

Source: [KBHistoryMasterIndex](#)

1 | Unit 2 Essay

1.1 | General Information

Due Date	Topic	Important Documents
Nov 9th, a Monday	French rev politiking	Henry the Kissinger, Mason, Roberts

1.2 | Prompt

In the end, did the European balance of power succeed in its goal to, as Kissinger puts it, limit conflict and produce the “best possible outcome” from flawed human nature? Or did it magnify conflict and increase the likelihood of global war?

Quotable Quotes

- Kissinger
 - “If the circumstances were reversed, we could equally be pro-German and anti-French.” A1
 - “William was perfectly willing to negotiate with Louis XIV when he felt the balance of power could best be served by doing so.” A2
 - “Agreeing on the importance of the balance of power did not, however, still British disputes about the best strategy to implement the policy. ... The Whigs argued that GB should engage only when balance threatened, and only long enough to remove threat; Tories argued that GB’s duty was to *shape* the balance of power.” A3
 - CLAIM: “Of course, in the end a balance of power always comes about de facto when several states interact.” A4
 - “Power is too difficult to assess, and the willingness to vindicate it too various, to permit treating it as a reliable guide to international order. ... The balance of power inhibits the capacity to overthrow the international order” A5
 - “Every king consoled himself with the thought that strengthening his own rule was the greatest possible contribution to the general peace, and left it to the ubiquitous invisible hand to justify his exertions - without limiting his ambitions.” A6
 - “But Louis XN gained no peace. of mind from security; he saw in it an opportunity for conquest. In his overzealous pursuit of *raison d’etat*, LouisXN alarmed the rest of Europe and brought together an anti-French coalition which, in the end, thwarted his design.” A7
 - “Thereby, France lost the advantage of having adversaries constrained by moral considerations ... Once all states played by the same rules, gains became much more difficult to achieve” A8
- Roberts
 - “In the next four centuries, Christianity was often to have disastrous effects. Confident in the possession of the true religion, Europeans were impatient and contemptuous of the values and achievements of the peoples and civilizations they disturbed.” A9
 - “Greed quickly led to the abuse of power, to domination and exploitation by force. In the end this led to great crimes - though they were often committed unconsciously.” A10
 - “Europeans could usually exact what they wanted in the end because of a technical superiority which exaggerated the power of their tiny numbers and for a few centuries turned the balance against the great historic agglomerations of population and civilization.” A11

- “The obscuring of the Company’s primary commercial role was not good for business. It also gave its employees even greater opportunities to feather their own nests. ... the British government hoped as fervently as the Company to avoid being dragged any further into the role of imperial power in India.” A12
- “The huge and growing Caribbean market for slaves and imported European goods was added to that already offered by a Spanish empire increasingly unable to defend its economic monopoly. This fixed the role of the West Indies in the relationships of the European powers for the next century. ... They were long a prey to disorder” A13
- “Gradually, the great powers fought out their disputes until they arrived at acceptable agreements, but this was to take a long time.” A14
- “All the colonial powers had, by the eighteenth century, been able to extract some economic profit from their colonies” A15
- “Europeans did not just conquer; they exterminated local cultures and peoples and replaced them with their own” A16
- “Older cultures were to be cut off from populating the new worlds or setting their mark on them” A17
- “The French were Great Britain’s most dangerous potential competitors, but their government was always likely to be distracted by its European continental commitments.” A18
- “The British lacked missionary zeal ... they had no immediate urge to interfere with the native custom or institution” A19
- “Before its outbreak, there had in fact been no remission of fighting in India, even while France and Great Britain were officially at peace after 1748.” A20
- “The possession of a station at Calcutta placed them at the door to that part of India which was potentially the richest prize - Bengal and the lower Ganges valley.” A21
- Mason
 - “A long struggle between Parliament and the Stuart kings in England? and essentially replaced the absolute monarchy with a constitutional monarchy” A22
 - “‘Sovereign power resides in my person alone It is from me alone that my policies take their existence and their authority’ ” A23
 - “European monarchies had consciously pursued a policy of the balance of power, a system of shifting international alliances that prevented any one country from becoming too powerful” A24
 - “Wars were fought not so much for ideology or nationalism but to maintain the balance of power ... The victor did not want to crush the vanquished” A25
 - “Napoleon formed mass armies and led them into other countries to spread the ideas of the Revolution and to enhance his own power” A26
 - “The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars had unleashed forces that would shake the foundations of European society.” A27
 - “Napoleon had changed the nature of warfare in Europe by conscripting huge armies and infusing them with a commitment to fight for France and for ‘liberty, equality, and fraternity,’ the slogan of the Revolution.” A28
 - “The victor did not want to crush the vanquished, as this would upset the balance; in any case, the defeated state might be a future ally.” A29
 - “Louis XVIII issued a constitutional charter that incorporated many of the changes that had entered into French life and society since 1789” A30
 - “An inefficient system of taxation made it difficult for the monarchy to raise the money it needed. ... Between 1726 and 1789, the cost of living increased by 62 percent, whereas wages rose by only 25 percent.” A31
 - “Napoleon’s military fortunes began to wane ... The allied armies pressed on, entered Paris, and forced Napoleon to abdicate” A32
- Our Surprise Friend Kennedy
 - Europe had always been politically fragmented, despite even the best efforts of the Romans A33
=> Europe is politically fragmented

- For this political diversity Europe had largely to thank its geography. There were no enormous plains over which an empire of horse men could impose its swift dominion; nor were there broad and fertile zones ... providing the food for masses of toiling and easily conquerable peasants
A34 => Europe is A33 because of its unique geography
- Balance of power only encourages fighting when provoked
- Entropy, so people provoke
- But ultimately its more stable than old world empires
- It encourages fighting, but that's unavoidable
 - Competing resources
 - Competing land
 - Competing trade
- BOP naturally create conflict
- But these conflicts are still better/necessary than normal war
- BP 2
 - Napoleon
 - England, too + their overseas
- Better BP3 =>

1.3 | Idea Snippets Gathering

- Unquoted
 - old France got power from the King alone A23
 - European's colonization had strategic advantage A17
 - Competition in colonies often set aside for mainland competition A18
 - HUN? Spain's cat-and-mouse game with defending its monopoly fixed the contry's stance in the Indeas A13
 - Napoleon changed wars into a war of ideology A28
 - Britian's aquisition of Calcutta train station was beneficial A21
 - Good outcome for future collab: when interest is served, working with adversary is possible A2. Did not want to crush enemy in hopes of not hurting future collab A29.
- wars are fought for BOP A25
 - Europe's technical superiority turned the balance against historical civilizations A11
 - every king believes that acting in his self intrest strengthened general peace A6
 - greed lead to unconcious crimes A10
 - too many countries Reasoning may lead to countries unrestrained by morality A8
 - Before the 7 years war, Britian and France still fought even nominally at peace A20
 - all the colonial powers had, by the eighteenth century, been able to extract some economic profit from their colonies A15
- balance of power whether ye wanted or not A4
 - No agreement? Fight! Eventually there will be one. A14
 - Europeans intentionally set up goverment to prevent one from being too powerful A24
 - Napoleon being napolean
 - France is looking pretty grim A31
 - napolean tried to spread ideas of the revolution A26

- French Rev shook Europe A27
- Napoleon got Balance-of-power A32
- Bloodshed or whatever, but eventually we got there and got a better policy A30
- Its advantageous to do business instead of doing brute territorialism A12
 - The Britons did not want to assimilate in the Ideas A19
 - When interest is served, working with adversary is possible A2. Did not want to crush enemy in hopes of not hurting future collab A29
 - Being contemptuous of the values of other societies bring disasters A9
 - Power in itself can't be used to gauge international order, but BOP inhibits capacity to overthrow intl order A5

1.4 | Claim Synthesis

Although the European balance of power does lead to frequent competitive conflict — like that between France and England — it ultimately is both naturally unavoidable and the best outcome for generally peaceful international policy

- To BOP, constant adjustments must be made, and they often involve conflict
 - We got to our current Euro-centric world b/c European nations, through leveraging its technical superiority, upset the balance of power in ancient countries A11
 - They did this b/c our good friend Raison d'état. Every king believes that acting in his self interest strengthened general peace A6, but greed leads to unconscionable crimes A10
 - Indeed, too many countries Reasoning may lead to countries unrestrained by morality A8 to achieve the bestest they could
 - But to actually achieve "the best", we need to constantly adjust the balance:
 - Before the 7 years war, Britain and France still fought even nominally at peace A20
 - All the colonial powers had, by the eighteenth century, been able to extract some economic profit from their colonies A15
- These small adjustments are, although potentially brutal, completely necessary
 - No agreement? Fight! Eventually there will be one. A14
 - Because Europeans intentionally set up government to prevent one from being too powerful A24
 - What adjustments? Tracing Napoleon:
 - France was bad: A31
 - The Enlightenment happened (need quote?) Which seeks to BOP
 - French Rev shook Europe A27
 - Napoleon tried to spread ideas of the revolution A26
 - How did he fail? He got balance-of-power A32 again b/c he was being too good at this emperor-not-an-emperor thing.
 - Net positive? Hard to tell. But! At that time, this was natural and inevitable: we got from Louis to Louis, but it is from A31 Louis to A30 better Louis
 - Same thing in England too, after A22 replacement happened, England was always the mediator (QUOTENEED)
 -
- BOP is heavily Euro-centric, and won't work elsewhere
 -
 - The big-BOP Britons did not want to assimilate in the Ideas A19 when it is not in their interests
 -

1.5 | Defluffifying

Although the European balance of power does lead to frequent competitive conflict — like that between France and England — it ultimately is both naturally unavoidable and evolved to fit European power dynamics

- European BOP lead to frequent conflict
- BOP is naturally unavoidable
- it is uniquely European, making global BOP-caused war unlikely

So what? SO WHAT

Now, defluffify by re-writing the three points + so what in as little words as possible.

Although the Balance-of-Power leads to frequent “adjustments” of balance in the shape of minor conflicts, this system is uniquely unavoidable in European politics (sounds like Kennedy) and hence will not contribute to global war due to its European nature.

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