Liberalism in International Relations III

Ideology, Liberal Democracy and Peace

Another group of commentators sees that peace would eventuate through developments in ideas, beliefs and attitudes throughout the world. Changes were taking place in humankind that made them less likely to go to war. The major change was the widespread adoption of liberal democratic forms of government.

The most extreme position was taken by Fukuyama, who stated that:

"…a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism." In his view, liberal democracy was the ultimate form of government and that the force of history would see it supplant all others. Other observers took a more cautious approach, simply citing the spread of democracy as it had been observed as a positive sign.

The underlying theme of these arguments is that democratic states are less warlike, at least in their relations with other democratic states. Being founded on principles such as participation, tolerance, ownership of private property and public control over elected officials, democracies are more pacific than other states.