

Chapter 5

Alone, Together: Comparative Politics and International Cooperation in the 21st Century (Thus Far)

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides insight into the contemporary problems plaguing the international community, including climate change and terrorism, and examines how international cooperation has worked to combat issues in the past. The chapter will highlight the criticality of cooperative institutions and organizations within the international community and how those organizations may stand up to the rising tide of nationalism around the world.

INTRODUCTION

The international community is in the midst of a transition. As stated, this transition includes the infusion of anti-globalization ideologies into de-democratization (or authoritarian) politics, which is subsequently causing at the very least a trial separation amongst nation-states cooperatively handling global decision-making on shared issues of concern, to an all-out divorcing from the international alliances and organizations that characterize the globalized world order. The post-globalization, neo-nationalist, and mid-pandemic world order will (and is currently being) shaped by the turn away from multilateralism at a time in civilization's history that seemingly calls for 'all hands on deck'

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to combat terrorism, get control of global warming and curb climate change, and ensure that no modern democratic nation-state is forced to ‘go it alone’ militarily or within the realm of foreign policy. The dangers of a return to a siloed hegemonic competition in terms of global cooperation are clear: this transition (which arguably began under Trump) marks a distinctive change in global *mood* and a homecoming for nationalist policies that tout things like *America First*, *Britain First*, or *China First* – rather than ‘we are in this together’. This chapter will explore the three most pressing issues in the 21st century, and those that are critical to have international input, buy-in, and cooperation in rectifying or balancing tensions.

International Cooperation in the 21st Century

The 21st century began with a bang, literally. Just one year into the century did the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks occur and began a new era of cooperation that necessitated the affirmation of alliances. The principle of collective defense is the underlying principle of the NATO alliance and provides for a binding commitment to the other member-states that they will protect each other and act in accordance with the NATO founding document. The organization was initially organized in 1949 to align the members and provide mutual assistance to counter (then Soviet Union, now Russian) aggression into Eastern European territory. The solidarity that each member-state agreed to is the foundation of NATO and makes Article 5 the most important operable piece of the alliance. Article 5 notes that if a NATO ally is attacked, every other member of the alliance will consider the event an act of violence against all NATO members, and all will take the necessary actions to protect the allied country attacked. More specifically, Article 5 says,

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be

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