

Haass, R. (2005) *The Opportunity: America's Moment to Alter History's Course*, New York, Public Affairs

The attempt to construct a more integrated world does not have to begin from scratch. A degree of international society, even a degree of concert, already exists. Contemporary international relations are not some all-out, unregulated struggle; to the contrary, there are some important principles that are widely embraced, and in some areas these principles are buttressed by institutional arrangements. In short, the world is already somewhat integrated and, in some areas such as trade, quite significantly so.

There is, for example, near-universal support for the right of self-defense, the concept that a state can respond militarily if attacked. This right is enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, which explicitly states: "Nothing ... shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations" As the text makes clear, the notion of self-defense applies not simply to the state under attack but also provides a mechanism for other parties to come to the defense of the victim. All this was embraced by Kuwait, and subsequently by the international community, in the aftermath of the August 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation of its wealthy but small and relatively weak neighbor.

In the realm of security, there is a host of arms control agreements that place ceilings on or eliminate entire categories of armaments, as well as so-called laws of war that influence when and how military force is to be used, including what governments are obligated to do to safeguard the rights of combatants and noncombatants alike.

There are elements of consensus in the political realm, including a number of international conventions supporting human rights and democracy and opposing torture, slavery, and genocide. The United Nations, despite its weaknesses and shortcomings, is an institution of some—and, at times, considerable—international authority. Other groupings that contribute in meaningful ways to international cooperation include the G-8 (consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom in addition to the United States) and many of the numerous regional organizations (the African Union [AU], the Organization of American States [OAS], the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN], and above all the European Union) that reflect a degree of consensus about not just local but also international matters. Transatlantic arrangements, including NATO, also contribute meaningfully to political order in the world.

Technical arrangements abound when it comes to issues that affect the ability to function efficiently in a global world. Aviation safety standards, communications conventions, and international rules affecting agricultural and health policies have become essential for facilitating international travel, broadcasting, trade, and safety. In the environmental realm, there is also a considerable degree of integration, in particular international arrangements with near-universal participation that protect the ozone layer and ban persistent organic pollutants. Most of the world's countries participate in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, while all of the major powers other than the United States have ratified and agreed to implement the Kyoto Protocol.

There are many examples of significant cooperation in the economic realm. Even a partial list would include the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the Paris Club for debt rescheduling, the G-7 group of leading industrialized countries (essentially, the G-8 minus Russia), the Bank for International Settlements, the International Energy Agency (IEA) (designed to help oil-importing countries weather a supply interruption), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ...

Sovereignty is a central building block of modern international relations. Only states enjoy sovereignty. It is states that have rights and roles, dominate international gatherings, and are members of the United Nations and other international organizations. What, though, makes a state sovereign? In theory, a state qualifies as sovereign if it meets four criteria. First, a sovereign state is meant to enjoy supreme political authority and a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its borders. Second, a sovereign state is supposed to be able to control its borders and regulate what goes in and out of its territory. Third, a sovereign state is free to adopt the foreign and domestic policies it wants. And fourth, a sovereign state is one so recognized by its peers.

In reality, the test for sovereignty is more lenient. State sovereignty has always been less than absolute in practice. Governments continued to try to influence “domestic” developments in other countries, at times for reasons of high principle (say, to promote freedom), at other times more for reasons of relatively low politics (to weaken a rival from within). Smugglers and others often cross borders with impunity, as do multinational corporations.

The “balance of power” in international relations overwhelmingly favours states and governments. In recent years, however, this balance has begun to evolve. More than anything else, it is the nature of globalization that explains this change. States cannot regulate much of what flows across their borders in ever-increasing volume and with ever-increasing velocity. In addition, there has been an explosion in the number of entities activities in more than one country. As well as multinational corporations, millions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exist around the world. One analyst summed all this up as constituting a “power shift” in the world, one in which states and governments increasingly have to share the stage with other non-sovereign entities that possess real independence, power, and influence. Each has taken away a little of the state’s sovereign authority. In this respect, the emergence of these entities anticipated a future in which state sovereignty *needs* to become somewhat weaker in selected areas in order to protect the interests of most people and countries in the world, including Americans and the United States.

This is not to confuse the world we are entering with the relatively unstructured world that existed some four centuries ago, just before state sovereignty first became the norm. Until that time, it was commonplace for states to meddle in the affairs of their neighbors, a practice that often resulted in wider conflict. (The “Dark Ages” are described as “dark” for a reason.) After the Thirty Years’ War, Europe’s leaders accepted the notion (in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia) that each ruler was to respect what might be described as the internal independence of the others; in return, the rulers enjoyed a “right” to act pretty much as they pleased within their own borders. Such collective restraint contributed to greater international stability; the wide-spread adoption of the notion of sovereignty constituted a major development in the emergence of what Hedley Bull would term “international society.” ...

Now that borders are porous, every country is or can be affected by what goes on inside other states. To paraphrase John Donne (and setting aside the geography of Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines Sri Lanka, Haiti, Cuba, and Madagascar, among others), no country is an island. The notion that the world is somewhat divided into internal and external spheres and that foreign policy and national security policies of the United States (or any country for that matter) need or can only deal with the external and can safely ignore the internal or domestic side of other countries is an anachronism. We live in an age in which what takes place inside one country can easily affect developments within another. This is true whether one is talking about disease, terrorists, weapons, or jobs. U.S. foreign policy needs to concern itself with the domestic policies of others; it is essential to adopt an approach to international relations that takes all this into account.