

# **The Liberal Perspective**



**I. Assumptions and Approach**

**II. Liberal Idealism**

**III. Neoliberal Institutionalism**

**IV. Problems with the Liberal Perspective**

# **I. Assumptions & Approach**

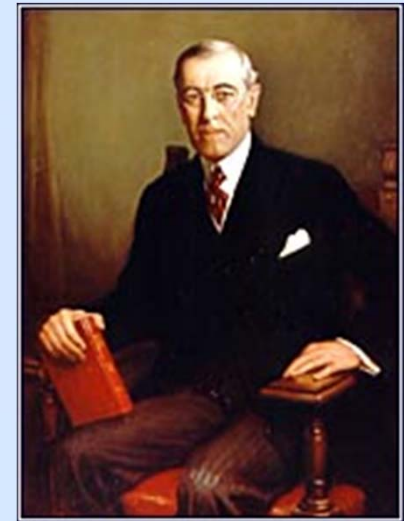
- **Non-State actors are important in IR**
- **States are not unitary actors**
- **States are not fully rational actors**
- **Agenda of IR more than just security**
- **Security dilemma not as overwhelming or pervasive as Realists contend**

## **II. Liberal Idealism**

- **Problem: Power politics leading to WW I**
  - Alliances
  - Secret Treaties
  - Arms Races
- **Human nature essentially good**
- **Problems (i.e., wars) from poor governance, not evil people (or nations)**
- **Solution: Create effective multilateral institutions to achieve collective security**

# **Liberal Idealist Reforms**

- **Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'**
  - International Institutions (i.e., League of Nations)
  - International Law (e.g., Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928)
  - Disarmament
  - National Self-Determination
  - General Rejection of Balance of Power Politics
- **Failed because it could not prevent Second World War!**



### **III. Neoliberal Institutionalism**

- **Anomalies to Realist perspective (i.e., Peace in Europe)**
- **Factors mitigating the security dilemma...**
  - **International Organizations**
  - **Trade/Interaction**
  - **Common Values/Goals and International Regimes**
    - **International Regime = a set of principles, norms and rules governing behavior within a specified issue area (NOTE: slightly different from Nau)**
- **Leads to ‘positive sum’ IR not based solely on power!**

## **Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, “Realism and Complex Interdependence”**

- **Under Complex Interdependence:**
  - 1. Multiple channels connect societies
  - 2. Absence of hierarchy among issues
  - 3. Military force less important
- **Q: What evidence (writing in late 1970s) leads them to question the realist viewpoint?**
- **Q: Does complex interdependence apply globally?**
- ***“We do not argue, however, that complex interdependence faithfully reflects world reality. Quite the contrary: both it and the realist portrait are ideal types.” p. 45***

# **Summary of Liberalism**

- **Anarchy and the security dilemma, but...**
- **International organizations, economic interdependence, common ideals ALTER the calculations of states within that anarchic framework**
- **All serves to increase trust and cooperation between states, creating a POSITIVE CYCLE of peace and stability**

## **IV. Problems with the Liberal Perspective**

- **The persistence of conflict under interdependence**
- **The limitations of international institutions**
- **The stubborn health of nationalism and separateness**

These guys can only do so much...

