased interconnectivity can result from such increased levels of international interactions, but this is not interdependence.’ (A.K. Hanami, ‘Structural Realism and Interconnectivity’ in A.K. Hanami (ed.), *Perspectives on Structural Realism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 205). Last but not least Stephen Kranser portrays interdependency as a an inherent, a logically necessary, aspect of an international system composed of sovereign States (St. Kranser, ‘Economic Interdependence and
ful co-existence between the states [48]. However, American politicians, primarily during Clinton’s and George Walker Bush’s administrations, argue that global peace and prosperity can be established only through the spread of liberal democracy all over the world. Nevertheless, moralistic arguments cannot disguise the genuine political objectives of the United States. The U.S. is the undisputed western peripheral hegemonic power and it aspires to expand its dominance throughout the International System. This, as we have already mentioned before, does not constitute an innovative course of action, or reveal a unique American egocentrism. It is rather a typical function of a Great Power in order to achieve its upgraded role in the international arena and, at the same time, confront any kind of threat to its peripheral primacy. As it can be understood, the main objective of Democratic Peace is not the radical modernization of the International System through a crusade for the establishment of democracy, but rather through the decisive elimination of any kind of opposition or threat to its hegemonic might, without, however, facing the risk of being accused of being a ruthless and immoral despot. It could be seen that D.P.T. is the Trojan Horse of the 21st century used by the United States, not only for conquering the enemy’s castle, but also for preserving the archetypal image that the U.S. has projected within the Western world since the nation’s birth on July 4, 1776. The veiling of the United States’ hegemonic objectives under the moralistic guise of the D.P.T could initially be perceived as unnecessary. Why, after all, does the superpower feel the need to cover its hegemonic objectives under such a utopian theory? This question can be answered by observing the structural function of the International System. A clearly revisionist endeavour can generate serious reactions, both within the western world and in the rest of the International system, which would place the United States at the mercy of such upheaval. This could occur either by the creation of counter balancing anti-hegemonic coalitions, or by the gradual disintegration of NATO into a marginal alliance with limited capabilities of intervention. In other words, the U.S. would plainly reveal its political agenda and its idealistic facade would be demolished. This, in turn, would jeopardize the position of the U.S. on the International scale of power and would force longtime and traditional allies to take opposing positions against the U.S. [49]. As a result, it can be concluded that D.P.T cannot possibly exceed the systemic limitations of the international system. No hegemony has ever managed to bypass the anarchic and antagonistic structure of the international system and become a supreme global imperium. Nevertheless, even in a limited geographical area, where a peripheral hegemony has succeeded to impose its dominance, there have been dis-

putes; either in the form of social revolts against the ruling administration, or in the form of national claims by ethnic groups for their independence or self-determination. Consequently, the elimination of the war phenomenon is not the main precondition for D.P.T to function properly. Certainly war can be a source of destruction for any state, regardless of its size or capacity for power. However, war is a human invention and a direct result of the structure of the international system. Therefore, it is clear that when a Great Power aspires to establish the D.P.T, then its fundamental objective cannot be the elimination of the war phenomenon but, rather, the decisive invalidation of the International System as a mechanism for international relations. The pivotal objective of the D.P.T. is not to establish liberal democracy as the ultimate element that connects states so that they do not wage war on one another. Such an objective is utopian and cannot eradicate the central role of national interest in the political designs of every state. If this was the case, in order for the war phenomenon to be eliminated, national interests would have to cease to exist as well. Consequently, the international system would cease to exist as well, since a nation-state without the will and ability to safeguard its national interests becomes like the Flying Dutchman, a ghost ship that can never make port. It no longer resembles the Westphalia paradigm of the modern era. The International System would be abolished, then the hegemonic power would be able to elevate its power from the sub-systemic to the global level, since the systemic limitations would no longer exist. Therefore, we can now fully support the view that Democratic Peace is a qualitative political method that seeks to eradicate the states’ ontological existence and replaces it with a new homogenized global structure.

Today, D.P.T is considered to be a descendant of international cosmopolitanism, which some scholars link with so-called progressive ideological beliefs [50]. The aforementioned illusion, that humanity will be better off without the cultural and political diversity of the westphalian system, is based on a crucial misconception that war, as a phenomenon, will cease to exist if the anarchic and antagonistic nature of the international system is abolished. Nevertheless, if we overcome the dubious utopianism of the D.P.T and focus on the selected methodology concerning its implementation, we will understand that D.P.T is the main source of militarism in the 21st century. Not only because it is almost impossible to modify a state’s international behaviour by making considerable changes to domestic policies but also because democracies are war-prone [51].

**U.S and Democratic Peace Theory**

As we have already mentioned, in the post Cold War era, the idea of promoting a Democratic Peace zone was advanced from the level of a mere ideological source of differentiation between the United States and the USSR, to an extensive political and military operation. However paradoxical this may sound, the United States’ aspiration to enforce democracy has actually caused the most significant military conflicts of the post- Cold War era. The Belgrade bombing in 1999 by U.S. Stealth aircrafts took place, according to official American statements, due to Milosevic’s autocratic regime that carried out ethnic cleansing against the Albanian population in Kosovo [52]. However, while the United States was mobilizing its hard power apparatus by condemning Serbia to a long period of international isolation and domestic underdevelopment, the White House was offering its full support to the Kosovar separatists of U.C.K, whose democratic credentials can be highly contested [53].

In the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, D.P.T was used to control the region after the collapse of Sadam Hussein’s Baathic rule in Iraq and the collapse of the Taliban in Afghanistan. This double democratization process is considered to be an essential political development for local societies and a major step to fill the political gap after the fall of the two aforementioned autocratic regimes. In the case of Serbia, Liberal Democracy’s imposition produced the desired outcomes for the White House. Yet, this was not because the Serbian community suddenly discovered the positive aspects of liberal democracy, but because the Serbian majority understood that there was no other way to stabilize the state and repair diplomatic relations with other Western states. However, the Iraqi and Afghan cases are different from Serbia. The violent enforcement of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan has not produced the desired results. The American army departed Iraq leaving behind a dubious peaceful co-existence between the Sunni and Shia population. Left in power was also a weak central government trying unsuccessfully to imitate western civic democratic methods. In Afghanistan the Taliban has not only re-emerged across the eastern borders of the state, but has also managed to be a constant threat to Pakistan.

So, is liberal democracy a political opulence that can only function in the western world? The answer is no. European states such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, which had turbulent political histories during the 20th century, today constitute ideal examples of liberal democratic regimes. It is this author’s view that the political history of a state does not influence its civic present or future. Societies have the power and the ability to bypass historical determinism and choose their own best solution. Tak-


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ing into consideration the aforementioned examples, can we presume that Iraq and Afghanistan would follow the same course of domestic political re-organization? Once again the answer is negative. From a constructivist point of view there is neither a historical nor ideological connection between today’s Afghan and Iraqi conscience and liberal democratic principles, since the historical past influences the political present and future of a state [54]. However, this view is not sufficient. I support the position that Iraq and Afghanistan could not adopt liberal democracy, since both domestic political sceneries are being dictated by an equally powerful socio-political element: Islam. In other words, it is not the historical past of the two states that shapes their future in the international arena, but the collective choices being made due to religion and cultural social conditions of a metaphysical structure.

Islam is not simply a world religion. It is primarily a collective ideology with a rather developed political and doctrinal theory concerning social organization. The indisputable dominance of Islam at the centre of the Muslim world eliminates any attempt at domestic ideological and political pluralism, or of harmonious co-existence with contrasting socio-political models such as liberal democracy. The entire process of democratizing the two aforementioned Islamic states goes beyond the utopian ideal of voluntarily acceptance of Western values, an idealistic point of view that vividly resembles the Catholic Church’s arguments at the time of the discovery of the New World. The unwillingness of these Islamic states to voluntarily accept democracy makes war the only realistic option for the U.S. to impose power.

In reality, no one can really support the view that the NATO attack against the Taliban regime was an irrational action. The Taliban is one of the most totalitarian regimes that humanity has ever witnessed and had almost identical methods of imposing its political presence as the notorious Khmer Rouge. Nevertheless, the NATO invasion of Afghanistan was not a humanitarian venture, but was motivated by the Taliban’s alliance with Al Qaeda terrorists. In order for this radical regime to be defeated, an ordinary military invasion was not sufficient. The primary objective for NATO and, in particular, the United States was the complete reformation of Afghanistan’s socio-ideological and political foundations. The situation is similar in Iraq. The objective in Iraq was not solely the overthrow of the Baathic regime of Sadam Hussein, nor was it control of Iraq’s oil deposits by Western companies. The primary objective, rather, was to install basic western socio-political values in Iraq. This would lead Iraq in an entirely different direction in the sub-system of the Middle East.

On both occasions, the United States chose to wage war. On a primary level, the goal was to eliminate the political risks to Western interests. However, on a secondary level, the main goal was transformed into an undisguised attempt at altering the domestic structure of the aforementioned states in accordance with U.S. preference. War, in the second case, abandons the self-restraining Clausewitzian logic as an al-

54. For this kind of a constructivist approach see: R. Ned Lebow, _A Cultural Teory of International Relations_, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
ternative way of achieving political goals. The very essence of the aforementioned dimension of war eliminates any form of rational application and, as a result, leads directly to military action. Therefore, it can be clearly supported that the D.P.T, on one hand, and militarism, on the other, develop a close ideological and empirical connection since neither is addressed directly in American foreign policy [55].

From the above it can be said that the D.P.T is a political weapon used by a Great Power, to accomplish its hegemonic objectives. This qualitative course of action promoted by the U.S. since the Cold War ended has been the primary source of militarism in the 21st century, as the wars in the Balkans and the Middle East clearly show. Inevitably, Democratic Peace leads to Democratic War and constitutes the ultimate attempt at imposing radical changes in the domestic socio-political structure of a state. As Geis et al argue: ‘As long as democracy is promoted by peaceful means of cooperation and voluntary assistance, one might not object to such a foreign policy strategy. If regime change is to be achieved by force as in the Iraq war 2003, however, the “flip side” of the democratic peace, namely a “democratic war” becomes obvious. Unfortunately, the notion of a democratic peace lends itself to being employed as an ideological underpinning for liberal-expansionist policies. Under the guise of promoting a seemingly “universalist” idea of democracy and freedom, some of the powerful Western democracies arrogate to themselves the right to pursue a “liberal mission.”’ [56].

Is Democratic Peace Morally Acceptable?
This question is misleading and therefore entirely rhetorical. This is because, as we have previously asserted, D.P.T is actually widely used by the United States as a tool for promoting political objectives in the international arena [57]. Thus, the more appropriate question at this point would be: is the United States’ desire to maximise its hegemonic power a moral quest or an immoral crusade? I support the view that morality can neither define the political choices of a state in the international arena nor can it portray, in a qualitative form, the efforts of a hegemonic power to secure its

57. In general it can be said that American foreign policy makes use of the concept of morality as a methodological apparatus in order to achieve diplomatic goals. Various analysts clearly affected by the teachings of Thomas Paine promote the view that this is a genuine reaction of the US towards crises and hardships in the international arena. See for example: R. McElroy, Morality and American Foreign Policy, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. Within the context of Thomas Paine’s legacy regarding the defense of human rights, humanitarian intervention in the Third World etc. see: K. M. Jensen and E.P. Faulkner (eds.), Morality and Foreign Policy: Realpolitik Revisited, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2005.

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survival through maximizing its power. This is because morality is not a so-called perpetual social principle, but a relative one under the direct influence of periodic sociological conceptions and misconceptions. In every historical period, morality is transformed to a great extent by the social trends and collective perceptions of that specific era and it dictates the domestic developments of organized societies [58]. However, this cannot be said for the anarchic and antagonistic structure of the International System. If someone, for example, during the Dark Ages had supported the argument that Jesus Christ had an intimate connection with Mary Magdalene, he likely would have been burnt at the stake as a heretic. Today, however, if a gifted author, such as Nikos Kazantzakis or Dan Brown, presents a novel about Jesus Christ, St. Mary Magdalene and their alleged descendants, he can become a very successful and prominent member of the western society. Nevertheless, states in the international arena are obliged to function rationally and not morally. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, morality is not an unchanging or necessarily common ideal for humanity. Morality takes on various forms for human societies and it is also utterly dependent on historical and societal development. What used to be immoral during the past is a social trend today, and vice versa. In addition, morality does not dictate international relations, because the quest for power cannot be combined with the quest for immaterial aspects of self-existence.

Due to the aforementioned theoretical inconsistency of the concept of morality, the only way states can function morally in the international arena is to operate rationally [59]. In other words, states’ main moral burden is to safeguard and protect their national interests against their adversaries. This can be accomplished primarily through the maximization of the state’s power, since power is the main element that most directly defines the international status quo. Taking John Mearsheimer’s theoretical stance regarding the Great Powers’ constant motivation to change the international distribution of power in their favour [60], the United States’ attempts to apply the D.P.T as a political trend in the 21st century international politics is a well-expected development. As Jeffrey Taliaferro quite rightly states: ‘All states strive to maximize their power relative to other states because only the most powerful states can guarantee their survival. They pursue expansionist policies when and where the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. States under anarchy face the ever-present threat that other states will use force to harm or conquer them.’ [61]

In contrast, the wide support of other states towards the U.S. political agenda is irrational. By supporting U.S. initiatives around the implementation of the D.P.T., states, along with their political and economic elites, simply bring the end of their ontological existence one step closer. As Hobbes accurately states in Leviathan, the establishment of the state system decisively halts the appearance of the ultimate militaristic phenomenon for humanity, that of *bellum omnium contra omnes* [62]. This means that any attempt to eradicate, or even diminish, the status of the Westphalian system only brings closer the realization of this most extreme militaristic phenomenon. Such a backlash would elevate the frequency of organized violent disputes on the domestic and international level. Wars would become the continuation of cultural and behavioural incidents. In this homogeneous global reality brutality would emerge as the only pragmatic option to safeguard individual or collective existence.

Therefore, the proper question is not whether the United States’ ambitions are moral. Such a dilemma is clearly of little importance, and any attempt to answer it would remove the discussion from the sphere of international relations’ theory, thus leading the scholar into a labyrinth of utopian subjectivity. Nonetheless, it is essential to mention one more time that states’ enforcing of hard and soft power is completely rational, due to the systemic conditions that states face. This enforcement of power would lead to the establishment of a multipolar international system, which would counter-balance the hegemonic objectives of the U.S., or of any other peripheral hegemony, and would remove D.P.T from the framework of international politics. Undoubtedly, a multipolar world would increase the level of international antagonism, especially between the Great Powers. However, such a development could counter-balance and contain their hegemonic political agendas. Furthermore, a multipolar international system could function in favour of those states of lower and middle status, since bipolarity and unipolarity limit their options concerning the course of action they will adopt in a more hierarchical international environment. Last but not least, it is important to remember that any international modus operandi that functions in favour of the gradual decrease of antagonism between states erodes states’ ability to safeguard their self-existence. This offers a great opportunity to rogue elements to appear in the most vicious way. Islamic fundamentalism, which is expressed today through the terrorist activities of Al Qaeda, constitutes a defining example.

**Conclusion**

Although D.P.T is deeply influenced by Kant’s Perpetual Peace, it does not constitute its continuance. It is a well-orchestrated attempt to cover the United States’ hege-


monic objectives behind the veil of a benevolent cause that promises a liberal Valhalla to humanity. However, for a state to enter this promised land where peaceful co-existence and social prosperity regulate human conduct, it requires a long stay in Purgatory. After all, Valhalla exists only in mythology while Purgatory is a miserable reality demonstrated by such cases as Afghanistan and Iraq.

As we have seen, the origins of war are purely systemic; therefore no governing system can influence them. The United States’ hegemonic objectives of transforming the international arena into a homogeneous and collective upwardly mobile system constitute the main source of militarism in the 21st century.

D.P.T is not capable of materialising its promises. Minimizing the frequency of war can only be accomplished if states provide for their survival by increasing their capacity for hard power, enhancing their alliances and generally reinforcing their active presence within the international arena. By increasing the number of powerful states in the international System, the likelihood of war is reduced because one state can counterbalance the expansionistic tendencies of another. Within this context war is a less feasible scenario [63].

War will continue to play a significant role in the international system since it constitutes an indispensable tool for states to achieve their political objectives. For the establishment of a safer International System the eradication of war is not a realistic option. Nevertheless, the herculean task in front of us is the establishment of an international balance of power that would decrease its rate of occurrence. This can be achieved, not through the implementation of the D.P.T., but through the construction of an enduring international system in which states invest in their empowerment so that they are able to provide for their survival. The ontological existence of states can serve as a counter-balancing mechanism to hegemonic aspirations. Global homogeneity can only provoke fundamental animosities and the prospects of war of “all against all”. If we continue with the current state of affairs, we will guarantee the establishment of militarism in the 21st century.
