

Liberal Democracy is the Key to World Peace

เสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตย คือ กุญแจหลักของสันติภาพโลก

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Abstract

Since the Cold War ended, democratization has spread across the globe - with many states adapting the ideology as their main political regime. Since their turning to liberal democracy, there have been no wars among the liberal democratic states. This points out that liberal democracy has potential to maintain world peace and can provide significant explanations to counter the realists' belief that liberal democratic notions of peace are flawed. The Iraq war was an exception because it was not a war between liberal democratic states, but one waged against an illiberal state. Nevertheless, there are two main weaknesses in this notion of overall suitability: These are how liberal states deal with illiberal states, and the dominant influence of the U.S. in the decision to wage war. Thus, the purpose of this article is to argue the possibility of liberal democracy as a regime to create world peace.

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Keywords: Liberal Democracy, Liberal State, Illiberal Democracy, Peace Concept

บทคัดย่อ

ตั้งแต่สงครามเย็นสิ้นสุดลง แนวคิดเรื่องเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยได้แผ่ขยายไปทั่วโลก โดยมีรัฐชาติมากมายที่ได้นำเอาแนวคิดนี้ไปปรับใช้เป็นระบอบการเมืองหลัก ตั้งแต่รัฐชาติต่าง ๆ เริ่มเปลี่ยนมาใช้การปกครองตามรูปแบบเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตย สงครามระหว่างรัฐเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยก็ไม่เคยเกิดขึ้นอีก แสดงให้เห็นว่าประชาธิปไตยมีศักยภาพในการรักษาสันติภาพของโลก และสิ่งนี้สามารถเป็นหลักฐานที่สำคัญเพื่อใช้ในการตอบโต้ความเชื่อที่ว่า การปกครองแบบเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยนั้นไม่สามารถทำให้โลกปราศจากสงคราม ทั้งนี้สงครามอิรักเป็นข้อยกเว้นเพราะไม่ใช่สงครามระหว่างรัฐเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตย แต่เป็นการสู้รบระหว่างรัฐที่เป็นเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยกับรัฐที่ไม่ได้ใช้รูปแบบการปกครองอย่างเดียวกัน อย่างไรก็ตาม การรักษาสันติภาพตามแนวคิดเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยยังมีจุดอ่อนที่อาจทำให้เกิดสงครามได้สองประการ คือ รัฐเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยมีวิธีการปฏิบัติอย่างไรต่อรัฐที่มีรูปแบบการปกครองที่ตรงข้ามกันและอิทธิพลที่สำคัญของสหรัฐอเมริกาในการตัดสินใจที่จะก่อสงคราม ดังนั้นวัตถุประสงค์ของบทความฉบับนี้ก็เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นถึงความเป็นไปได้ของระบอบเสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตยว่าเป็นระบอบการปกครองที่สามารถสร้างสันติภาพให้เกิดขึ้นในโลกได้

คำสำคัญ : เสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตย รัฐเสรีนิยม ประชาธิปไตยไม่เสรี แนวคิดสันติภาพ

Introduction

After World War I and World War II, the World had lost a lot of its population right across the globe. This tragedy made the whole world realize the importance of the word “Peace” and the danger of the word “War”. This brought back the idea of liberalism in society after the decline

of its reputation during World War I. In addition, the collapse of the League of Nations was also strong evidence of how weak this idea was. As a result of this post Second World War situation, liberalism gradually evolved into neo-liberalism by the early 1980s - with a greater focus on the role of International Organizations (IOs). Neo-liberalism placed greater faith in the ability of IOs to build peace among nations. The rise of the European community was a good example of this process, and its rise also supported the renaissance of liberal thinking. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought about a unipolar system in the world, with the United States of America playing a major role in the world arena. The most prominent feature during this period was the spread of democratization. Many liberal scholars of that era - such as Dixon, Russett, and Weart - believed that liberal democracy was the key to world peace, and that liberal democracies rarely fought each other (as cited in Rosato, 2003). The Kant hypothesis (as cited in Panke & Risse, 2007) asserted that a perpetual peace would eventually arise because of the increase of economic interdependence, the spread of both international cooperation & International Organizations, and the continuing spread of democratization. In the first section of this article, it will briefly explain what 'liberal democracy' is, and then explain how liberal democracy can increase peace among liberal states according to democratic peace scholars. Furthermore, it also provide some examples to support the purpose of this article. In the next section, this article will present some arguments that liberal democracies are not always able to be at peace with illiberal states. Firstly, it will describe how illiberal states arise, as well as focusing on the role of the U.S. – as the U.S.

has always exercised a considerable influence over any decision to make war against illiberal states in modern times. Then, this article will provide reasons why the U.S. sometimes needs to wage war against illiberal states. Before ending, this article will analyze whether peace could really exist if the World further embraced liberal democracy. Finally, this article will explain a realistic point-of-view on the peace concept of liberal democracies.

What ‘Liberal Democracy’ is ?

It is widely believed that the idea of liberal democracy was established in the nineteenth century. This idea focused on giving more rights and freedoms to citizens - to allow them to play a greater role in the actions of their societies, and also to prevent governments from dictating to them. According to Mencken (as cited in australianpolitics.com: online) stated that "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard". To achieve this goal, each country has to organize national elections, and then give people a right to vote for their own representatives. Those representatives, who are elected, will be the people's voice in parliament - but it is important that these representatives follow the principle of the rule of law. The key democracy is "civil liberties" (Cohen, 1988 - 1989: 378) which allows people to have freedom in many aspects of their lives. For example; freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of dissent and freedom of religion. The primary liberal democratic principle will provide common civil liberties to their citizens in a way that can also indirectly foster their peace with other liberal states.

How Liberal Democracy Can Increase Peace Among Liberal States

It is generally perceived that liberal democracy is an idea that has returned peace to many states. This is because liberal democratic states give freedom to individuals and believe in the notion that disparate groups of individuals actually have a great deal in common - so that it is important for the leadership of states to treat everyone with equity. Similarly, such states also look to other liberal states to act as companions with which to share the same ends of liberty and self-preservation. According to Starr (1997: 153) stated that "there is a virtual absence of war among dyads of democratic polities". For this reason, there is no necessity for liberal democratic states to fight against each other. The majority of people in liberal states appear to share similar thoughts as to the advantages that they will gain from increased cooperation between liberal states, when compared to the long-term outcome of war occurring among them. In these terms, the outcome of war becomes a non zero sum-game; On the contrary, collaboration in peacekeeping will often provide states with a positive sum-game result. This leads liberal democracy states to seek to build peace instead of war. Doyle (as cited in Spiro, 1994) stated that none of the liberal states have yet to start war against one another. We can find ready historical examples to support this viewpoint, as since 1789 there has been no such war between countries that claim to be liberal states (as cited in Schweller, 1992). According to Lave and March (as cited in Starr, 1997: 155) also stated that "there was lack of cases in which democracies go to war against democracies". Below, this article will outline how to identify liberal states - starting with some ambiguous cases.

There is some confusion in distinguishing liberal states. There have been some cases which seem to be rather ambiguous, such the Anglo-

American relations (as cited in Owen, 1994) is an obvious case which can provide us with a good explanation. Americans considered Britain – in the periods 1803 - 12 and 1861 - 63 - to be a non-liberal democracy, because at that time it was monarchy. This led both countries to come close to war. But the turning point arrived during 1895, when Americans realized that Britain shared common purpose with them. This led to a peaceful resolution of their previous conflicts. Since that time, the two states have never again come close to war. Indeed, the two states continue to provide the best possible alliance for each other. Additionally, Russett and Antholis (as cited in Gleditsch, 1992) revealed that the Ancient Greek democracies often waged war against each other. But it eventually transpired that the ancient Athenians could not really be seen as possessing a liberal democracy. So in two cases mentioned here, there has proved to be some confusion in distinguishing those states that could truly be labeled as liberal democracies in the past. Following this, how liberal democracies distinguish themselves from those states following an illiberal ideology will be explained.

Liberal democratic states believe themselves to be more pacific and trustworthy than states of a different belief. Such states believe that they have developed a highly pacific and trustworthy relationship with other liberal democratic states because they have collectively arrived at decisions not to fight each other. But this does not mean that they can automatically deal in the same way with illiberal states. Rosato (2003) stated that liberal democracies tended to remain at peace because they respected and trusted each other. He also noted that the same liberal democracies often came into conflict with illiberal states, because they felt unable to believe or trust states of a different ideology. Liberal states tend to assume that illiberal states are cruel to their citizens – and that their leaders exercise a

heavy-handed control over their citizens' freedoms and rights. Liberal states all too often believe that the actions of illiberal states seem to undermine the global peace process, and that such governments are unreliable. All of these characteristics of illiberal states are unacceptable in the view of many liberal democratic states.

Above all else, it is widely believed that liberal democracies have found the key that allows them to constantly resolve their conflicts with other liberal democratic states in a peaceful manner. It is hard to find examples of war being waged between liberal states, although there have been some conflicts that have come close to war. According to neo-liberal ideology (Martin, 2007), most liberal states currently believe that International Organizations play a significant role in preventing war among their member states – so that when conflicts arise, there will usually be a middleman to mediate. In such a world, economic crises become of paramount concern. There is a common perception that if two countries wage war against each other, the numerous 'cobweb' connections of the modern world will almost certainly results in other counties being drawn into the conflict by way of a global domino effect. This means that it is far more likely that these states will compromise with each other. The result of this flexibility is that states are able to broadly pursue their individual national interests without having to wage war. In most cases, a difficult relationship between liberal states rarely escalates to war level. There is also a high level of inter-state conflict that is known as 'undeclared war'. It has been known to occur between liberal democratic states, but it does not usually escalate into full-scale war. This scenario can be illustrated by Franco-American relations in the period 1797-1801 (McCurry, 1967), when a 'quasi-' or undeclared war took place. The US and France fought a series of

naval battles in the Caribbean Sea. Owen (1994) argued that liberal ideology in the form of republican solidarity was a factor to prevent the full-scale war in this case. Having identified several possible scenarios that can occur between liberal states, this article will now turn to scenarios that may occur between liberal and illiberal states.

Liberal Democracies are not Always able to be at Peace with Illiberal States

It is generally perceived that the term ‘illiberal state’ refers to a non-democratic state in which the leadership has not been selected through an electoral process. One example would be the military government in Burma. The leadership there has strongly constrained its citizens’ rights and freedoms. They have also excluded people from participating in the political arena. Such measures ensure that ‘public opinion’ does not really exist in this type of state. Authoritarian regimes seem to be common among illiberal states, with North Korea and Iraq being good examples. A large number of elements of illiberal states are totally wrong in the view of liberal democratic states. These two sets of states appear to have little in common, and they also do not seem to share the same objectives. There is an argument against the potential of liberal democracies to maintain peace. Doyle (1997) stated that liberal democracies were no less likely to go to war than other states, but that they usually had fewer reasons to wage war. In most cases, liberal democracies go to wars with illiberal states whenever they feel threatened, unsafe or insecure. In the period 1815-1975, there were 66 wars in which liberal democracies conquered non-European entities in order to build buffer states - but it later became obvious that these conquering states could not really be described as full liberal democracies

at that time. Thus, war is always with us. War was not only a phenomenon of ancient times, but is also phenomena with which we continue to be very familiar in the modern world

The Role of the U.S.

In the present day, it is very easy to identify the ‘big brother’ of liberal democratic states. After the end of Cold War, the World developed a unipolar system, with the U.S. becoming a hegemonic state. Above all else, liberal democracy was technically the symbol of the U.S. - and U.S. decisions were of extreme importance in deciding whether or not war would be waged against illiberal states. In his speech at West Point (Whitehouse: online), President Bush stated very clearly how a new world order (based on liberalism) could be built. And to achieve this goal, he envisaged American military power as a major element. He also expressed the view that America should take the responsibility of constructing world peace. In his speech, Bush clearly stated that America was a privileged nation, with a far greater capacity for action than some others. Thus, he thought his country had a duty to take care of the rest of the world. After the 911 tragedy, the policies of the Bush government towards illiberal states seemed to become markedly more aggressive. Bush had launched the term ‘Axis of Evil’ during his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002 (Whitehouse: online). His stated goal was to demolish ‘evil states’, that included Iraq, Iran and North Korea. In March 20, 2003, he proved to the world that he really would do as he had said in his State of the Union address. The U.S. declared war on Iraq. This war can claim to be the most recent war between a liberal democracy and an illiberal state. The United Nations opposed the U.S. decision to wage war against Iraq. Nevertheless, the U.S. had a strong desire to declare

war - whether they received UN sanction or not. Thus the big issue, on whether to wage war, frequently depends on a U.S. decision. U.S. actions have become a major threat to illiberal states, and this has also created great suspicion between illiberal states. This article will analyze the reasons that have been cited to support the waging of war by the U.S. against illiberal states. Firstly, citizens of illiberal states lack any real freedom, and almost always struggle to exercise their rights. This is certainly the case for the citizens of countries like Afghanistan. Again, freedom is a primary element of liberal democracy. For this reason, the U.S. has persuaded itself that it can intervene in world affairs to manage this problem. Secondly, the U.S. can never be sure whether illiberal states will opt to engage in pre-emptive strikes against them. Moreover, the 911 tragedy was a marked example of why the U.S. would find it increasingly difficult to support illiberal states. In the wake of that tragedy, it was thought that the best way to ensure the U.S. status quo was to transform 'rogue' states into fully-fledged liberal democratic states that would remain under heavy U.S. influence. Thirdly, Rhodes (2003) believed that these rogue states were a big obstacle to a global liberal peace process, and that it was necessary to remove these illiberal states to allow the peace process to proceed any further. Lastly, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) are a big issue in the World nowadays. Countries in the so-called 'Axis of Evil' have all acquired WMDs in an illegal manner. Iraq was thus blamed by the U.S., and this became an excuse to declare war on Iraq - although until now there is no evidence that this U.S. assumption was right. Iran and North Korea have both acquired WMDs. These countries were different from Iraq, because WMDs really exist in these states. Indeed, the leaders of both these states have admitted that this is the case. Hence, WMDs are one reason for the U.S. to

attempt to intervene in the future of these states. It seems that U.S. is working really hard at the moment to rid these states of WMDs. In the North Korea case, the U.S. was using six-party talks as an instrument to achieve their goal. In Iran's case, there hasn't been any progress, as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has insisted on developing WMDs after Iran had failed to suspend its nuclear enrichment program (Squassnoni: online). In the future, there is a possibility that the U.S. will declare war on Iran, if that country continues to maintain its WMDs in an 'illegal' manner that the U.S. believes is harmful to the worlds' population.

During Barack Obama administration, since he was in the office, he tried to change the policy on military operations in Iraq. One of his speech, he stated that this is the time to end of military operations in Iraq because the U.S. had lost a lot of resources (money, soldiers and weapon) in order to help Iraqis building their new future after the dead of Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless it had not been victorious in military operations for the past 7 years. In his speech, Obama also stated that it was the time now for Iraqis to responsible for their own security. But the U.S. will continue to support the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people by leaving another 50,000 soldiers to maintain in Iraq to practice the Iraqi army on operations against terrorist groups. His speech proved that he did not eager to wag war even though Iraq was not a liberal democracy state. According to Kazmir and Bell (online) stated that during the Obama administration the U.S. can said to be the most liberal government body in U.S. history. In 2009 (The Nobel Prize: online), the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced to President Barack Omama of the United States of America was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2009 for great effort in strengthening international diplomacy and promoting cooperation between citizens in less than one year time after he took office

as President of the United States. Additionally, the Committee has emphasized on Obama's work in order to make this world without nuclear weapons. This Nobel Peace Prize proved that the role of Obama was promoting world peace thru liberal democracy. He also had an attention to stop the Iraq war since he was in power. Moreover during his 8 years in office, there was no new war occurred by the US being as a team leader.

In terms of the current U.S. President, Donald Trump his characteristic seems to be rather aggressive compared to the previous President. Nevertheless in 2019, Trump's administration launches a new peace plan proposal hoping to resolve the long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine which has been for many decades. Although this peace plan still has a long way to go but this can prove that at least Trump has a good attention trying to resolve the conflict. He also tried to start the peace talks with the Taliban but the peace talks was dead due to the Taliban admitted to the attack in Kabul, Afghanistan which killed one American soldier (Aljazeera: online). Trump's attention showed that he wanted to create world peace under his administration but no one can predict Trump's decision in the future due to his characteristic. The world has to wait and see but until now the U.S. action still never fights against liberal state as it was stated in the principle of liberal democracy. According to Doyle (as cited in Spiro, 1994) stated that none of the liberal states have yet to start war against one another.

Realistic perspective on the peace concept

A Liberal democratic peace process seems to be unrealistic from the viewpoint of many realists. Such realists also say that there is no real theory to underpin the liberal democratic peace process. For Classical

realists (Lebow,2007), it is generally perceived that International Organizations or International Laws do not prevent war because each state is eager to pursue its own interests. Realists do not agree with the liberal idea that every state has the ability to subsume their national interests for the sake of peace. Indeed, they believe that the opposite is the case - that it is foolish to subsume national interests, and that such compromise may actually be a trigger for war. They also believe that the exercise of power is the most important factor in the international political arena. After the two world wars, realists lost faith in the IOs, as they believed these organizations were largely acting to ensure their own survival. Later, the 'realist' viewpoint fell into disfavor, as there was some criticism about the weakness of its arguments regarding 'national interest' and the 'balance of power'. This led on to the argument that the 'realist' viewpoint was flawed in its analysis that liberal democracies were ineffective in preventing war. In the 1980s, the roles of the international organizations are increasing in the modern world. IOs also encourage states to build cooperation between themselves. The result has been that states have often been quicker to realize that they share a common interest with others, and that these states may also feel that they belong to the same group. War is less likely to occur in this type of situation.

Conclusion

According to the writer analysis, liberal democracy would continue to a key element of world peace – even in the event of every state in the world being classified as a liberal democracy. Ray (as cited in Berovitch, 1996) stated that liberal democratic states tended not to fight other states. But at the present time, the world is still governed by many types of regime.

Thus, war can still happen between countries with different ideologies, but not usually among liberal democracy states. Moreover, according to Flanigan, Fogelman, Gurr and Ziegenhagen (as cited in Mousseau, 2001: 550) stated that “nations with higher levels of democracy and political development tend to experience lower levels of political violence”. Thus, liberal democracies can always point out their ability to maintain peace. Most evidence seems to suggest that the liberal democratic ideology of peace- building seems to suit the majority of nations. Thus, this article believed that liberal democracy is a regime with the potential to create world peace, because it has proved that it can keep the peace among its own adherents.

Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes (as cited in Rhodes, 2003, 150) stated that “the pathway of peace is the longest and most beset with obstacles the human race has to tread; the goal may be distant, but we must press on”. This statement tells us that there will be many obstacles on the road to a permanent global peace – many of which will arise from the actions of illiberal states. Although success seems a long way off, we should keep moving towards it. And the best regime to keep the world at peace is liberal democracy.

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Received: October 3, 2019

Revised: November 12, 2019

Accepted: December 13, 2019