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- Home assignment (EC)

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Question: Does international peace require the construction and maintenance of supranational political structures?

In order to make all people in every state able to exercise their individual ways of life, a common condition must be met: International peace. Without international peace and some level of order, only anarchy and the “state of nature” is for certain, which famously was described to be “nasty, brutish and short” by Thomas Hobbes in 1651 (Ferdinand, Garner, & Lawson, 2018). In history, the period of international peace between 1945 and 2019 (as I write) is relatively brief compared to the history of wars between states and empires from thousands of years back. However, in the twenty first century, humanity is met with new global challenges such as climate change, that require adaptation to overcome. The idea that the current Westphalian system of individual sovereign states is capable of achieving international peace, as well as solving the new challenges for humanity is disputable. A transition towards supranational political structures could be both necessary and optimal for achieving international peace in the future. *Therefore, this assignment will argue that international peace does require the construction and maintenance of supranational political structures, if the supranational political structures are able to establish and enforce regulation.* Firstly, the assignment will clarify the theory of neoliberalism and the concepts of peace and power in international relations. Then, the assignment will outline eight arguments as to why international peace require supranational political structures with the ability to establish and enforce regulation. Finally, the assignment will present four opposing assessments that will be attempted to refute.

This assignment is informed by neoliberalism, which is the theory linked to works of scholars such as Francis Fukuyama, Joseph Nye, Robert Keohane, Richard Lebow and Andrew Moravcsik. With roots in liberalism, neoliberalism is based on optimism and a linear view of history, meaning that continuous world peace is achievable (Grasten, 2019), and that the world progressively improves over time via cooperation and interdependence for instance. Neoliberalism focuses on absolute gains rather than relative gains (Bøttkjær, 2019), and also assume that cooperation in the international system can be described as a positive-sum game, meaning that there are greater gains to be obtained when actors cooperate rather than not. Neoliberalism assumes that actors are rational and the fact that other actors than states can influence international relations, such as international organizations (Brown, 2019). The theory relates to this assignment, as the paper argues that international peace can be achieved via cooperation, more specifically with supranational political structures that hold the ability to establish and enforce regulation. Additionally, the concept of “positive peace” meaning that there is existing cooperation and social justice (Galtung & Webel, 2007), will generally be referred to as “peace” in this assignment. However, the concept of “negative peace” should also be mentioned,

meaning absence of war, which will be explicit if that is the concept referred to. Furthermore, the concept of power is broadened to include both hard power and soft power, meaning power is not only coercion through military capabilities, but also power through appealing to other actors, making them co-optive or act based on their own will to the benefit of the actor exercising (soft) power (J. S. Nye, 2004).

Constructing supranational political unions will provide international peace by facilitating the movement of money and goods between states. Commercial peace theory shows that states do not engage in war if they trade, since this creates economic interdependence between them. This makes war a poor decision based on a cost-benefit analysis, since damage to one's own state economy would exceed the benefits from waging war. The European Union (EU) is an example of a supranational political union, in which the original goals were trade and economic growth by facilitating the movement of money and goods. The EU has been able to provide economic growth for its members and establish regional peace via economic interdependence (J. Nye & Welch, 2017). Prior to the formation of the ECSC treaty (the first treaty being the predecessor to the supranational EU) (Adenauer et al., 1951), the second world war was waged between the Axis Powers and the Allies in Europe. At this time, economic interdependence was not yet as established between the European states. After the war, regional trade and cooperation was the basis for regional peace, which contributed to international peace.

Constructing a supranational currency would contribute to international peace. Accepting that humans are rational and utility maximizing following rational choice theory (Ashbee, 2019), we can say that humans would also support the currency that would provide the best economic situation for themselves, *ceteris paribus*. A supranational currency between a group of states could make financial markets more integrated, give greater security to firms and more stable prices for consumers, and thereby contribute to solidifying an economy. Since there is a link between domestic and international policy within a state (Moravcsik, 1997), a stabilized domestic economy could shift focus from domestic policy to other areas such as international peace and stability, while it also in itself creates economic interdependence. A regional supranational currency such as the Euro in major parts of the EU, regulated by the Economic and Monetary Union (European Commission, 2018), is an example of a supranational currency. Introducing the Euro has reduced currency volatility in Europe and increased trust in the EU economy, and thereby made it more attractive to foreign investors. This leads

to both regional and international economic independence, and thereby international peace, as the economic benefits of war are decreased compared to the economic benefits of peace.

Constructing supranational political structures will encourage trust between states. Achieving international peace requires some level of trust between states, which will be the basis for solving global challenges in cooperation. If states are on their own and are trying to maximize relative gains, it will be difficult for states to trust each other, since they know that their counterpart has no reason to trust anyone as well (J. Nye & Welch, 2017). However, if supranational political structures such as supranational law are constructed, it is possible to establish rules that states can play by, and thereby give them reason to trust other states. With regulation and a rules-based system, there would be a form of consequence of breaking the rules, which give states incentive to abide by the rules. This encourages trust between states to a higher degree, since each state in a bilateral agreement knows that it would be irrational for the counterpart to break the rules or agreements made. The partly supranational International Court of Justice (ICJ) represent regulation or a rules-based system with traits similar to those described above (Charter of the United Nations | International Court of Justice, n.d.). If a dispute erupts between two states, then the ICJ would provide an impartial legal space for the states to try their case, leading to positive peace. The alternative to this system would be anarchy to a higher degree, likely making the strongest one rather than the just one of the two states triumph, thereby relegating positive peace.

Maintaining supranational political unions lead to complex interdependence. Complex interdependence is based on the idea that multiple actors have power in the international system. These are for instance international organizations, multinational cooperations and non-governmental organizations. These actors form relations that can be described with an analogy to a cobb-web, making way for interdependence on different levels, which is broadened from the idea that interdependence can include only states (Keohane & Nye, 1987). A supranational political union would be an actor in the international system with powers of its own, making it an actor or counterpart to states, who would have to consider the potential countermeasures or regulation the supranational political union could enforce, such as sanctions, if a state would engage in war or illicit activities. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is an example of such an actor with supranational elements. It has the ability to call upon military actions, in case the Security Council fail to establish peace. It also has the ability to pass resolutions that opposes the actions or wishes of individual states, which would be

hurtful for the goodwill and standing of the individual state. An example of the UNGA doing this was a resolution declaring that the status of Jerusalem as “null and void”, opposing in particular the United States and Israel claiming that Jerusalem belonged to Israel (United Nations, 2017). This encourages cooperation and facilitates positive peace.

A supranational political union is the only feasible solution to prevent future arms-races. New disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) will greatly affect the future of warfare and international peace (Harari, 2018), as AI could be exploited and used for military purposes. With no regulation on an international level, the potential for a new AI arms-race generate international uncertainty. The risk is that two states are forced to develop AI weapons technology, since they don't know the intentions of their counterpart, and must be able and ready if the worst-case scenario happens. The security dilemma is that the counterpart will do the same, thus making the world more uncertain and the states less safe, when the states try to make their own state safer by developing the technology (Brown, 2019). This was the case during the cold war in the twentieth century between the USA and the Soviet Union (USSR). Whenever the USA increased their firepower for security reasons, USSR responded with similar action and vice-versa. While negative peace existed, uncertainty and the threat of world war also did. Positive peace could have been established by a supranational political union through establishment of regulation on weapons technology.

A supranational political union is needed to prevent a global crisis of unemployment. Some argue that a fourth industrial revolution is currently happening in 2019 (Schwab, 2015). This means that automation and machines are gradually taking over tasks from unskilled factory workers. This will likely continue in the future, and a potential consequence is that states with a largely unskilled workforce will experience great numbers of short-term unemployment with short notice (Harari, 2018). This could frustrate developing states in reaching political and economic stability, since the workers would have no way to get food and shelter with no job, thereby removing basic levels of human needs in Maslow's pyramid (“Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs | Simply Psychology,” n.d.). The risk is potentially hunger, conflict over resources, civil war or mass emigration from these states. An example where this soon could take place would be the state of Laos, where the economy is driven largely by an unskilled labor force. While technological unemployment only is “a temporary phase of maladjustment” as argued by John Maynard Keynes (Keynes, 1936), this would only be true for an advanced economy as the one in California in the US, which has the means to adapt. Regulation could

solve this issue (Min et al., 2019), and a supranational political union would be able to provide just that. It could establish a global safety net, enforce regulation on fast-paced automation and ensure a non-disruptive and steady transition to machines in the industries, thereby reducing risks of global instability and conflict, thus increasing likelihood of international peace.

A global supranational political union is required to handle climate change in the future. No matter if the concept of peace is referred to as negative or positive, climate change poses a threat to international peace. As the Pentagon has pointed out, climate change is a threat to national security in the US, since it could increase frequency of natural disasters and refugee flows (Klare, 2019). For instance, climate change could increase number of yearly droughts in Africa, and trigger wars fought over already scarce water resources between citizens or even states, thereby upsetting international peace. A global supranational political union would be able to sufficiently regulate global greenhouse gas emissions to handle climate change, since it is a global issue that expands across state borders. Individual states can take action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, but this is ineffective if neighboring states emit high levels of greenhouse gas regardless. The physics of nature does not respect or acknowledge the ideas of “sovereign states” and “borders”, which can be argued to be purely social constructs or intersubjective ideas unique to homo sapiens (Harari, 2014). An example of a supranational political union handling climate change, although regional and not global, is the EU, which in 2019 elected a new Commission with the policy goal of co2 neutrality in 2050 (European Commission, 2019). While global regulation is required, the EU implementing these measures is a move that show the way for other great powers and prove that supranational regulation can be realized to handle climate change, and thus providing a basis for international peace in the future.

Maintaining a global supranational security forum is required to achieve international peace. Maintaining a security forum for all states would provide an impartial space for states to discuss peace and security. It would decrease chances of war, since it contributes to reducing the amount of incomplete information about counterparts held by the states, on which they might base their decisions on war. The United Nations (UN) is a global intergovernmental political union rather than a supranational (Ferdinand et al., 2018), but it does have parts that can be characterized as supranational. Such as when UN member states accept that the Security Council (UNSC) acts on their behalf in matters of security. The UNSC has been successful with military operations in the Korean war in 1950 and the

war in Kuwait in 1991 for instance (J. Nye & Welch, 2017). This partly supranational council is effective on matters where actors show “clear cut aggression”, such as when Iraq in 1991 invaded Kuwait. The UNSC also brings together the Permanent 5 states in dialogue (USA, China, Russia, UK, France), which are among the states that hold nuclear weapons and essentially have the power to end humanity. Furthermore, it has been able to introduce the UNAMI peacebuilding mission in 2003 promoting positive peace by assisting Iraq in a situation of turmoil via political dialogue, humanitarian assistance and reformation on legal matters (J. Nye & Welch, 2017), thus contributing to stability in the region and international peace.

A supranational political union offer the only viable path to international peace, even though alternatives such as intergovernmental political unions exist. While global intergovernmental cooperation would contribute more to international peace than no international cooperation at all, it does not offer the same level of effectiveness as a supranational political union, since it does not have the sovereignty to make change. As Fukuyama similarly argues in 2005, “*The international community’ is a fiction insofar as any enforcement capability depends on the action of individual nation-states*” (Fukuyama, 2005). The largest intergovernmental political union, the UN, has so far been successful in preventing a world war. However, it has only been able to encourage and recommend cooperation on issues such as climate change, and regulation on greenhouse gas emissions is still dependent on decisions from individual states. The Paris agreement of 2015 was proven to be fragile as probably the most vital participant (USA) announced that it would leave the accord just two years later in 2017 (Johnson, 2019). On the other hand, progressive realists such as Thomas Weiss provide an approach to global governance, in which establishing global statehood is not suggested, but rather that reforming international organizations such as the UN is beneficial (Scheuerman, 2011). While this is a constructive suggestion, the long-term solution indicates a level of supranationalism regardless. Thus, it seems that international peace requires a form of a supranational political union.

Even though some argue that international negative peace can be reached via a bipolar world order, a supranational political union would in reality provide a superior path to international negative peace. Neorealist scholars such as Kenneth Waltz argue that international peace can be achieved through two political blocs balancing each other’s power. This would lead to negative peace, as it would be irrational for one bloc to wage war with the other since only a tie would be the result at best (Waltz, 1979). However, contrary to this neorealist idea, it can be argued that hegemonic wars (major wars

between great powers) are almost always accidental as argued by Richard Lebow in 2010 (Lebow, 2010). This theory of Lebow would suggest that the absence of war is due to a coincidence rather than balance, as Waltz argue. For instance, during the cold war between USA and USSR, it is true that there was no direct war between the blocs which indeed is negative peace. However, proxy wars between the blocs and uncertainty all over the world also existed as mentioned. A supranational political union enforcing regulation of military use and nuclear warhead arsenals would mitigate the risk of accidental hegemonic war between two blocs, thus providing negative peace.

Even though economic interdependence in a supranational political union also can have negative effects on its economy, the benefits of economic interdependence still exceed the benefits of no economic interdependence. Economic interdependence between states can be beneficial as argued. However, economic interdependence also means that if the economy of one state in a multilateral cooperation agreement has a downturn, then the other states will also be affected negatively. For example, the US mortgage finance setback caused a recession in 2008 in European markets, thereby negatively affecting the economy of European states, in particular Greece (J. Nye & Welch, 2017). European states were affected economically furthermore, since the problems with the Greek economy affected the EU's economy. While this is true, it can also be argued that the main reason for the survival of the Greek economy was due to assistance by Germany via the EU. In this case, because of the supranational political union and economic interdependence, it was in the interest of Germany to assist Greece via EU regulation and stimulation of their economy, since it was a positive-sum-game situation where Germany acted to maximize absolute gains (J. Nye & Welch, 2017). This indicates that the economic interdependence prevented threats to regional peace and thereby international peace from a potential crash of the Greek economy.

Achieving public support for a supranational political union via movement towards a global identity is possible, even though such a structure is imperfect. Introducing a supranational political union and giving it the power to enforce regulation would inevitably mean that states would have to give up sovereignty. Some argue that this will not be possible, and instead people of different cultures will engage in a "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1996). However, making millions of strangers cooperate and subscribe to common values in spite of differences was an accomplishment of nationalism in the twentieth century (Harari, 2018). Those opposing the construction of supranational political unions have not yet proven that this phenomenon cannot be scaled up to a global identity. For

example, some argue that EU integration can lead to a demand for renationalization of the competencies given to the union in the states, thereby undermining the project of formulating a political identity that Europeans will share (Axtmann, 1996). However, while there may be internal challenges such as the Brexit situation, this incidence produced the highest levels of public support elsewhere for the union in the statistics, which has rarely been seen (European Parliament, 2018). Still, the EU is a reality, proving that strangers and people with different cultures can subscribe to common values in a supranational political union. This indicates that a supranational political union can reach the public support it needs, in order to get the mandate to establish and enforce regulation to achieve international peace.

To sum up, this assignment argues with a neoliberal approach, that international peace does require the construction and maintenance of supranational political structures, if the supranational political structures are able to establish and enforce regulation. First, the assignment argues that free movement of money and goods, supranational currencies, increased trust and complex interdependence via supranational political structures lead to international peace. Secondly, the assignment argues that issues such as future arms-races, climate change and global unemployment crisis require establishment and enforcement of regulation by a supranational political union to be handled effectively, and that a global security forum is required in order to achieve international peace. Thirdly, the assignment proceeds by refuting suggestions of alternatives to a supranational political union, such as international peace via an intergovernmental political union and the neorealist thought of international peace via a bipolar world order. Finally, the assignment argues that establishing economic interdependence rather than not is more beneficial for international peace in spite of its imperfections, and while faced with criticism, the assignment argues that public support via movement towards a global identity can be reached for a supranational political union. To conclude, it seems that the course of history points to formations of larger political units (Harari, 2014). Thus, attempting to halt the development of supranational political structures with political action seems counterproductive, since they are inevitable anyhow, as it becomes more and more evident that the greatest absolute gains for humanity comes via increased cooperation. Thus, while nothing is to be said with absolute certainty from a short paper, this assignment shows that there are indications which point to the fact that a transition towards supranational political structures is both necessary and optimal for achieving international peace in the future.

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