

**Source:**

## 1 | Prompt

Option 1: "The concept of the balance of power was simply an extension of conventional wisdom. Its primary goal was to prevent domination by one state and to preserve the international order; it was not designed to prevent conflicts, but to limit them. To the hard-headed statesmen of the eighteenth century, the elimination of conflict (or of ambition or of greed) was utopian; the solution was to harness or counterpoise the inherent flaws of human nature to produce the best possible long-term outcome."

Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy

From one point of view, balance of power politics in the early modern period succeeded spectacularly, preventing a single European power from conquering the whole continent, although Napoleon almost succeeded. From another point of view, it exported great power conflict to the rest of the world, turning Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas into battlegrounds for rivaling European states. 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? Answer this question in a well organized essay using examples from multiple global regions. (Kissinger, Mason, Roberts)

## 2 | Outline

### 2.1 | Intro

#### 2.1.1 | Background Info

##### 1. Raison d'état

In the 16th century, as the Reformations saw the church lose its political standing over Europe, the emerging states of Europe needed some philosophy to balance power amongst them and prevent unification, which they imagined to require inevitable and brutal conflict. The statesmen of the time, following the example of Cardinal de Richelieu, First minister of France from 1624 to 1642 (Kissinger 58), settled on the policy of *Raison d'état*: the idea that a group of states each pursuing its own selfish interests would create a balance of power, with weaker states banding together in times of need and no one state gaining a significant upper hand.

##### 2. Mercantalism

At roughly the same time, the concept of mercantalism, or the idea that economic transactions are zero sum games that the government must control and play, cropped up. Proponents such as Jean-Baptiste Colbert, minister of finance and minister of marine and colonies for France from 1661 to 1683, saw mercantalism as a component of *Raison d'état*'s <punctuation, apostrophe?> selfish furthering of the state. While *Raison d'état* primarily concerned negotiations with and attitudes towards neighboring states, mercantalism had colonial implications. This dual philosophy of looking to gain the upper hand both militarily and economically, termed "balance of power politics" was supposed to keep peace and limit conflict in Europe.

#### 2.1.2 | Thesis

Although Europe managed to remain disjoint and disunited, "balance of power politics" and the related mercantilist mindset hardly limited conflict or produced a desirable <WC> outcome: *Raison d'état* prolonged

wars in Europe and exported conflict and oppression to India and the Caribbean.

## 2.2 | Richelieu + Raison d'état

Raison d'état—the basis <WC> for 'balance of power politics'—countered unification by prolonging wars and leveraging suffering, creating unnecessary conflict for a not-so-rosy <WC> continuation of power struggle <rephrase>.

2.2.1 | **"In order to prolong the war and exhaust the belligerents, Richelieu subsidized the enemies of his enemies, bribed, fomented insurrections, etc" (Kissinger 62)**

2.2.2 | **"France stood on the sidelines while Germany was devastated" (Kissinger 62)**

2.2.3 | **"He seeks peace by means of war" (Quote on Kissinger 64, footnote 10)**

2.2.4 | **"Richelieu believed the end justified the means" (Kissinger 64)**

## 2.3 | India

Not only did "conflict politics" <WC> prolong <WC> conflict <WC> in Europe, it also created an air of rivalry that brought other regions, such as India, into the fray. <Expand and link to thesis?>

2.3.1 | **"These armed forces of the merchant companies now became war-making entities that drew Indian governments and their armies into the commercial and national struggle between the British and the French." (Trauttmann 176)**

The colonial domination of India began with fortified trading posts owned by the French and British East Indian companies. As the rivalry between the British and French grew, their respective merchant companies were subliminally pressured to be more aggressive, turn more profit, and generally outpace the counterpart. When the opportunity to expand their respective operations arose, the trading companies began fighting battles, negotiating terms, and ruling large swaths of land in India. The British gained a solid foothold in 1757 when the British East India Company army defeated the Mughal governor of Bengal at Plassey in 1757 (Trauttmann 176). It was in this way that the profit incentivised companies became, as American historian Thomas Trauttmann put it, "war-making entities" that "drew Indian governments into the commercial and national struggle between the British and the French" (Trauttmann 176).

2.3.2 | **~~"These 'princely states' ... each had a British 'resident' who kept them apprised of British policy, and often interfered with the internal governance and the succession to the kingdom."~~ (Trauttmann 179)**

2.3.3 | **"The mutinies of 1806 and 1857 had elements of feeling that religion was under attack" (Trauttmann 179)**

As the British tightened its grasp on India and drove the French out, it further assimilated the native power structure and peoples into its military <rephrase>.

2.3.4 | **"The aftermath of the failed Rebellion was a complex mixture of repression and conciliation by the British. The mutineers themselves ... were harshly and publically punished, some of them being tied to the ends of cannon and blown in half." (Trauttmann 181)**

2.3.5 | **TODO salt hedge? How to cite?**

2.3.6 | **"But the immediate cause of British rule in India was the worldwide struggle of England and France, which the English and French East India Companies joined in," (Trauttmann 177)**

2.3.7 | **"India had been irresistably sucked into the worldwide conflict between British and French power" (Roberts 642)**

## 2.4 | **Caribbean**

Like India, colonial rivalries brought European exploitation and conflict to the Caribbean, wiping out the native population and driving the slave trade in the process.

### 2.4.1 | **Rivalary**

1. "The spanish occupation of the larger Caribbean islands ... attracted the attention of the English, French and Dutch" (Roberts 650)
2. "Tobacco colonies in the new world rapidly became of great importance to England, not only because of the customs revenue they supplied, but also because they provided fresh opportunities for interloping in the trade of the Spanish empire." (Roberts 651)
3. "Production was for a long time held back by a shortage of labor, as the native populations of the islands succumbed to European ill-treatment and disease." (Roberts 650)
4. Lots of slaves: 6k slaves in 1643 but 50k in 1660 (Roberts 651)
5. "where colonial fronteers met and policing was poor and there were great prizes to be won, the area became the classical, indeed, legendary hunting ground of pirates." (Roberts 652)

## 2.5 | **Conclusion**

## 3 | **Editing**

### 3.1 | **WC**

3.1.1 | **TODO Need more synonyms for "balance of power politics"**

1. power politics?
2. conflict politics?