

47 minutes

International Relations  
2019 - European History

Q. Discuss the significant features of Treaty of Westphalia and the development of Modern Nation-state System.

Treaty of Westphalia:

• - Background:

30 years wars in Europe (1618-1648) to a lot of violence and bloodshed and the result was total chaos. In order to restore peace in the Europe, major powers agreed to the Peace treaties, later known as Treaty of Westphalia.

• - Features:

The Westphalian treaty established a new order that was known as Westphalian Nation-state System and following were its important features

- Religious freedom to everyone

- Respect for territory
- Territorial adjustments
- Respect for sovereignty
- Principle of non-intervention

These basis of Westphalian treaty played an important role in the development of modern Nation-State system.

## Development of Nation-State System:

The modern Nation-State System is the result 4 centuries of evolution of westphalian Nation-state system, with innovations being introduced with time as per needed:

### • - Westphalian State-System:

The end of 30 years war saw the adoption of westphalian order with more religious freedom and

territorial independence. Furthermore, the principle of non-intervention put an end to blood-thirsty wars across Europe for some time. This ultimately led to various developments.

— Enlightenment: Rational thinking developed over time among masses leading to challenging of divine nature of clerical authority and monarchy powers.

— Self awareness: Masses started questioning and demanding their rights at massive levels. Various ethnic groups started raising voice for a separate land.

• - Rise of Westphalian Order:

19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of 18<sup>th</sup> and

westphalian nation state system,  
significantly due to various factors  
that contributed to the development  
of its modern form.

— Colonialism: After resolving  
their disputes, Europeans set  
to explore and colonize the  
world to grow territories  
and economies. This spread  
the concept of nation-state  
system outside the Europe.

— Rise of Nationalism: The  
great American revolution led  
to the rise of a new  
Nationalist oriented system that  
followed westphalian system  
in its core aspect and  
also emerged as a true democracy,  
ie. United States of America.

— Rise of Liberalism: Fed  
up with the autocracy of a  
family, nobles and Clergy,  
French also stood for

their rights and ended the so called divine Monarchy, to impose a liberal political system that was also inspired by Westphalian system in its core.

### • - League of Nations:

The first of its kind multilateral forum was made as a result of WWI. The purpose was to ensure a peaceful state of world by keeping the westphalian Nation-State system in its true form to ensure social and political justice.

### — Rise of Fascist Regimes:

Italy and Germany were seeing a new form of order that would have challenged the core principles of Westphalian system but the situation

led to WW II that ended the fascism.

### — Multilateralism:

The LoN was aimed at increasing multilateral cooperation among states that was seen by some as a new challenge to sovereignty. But due to lack of resources and direction, it failed to stop the upcoming WW II.

### •— Post WW II & Cold War:

The end of WW II brought a hope for expanding the westphalian system across the world by assimilating local values. The factors involved were:

— Decolonization: The decolonization of Latin America, Asia and Africa led to the end of foreign rule and birth of several nations that followed the colonial legacy of

West phalian nation-state system.

— Bipolar World: Difference of political and socio-economic policies brought U.S vs U.S.S.R at the verge of war. New blocs were formed and countries aligned themselves accordingly. This determined their foreign policies for the next half century.

• - Globalization: Post Cold War:

The disintegration of U.S.S.R made the U.S as sole super power of the world. It kickstarted the era of globalization and global cooperation, changing policies and interests of countries:

— Rise of Globalization:

The end of U.S.S.R opened way for a hassle free global integration, where countries would cooperate and

progress jointly.

— Regionalism: ASEAN and EU were made into new integrated political entities to promote trade, commute and improve HDI regionally. This somehow changed the traditional concept of Nation-state.

• — 21st Century:

The dawn of new century brought new hope for the world to maintain peace but several incidents changed the political landscape globally.

— Rise of Non-state Actors:

Factions like Taliban, ISIS, ~~Al~~ Al-Qaeda emerged as strong non-political actors that were challenging the western liberal order and presenting their radicalized version of so-called "Islamic system".



— Digital Diplomacy: Media and social media became a powerful tool for propaganda and soft influence, raising question about sovereignty!

— NGOs & MNCs: NGOs and corporates also emerged as influential players. In third world countries they would even violate individual rights for monetary benefits, making them a challenge for liberal westphalian order in 3rd world countries.

Conclusion:

Current Nation-state system has evolved over centuries but highly influenced by westphalian treaty. New era has brought new challenges for the westphalian state-nation system

due to increasing globalization and regionalism, followed by the rise of various non-state actors.

