

## **RETHINKING THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND FRANCIS FUKUYAMA'S "END OF HISTORY" HYPOTHESIS**

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### ***Introduction***

The year 1991 marked a turning point in the world history - one of the two superpowers (the Soviet Union - USSR) collapsed, putting an end to the bipolar system and nearly half a century of the intense confrontation between the United States (US) & the USSR in their global Cold War. Two decades have passed since that day but scholars keep debating about its end, perhaps no less heated as they did about its origins. The fact that no single international relations theory managed to predict such an end and even had difficulties explaining it makes the end of the Cold War more attractive and controversial for both historians and theorists. Coming out right after this very end, Francis Fukuyama's book "*The end of history and the last man*" furthered the debate as it provoked the idea that the end of the Cold War would be the end of all kinds of IR theory and mankind's history toward a long-lasting peace and stability dominated by liberalism and Western values.

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How can we explain the end of the Cold War? Did it really end? Why did IR theory fail to predict such an end? Is the end of the Cold War an end to theory and history? These questions have been and are still shaping a great debate between international historians and IR theorists. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cold War's end - a perfect time for revisiting these issues. With the hope to contribute to the clarification of the aforesaid puzzles, this paper will review the debate and give its own assessment.

### ***Reasoning the End of the Cold War: the end of IR theory?***

International politics during the 1989-1991 period witnessed strange events, most notably the Soviet Union's behaviors. Within these two years, the Soviet Union withdrew troops from Afghanistan (1989) and more importantly its traditional strategic sphere of influence - Eastern Europe, approved the unification of the Federation of Germany (1989), ended the confrontation with the US at the Malta Summit (1989), let go of US-led UN forces in the first Gulf War (1991) and most suddenly came to disintegration at the end of 1991, putting an end to its 76-year existence and consequently the bipolar system. The abrupt end of the Cold War astonished everyone, whether in government, academy, media, or think tanks. Although there was nothing inherently implausible about these events given that the Cold War had to end sometime, that war had always been a possibility in the Middle East, and that communism's failures had been alarmed for years, the fact that they arose so unexpectedly suggests that "deficiencies persist in the means by which contemporary princes and the soothsayers they employ seek to discern the future course of world affairs,"<sup>1</sup> as argued by John Lewis Gaddis.

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<sup>1</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War", *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Winter 1992/1993), p. 5.

Unexpectedly, and with hardly a shot fired in anger, Russian power has been withdrawn from the Elbe to the Eurasian steppe. A central question, hence, faces students and practitioners of international politics: “Do the rapid decline and comparatively peaceful collapse of the Soviet state and with it the entire postwar international order, discredit IR theory?”<sup>2</sup>

“If you are a student, switch from political science to history.” Such was the blunt reply of Robert Conquest, the distinguished Anglo-American historian of the Soviet Union, when asked to draw lessons from the sudden end of the Cold War. Though his idea is rather provocative, he does have a point. The efforts theorists “have made to create a ‘science’ of politics that would forecast the future course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results: none of the three general approaches to theory that have evolved since 1945 came anywhere close to anticipating how the Cold War would end.”<sup>3</sup>

The end of the Cold War, therefore, was seen as a big failure for IR theory, especially realism - the dominant IR theory up till then and its component Power Transition Theory. Realism and its later version of neo-realism stress on the systematic approach whereby international politics is governed by a state of anarchy and security dilemma that leads states to use power maximization and balance of power as main instruments for survival and national interest. It was realism that explained the cause of the Cold War was due to the then international inevitable system change from multi-polarity to bipolarity whereby the

<sup>2</sup> Wohlforth William C., “Realism and the End of the Cold War”, *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Winter 1994-95, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Cited from Gaddis, op. cit., p. 53.

US and the USSR competed for an all-out global Cold War - an order they believed was more stable than the war-prone multilateral system.<sup>4</sup>

Until the late 1980s, Soviet foreign policy seemed consistent with realist theories. Moscow tried to expand its influence in the Third World and consolidated it in Eastern Europe. Soviet leaders suppressed uprisings in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 to restore hard-line communists to power, sent troops to Afghanistan in 1979, and used the threat of intervention in 1980 to intervene in Poland.<sup>5</sup>

Under Gorbachev, Soviet foreign policy became increasingly inconsistent with power transition and other realist theories. While military withdrawal from Afghanistan could be explained as retrenchment at the periphery, the 1987 treaty on intermediate nuclear forces was problematic because it ran counter to realist’s relative gain concerns. The Soviet agreed to remove many more missiles from the European theater than the US, and the treaty was widely interpreted as advantageous to the West. The Soviet withdrawal from Eastern European (core sphere of influence) was more anomalous, “it stands in sharp contrast to a core realist assumption: hegemons are expected to make every possible effort to retain their principal sphere of influence.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Soviet response to relative decline confounds existing realist theories in other important ways. Neo-realism considers the distribution of power in the international system as the fundamental driving force behind whatever changes might occur in international

<sup>4</sup> See Kenneth Waltz and many other realists i.e. Robert Gilpin, John Mearsheimer etc.

<sup>5</sup> Lebow, Richard Ned, “The long peace, the end of the Cold War, and the failure of Realism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Spring 1994, p. 261.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

relations. Yet changes in the distribution of power within the international system were substantially a result rather than a cause of the end of the Cold War. Both the US-USSR military balance in general and their nuclear balance in particular which are the essential features of the bipolar system remained in place while the most dramatic changes in Soviet policy and in the US-Soviet relationship occurred. In other words, the dramatic changes in Soviet-American relations took place even though the distribution of power in the system remained quite stable.<sup>7</sup>

The end of the Cold War also discredits the power transition theories which comprise the branch of realism that analyses great power responses to decline.<sup>8</sup> Instead of launching a preventive war, the Soviet Union sought an accommodation with the United States, its principal adversary and rival hegemony, and made concessions that greatly enhanced the relative power of the United States and its NATO ally, the Federal Republic of Germany. With Gorbachev and Yeltsin at the helm, the USSR has been content to play a subordinate role in international affairs.<sup>9</sup> These theories failed to envisage the possibility of a peaceful accommodation between the two poles of a bipolar system or that one of them would voluntarily relinquish its core sphere of influence to bring about that accommodation. Such an anomalous outcome constitutes

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<sup>7</sup> Ray, James Lee and Bruce Russett. 1996. *The future as Arbiter of Theoretical Controversies: Predictions, Explanations and the End of the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, p. 457.

<sup>8</sup> Power transition theory argues that hegemonic war is most likely to occur when the power capabilities of a rising and dissatisfied challenger increase to the point where they approach those of the dominant state. They differ in their prediction about whether the challenger or the declining hegemony will initiate the war. Not all PTT maintain that hegemonic decline will inevitably lead to war. Gilpin argues that the first and most attractive response is to launch a 'preemptive war against the rising power while the declining state still has a military advantage. See Lebow, pp. 251-260.

<sup>9</sup> Lebow, op.cit., p. 263.

strong grounds for rejecting power transition theories. Realists have sought to save their core insights by treating the end of the cold war as "a special case and reformulating their propositions to take it into account."<sup>10</sup>

So the criticism by Gaddis and others about the inability of predominant international relations theories to cope with or account for the end of the Cold War apply rather persuasively to realism and neo-realism. His consequent assertion that a failure by the discipline of IR to predict the end of the Cold War "reinforces the conviction that the predominant theories as well as systematic empirical analyses of international politics have proved fruitless,"<sup>11</sup> however, is debatable. Despite its failure to predict such a peaceful and sudden end of the Cold War, realism had modified its theory in order to correct the problem.

The Cold War, in realist explanation, was caused by the rise of Soviet power and the fear this caused in the West. The end of the Cold War was caused by the relative decline in Soviet power and the reassurance this gave the West. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev may have had many reasons for competing with the US, ranging from genuine fear to ideological conviction, but a necessary condition for competition was their perception that they had the capability to do so. Gorbachev may have had numerous reasons for seeking to withdraw from the rivalry with the US, but a necessary precondition was the perception of reduced capability to continue competing.<sup>12</sup>

In 1988, Waltz argued that the Cold War was 'firmly rooted in the structure of postwar international politics, and will last as long as that

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ray, op. cit., p. 441.

<sup>12</sup> Worthforth, op.cit., p. 96.

structure endures.” The Cold War ended, however, according to Waltz in 1993 because “bipolarity endures, but in an altered state.” In short, the Cold War’s end caused an important amendment to be added to the theory: while bipolarity leads to Cold War, “altered bipolarity” leads to détente.<sup>13</sup> Such are remarkable modifications of realist theory in order to adapt to changes.

Liberalism also gave its own explanation of the end of the Cold War, basing on the three legs on which liberal Kantian vision of Perpetual Peace stands: “i) movement toward democracy in the USSR, with consequent changes in free expression and the treatment of dissidents at home, in the East European satellites, and in behavior toward Western Europe and the United States, ii) desire for economic interdependence with the West, impelled by the impending collapse of the Soviet economy and the consequent perceived need for access to Western markets, goods, technology and capital, which in turn required a change in Soviet military and diplomatic policy; iii) the influence of international law and organizations, as manifested in CSCE and the human rights basket of the Helsinki accords and their legitimation and support of political dissent in the communist states. Liberalism differs from neorealism in that its democratic peace proposition clearly implies that if major regime transitions do occur, they can fundamentally alter the pattern of relationships between states (US & USSR).”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ray, *op.cit.*, p. 461. From democratic peace theory, the Soviet Union did become more democratic in the years from 1989 to 1991, and the emphasis on the impact of domestic political regimes on foreign policies as well as international interactions that is a fundamental attribute of the democratic peace proposition seems well-founded in the light of the way the Cold War came to an end.

Other theories, i.e. constructivism and critical theories which this paper strongly support and will clarify latter on, are also very persuasive in explaining the end of the Cold War. Although the scarcity of accurate predictions by scholars of international politics regarding the end of the Cold War has apparently reinforced skepticism in some circles regarding the utility of the ‘scientific’ or systematic empirical approach to the field, it is unfair to say that it was evidence of “the bankruptcy of predominant theoretical approaches in the field, as well as of scientific or systematic empirical analyses.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, since social science is necessarily a probabilistic rather than a deterministic exercise, the failure to produce an accurate forecast about one particular event is not sufficient to discredit any theory in any field, and the absence of predictions by realists and neorealists about the end of the cold war should not be considered as a definitive contrary evidence. Nevertheless, that absence, and the tendency of realism and neorealism to create expectations of a violent end to the Cold War can fairly be considered as an evidence of weakening confidence in such theoretical approaches to international politics. Other theoretical approaches i.e. liberalism, constructivism and critical theories, in contrast, lead to an expectation of the peaceful demise of the Cold War if the autocratic antagonistic in that confrontation becomes more democratic or socialized by a change of ideas and mind that may result in substantial changes in the domestic political system of the Soviet Union and such a peaceful end of the Cold War.<sup>16</sup> Put it shortly, the end of the Cold War did create some challenges to the discipline, yet it is by no means, an end of theory.

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<sup>15</sup> Ray, *op.cit.*, p. 465.

<sup>16</sup> Ray, *ibid.*, p. 466.

### *An End of History?*

“The end of history,” on the contrary, is a historical approach of a theorist after the end of the Cold War. Even before the Cold War officially ended in 1991, Francis Fukuyama - a strong advocate of neo-liberalism, had foreseen such an end in his article “The end of History?” in *The National Interest* in summer 1989 in which he argued that the triumph of liberal democracy as a system of government over rival ideologies i.e. monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism may constitute the “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and the “final form of human government,” and as such constituted the “end of history.”<sup>17</sup> In fact, Fukuyama is not the first theorist to propose this idea of “end of history.” What he suggested that had come to an end, which previously had been mentioned by two great German philosophers G. W. F. Hegel and Karl Marx<sup>18</sup>, was not the occurrence of events, but History, with its capital letter, that is, “history understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times.”<sup>19</sup>

Later on, when the Cold War ended, Fukuyama further elaborated his idea in his 1992 book *The end of History and the last man* that with the end of the Cold War, History is over because the winner is clear:

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<sup>17</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. “The end of history and the last man,” Harper Perennial, p. xi.

<sup>18</sup> “Both Hegel and Marx believed that the evolution of human societies was not open-ended, but would end when mankind had achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings. Both thinkers thus posited an “end of history”: for Hegel this was the liberal state, while for Marx it was a communist society. This did not mean that the natural cycle of birth, life, and death would end, that important events would no longer happen... but rather that there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions had been settled.” See Fukuyama 1992, *ibid*, p. xii.

<sup>19</sup> Fukuyama, 1992, *ibid.*, p. xii.

liberalism and markets and the typical citizen of a liberal democracy is the “last man” who “was schooled by the founders of modern liberalism, gave up prideful belief in his or her own superior worth in favor of comfortable self-preservation”<sup>20</sup> or in other words, there is only “one language” in the world - that of liberal democracy.

Fukuyama’s “End of History” concept sparked off an explosive debate about the future of the world in the post-Cold War era. Although Fukuyama has been supported by empirical evidence that the end of the Cold War has increased the number of liberal democratic states and from his liberalism’s democratic peace theory which argues that democracies are less war-prone and decrease systematic violence such as interstate and intrastate wars and conflicts, there is much to grumble about the prospect of “an end of History.”

Criticism of Fukuyama’s thesis came from various backgrounds. Realists and pessimists like Mearsheimer and Friedberg see the post-Cold War future as not an end of history but rather the return of the past of instability and conflicts similarly to that of Europe between the two world wars whether it is post-Cold War Europe or Asia.<sup>21</sup> Others argue that we face an unprecedented situation in international relations.<sup>22</sup> The strongest critics of “The End of History,” however, come from critical theory which comprises of a wide range of perspective: Marxism, feminist theory, environmental movement, and Islamic fundamentalism -

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<sup>20</sup> Fukuyama, 1992, *ibid*, p. xxii.

<sup>21</sup> See Mearsheimer, John J., “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War”, *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Summer 1990, pp. 5-56. See also Aaron Friedberg, “Will Europe's Past be Asia's Future?”, *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Autumn 2000), pp. 147-59.

<sup>22</sup> Singer & Wildavsky, *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil*, Chatham House, 2003.

those who do not figure out such an ideal world painted by Fukuyama while reality still highlights poverty, inequality, wars, ethnic conflicts, moral degradation, etc. even in the capitalist world as well as the emergence of rising non-traditional security threats i.e. terrorism, pandemics, human trafficking, environmental problems etc.<sup>23</sup>

Another great challenge to *The End of History* thesis is Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington does not see the end of the Cold War as the end of history or as the introduction of something new in history. Like Mearsheimer, he sees it as the return of danger, and of the past.<sup>24</sup> In his essay and book in 1993 and 1997 with the same title *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington argues that the temporary conflict between ideologies is being replaced by the ancient conflict between civilizations. The dominant civilization decides the form of human government, and these will not be constant.<sup>25</sup> Huntington believed that "while the age of ideology had ended, the world had only reverted to a normal state of affairs characterized by cultural conflict. In his thesis, he argued that the primary axis of conflict in the future would be along cultural and religious lines. As an extension, he predicts that the concept of different civilizations, as the highest rank of cultural identity, will become increasingly useful in analyzing the potential for conflict."<sup>26</sup> In the 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article, he wrote:

*"It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future."*<sup>27</sup>

In short, while Fukuyama and many other liberals predicted a post-Cold War rise of liberal democracy, Huntington foresee a decline of liberal democracy and Western values<sup>28</sup> as well as possible conflicts between the West and the rest. Many events since the end of the Cold War, especially the 9-11 incident and the US-led war on terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq have been widely viewed as support for this theory. Although there are still many controversial problems in this approach, I do share, to some extent, with Huntington's hypothesis as well as critical theories criticism of Fukuyama in that history is not ended; on the contrary, it now just begins to write a new chapter.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on critical theory criticism of Fukuyama see Perry Anderson, Jacques Derrida, Alexandre Kojève, Hans-Hermann Hoppe etc.

<sup>24</sup> Lemke, Douglas, "The Continuation of History: Power Transition Theory and the End of the Cold War." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1997 p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> See Huntington, Samuel, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, New York: Summer 1993, Vol. 72, Issue 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "The West is increasingly concerned with its internal problems and needs, as it confronts slow economic growth, stagnating populations, unemployment, huge government deficits, a declining work ethic, low savings rates, and in many countries including the United States social disintegration, drugs and crime. Economic power is rapidly shifting to East Asia, and military power and political influence are starting to follow." See Huntington 1996, p. 82.

### *The end and the continuation of the Cold War*

It is thus seen that the end of the Cold War did not lead to the end of theory and history. It, however, does make us to rethink the relationship between International History and International Relation Theory on which we both learn from in order to seek truth. Their ambiguous, and in the case of explaining the end of the Cold War, hostile relationship while each trying to develop its own explanation and criticizing each other, undoubtedly, creates confusion for student of History and International Relations. Discussing about this problem, some scholars, most notably Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, suggest us to go beyond the Cold Wars to seek the compromise between the two as she sees that “As long as neo-realism remains dominant in IR theory there cannot be a dialogue between IR theorists and international historians that will be of any great significance. This will not change whatever the evidence from the archives.”<sup>29</sup> The answers she recommends are the English school, constructivism and critical theories whereby they both combine theory and history in developing their theory’s assumptions. From this perspective, this paper adopts a constructivist and critical theory approach which it sees most persuasive, to explain the end of the Cold War.

One of the advantages of reflectivist theory (constructivism and critical theory) is that they both strongly account for changes whereas rationalist (realism and liberalism) stick on certain type of order basing on their core assumptions (i.e. balance of power, power and interest, interdependence and democratic peace etc). Reflectivist theories take into

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<sup>29</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, “International History and International Relations Theory: A Dialogue beyond the Cold War”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), p. 748.

account various factors in shaping state’s behavior and international relations, including ideas, norms, history, culture, economic and domestic politics etc. That is the reason why, while sharing the common point with rationalist theory in failing to predict such a peaceful end of the Cold War, constructivism and critical theory provide convincing explanation for it.

From these perspectives, the end of the Cold War occurred as it did because the roots of its had exposed starting from the late 1970s. As John Lewis Gaddis has precisely pointed out, “the end of the Cold War made it blindingly clear that military strength does not always determine the course of great events: the Soviet Union collapsed, after all, with its arms and armed forces fully intact. Deficiencies in other kinds of power - economic, ideological, cultural, and moral ones - caused the USSR to lose its superpower status, and we can now see that slow but steady erosion in those non-military capabilities had been going on for some time.”<sup>30</sup> This was a process of socialization and peaceful evolution by the West toward the USSR since the détente period, evolving to the East-West reconciliation during the 1975-1976 Helsinki Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe. This socialization process latter on resulted in specific policies such as the *Otspolitik* policy by West Germany’s Prime Minister Willy Brandt in attempting to socialize the USSR and Eastern European bloc or NATO’s change of doctrine, announced in June 1990, calling for partnership with the Warsaw pact members and reducing the nuclear element in its strategy, or the US-led promises of financial and aid assistance for the USSR basing on a structural reform in the Soviet Union. These are important calculations

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<sup>30</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis, *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 281-295

that might have led to Gorbachev's change of mind and ideas in proposing perestroika and glasnost, accepting withdrawal from its core sphere of influence (the unification of Germany, Eastern Europe), and finally proposing a peaceful end of the Cold War with the US in the 1989 Malta Summit. In other words, this socially constructed process by the West had been successful in changing Gorbachev's intentionality: "he wanted to do what he did because his preferences had changed in ways realists would never expect; he wished to give up 'socialism' and join the West."<sup>31</sup>

From the critical theory perspective, the end of the Cold War has a deeper root in its comprehensive structure. The end of the Cold War was not only the result of the competition and reconciliation between the two superpowers. Instead, if we peel off the surface of Cold War's bipolar system, the explanation for the end of the Cold War will appear clearly, that is internal forces undermining the bipolar structure - centrifugal forces from both sides, domestic politics, the undergoing economic globalization process which used to be dismissed as periphery factors in rationalist explanation. Since the early 1970s, there have been signs that the Cold War was not the playground of the two superpowers only. International relations then witnessed increasingly complicated, crossed and intertwined relationships between the East and the West. There have been important centrifugal forces that wanted to move away from the influence of the two superpowers. From the Soviet camp, those were China (Sino - Soviet split during 1960-1980; Sino - US, Sino - Japan rapprochement in 1970s, China's independent and peaceful foreign policy since 1982), Yugoslavia (1954), Poland (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) etc. From the US camp, those were France (under De Gaulle

government), Germany (Willy Brandt's Oskpolitik policy), and its Southeast Asian allies (after US. failure in the Vietnam War). The US and USSR since 1970s, moreover, lacked relative control in the international political economy. While concentrating on arms and nuclear races, the two superpowers reserved much for military and defense spending while neglecting economic development, especially the USSR. Until 1980s, the Soviet economy far lagged behind the West whereas the US economy witnessed a slowdown, relatively declining from accounting for more than 50% of the post-war's world economy to about 30% at the end of the Cold War. Germany, Japan and Asian tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and China etc) meanwhile, taking advantage of opportunities given by the globalization process, developed their economies very quickly. Moreover, the 1973 oil crisis was a shock to the world as it showed how the small and lesser states then could join together to raise their voice and bargain against the big powers.

Therefore, it can be said that up to 1980s, the international structure has shifted from bipolarity to a more diversified structure whereby military power and balance of power were still very important but not all that matters. The emergence of centrifugal forces, rapid development of Germany, Japan and Asian dragons and tigers thanks to the globalization process, as well as domestic politics striving for freedom and democracy, etc. are other important factors. The US had realized its relative decline and sought ways to solve it, i.e. sharing burden with allies in military spending (Japan, NATO), floating the international exchange system, concentrating on economic and technological development, setting up the Group of Seven (G7) to work with other big economies (Japan, Germany, France, Britain) to regulate international financial issues etc. The USSR, on the contrary, failed to make adequate changes. Until 1989 Gorbachev made no major cuts in defense spending. Between 1985 and 1989,

<sup>31</sup> Worthforth, op.cit., p. 101.



spending for defence accounted for the same percentage of gross national product as it had under Brezhnev. After 1989 it consumed even more.<sup>32</sup> Soviet relative decline, especially in terms of its economy posed an urgent need for the adoption of perestroika and ‘new thinking’ and decline was connected to the burdens imposed by the Soviet Union’s international position.<sup>33</sup> The USSR continued expanding (in Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, arm races etc) and when implementing glasnost and perestroika, it mainly focused on political reform. Without a firm economic foundation (in contrast with China), Gorbachev’s perestroika only facilitated the development of democratic factions in its internal political system that eventually made the USSR’s dissolution inevitable. Put it shortly by Gaddis, “there was no military defeat or economic crash; but there was a collapse of legitimacy.”<sup>34</sup>

With the collapse of the USSR, it can be said that the global Cold War is over. The end of the Cold War put an end to nearly half a century of intense competition between the two superpowers in a comprehensive perspective ranging from military to ideological, economic and technological struggle and together with it, the bipolar system. The end of the Cold War also exposed drawbacks and shortcomings of the Soviet-like model of socialism that led to the collapse of communism and socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The Cold War, in that sense, has ended.

It is however, incorrect to suggest, as Fukuyama did in 1989 that history has come to an end. Probably, the end of the Cold War does not represent the peaceful acceptance of a capitalist - liberal international

order.<sup>35</sup> The five remaining socialist countries (China, Japan, Cuba, Laos, and maybe with the exception of North Korea) has learned precious lessons from the collapse of socialism in Europe and made timely adjustments and renovation in order to be able to adapt to the new international environment. They have so far remained well in place, especially China and Vietnam.

Moreover, the Cold War has not completely ended because many of its relics are still lingering. Intrastate and interstate issues at the sub-regions (Africa, Central Europe, Middle East, Asia) such as religion and race conflicts, cultural differences, social inequality, territorial disputes etc which used to be tamed by superpowers’ constraints now have condition to flare out as hotspots or flashpoints (Kosovo, Chechnya, Israel-Arab conflicts, South China sea disputes etc). Of no where do people realize that the Cold War is not completely over<sup>36</sup> than in Northeast Asia where there stay the problems of the Korean peninsular, the Taiwan issue as well as increasing tension between China and Japan, Japan and Russia due to territorial and historical disputes.

The end of the Cold War neither makes it impossible for new challenges to the international order to emerge. The world we are living in today because of its changing nature resulting from the globalization process, economic interdependence and integration is facing with increasingly new traditional and non-traditional threats, most of which are transnational in nature that no single country can cope with. Potential sources of threats and conflicts for the new world greatly stem from transnational concerns such as proliferation of weapons of mass

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<sup>32</sup> Ray, op.cit., p. 457

<sup>33</sup> Worthforth, op.cit., p. 101.

<sup>34</sup> Gaddis, 1997, op.cit.

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<sup>35</sup> Lemke, op.cit., p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> Some observers, notably former Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, feel that Asia’s Cold War is fully over.

destruction, drug trafficking, terrorism, water and other resource problems, smuggling, environmental degradation, maritime safety, piracy, and unregulated population movements across national boundaries. Forest fires in Indonesia; pandemics like SARS and bird flu; tsunami in South Asia; terrorism in England, Spain, Middle East; women and children trafficking in Asia, Africa and Europe are among such few threats to be named. Furthermore, the 9-11 incident, its subsequent US-led war against terror in Afghanistan and Iraq, recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa following by NATO intervention in Libya have deepened Huntington's hypothesis of "clash of civilizations," be it correct or not.

Similarly, it is incorrect to conclude that the end of the Cold war has put an end to theory. The role of theory, as Lewis has rightly pointed out, has always been "not just to account for the past or to explain the present but to provide at least a preview of what is to come"<sup>37</sup> The failure of political science to anticipate the rapid and peaceful end of the Cold War should be a wake-up call to the discipline. Nearly two decade since Lewis debate over the possibility of forecasting in the social sciences, *International Security* has not published a single article explicitly seeking to forecast any outcome in international politics. Gaddis is thus right to fear of a "butterfly effect" or "clocks - clouds" relation<sup>38</sup> in international politics in predicting event like the end of the Cold War. But I agree with

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<sup>37</sup> Gaddis, 1993, op.cit. p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> "The metaphor of a 'butterfly effect' whereby a butterfly flapping its wings in Beijing causes a tornado in Topeka captures the sensitivity of complex systems like the weather to initial conditions. Unlike the domino effect, the results of the butterfly effect are not linear but chaotic and hard to predict. Gaddis is thus right to point out that events in international politics like the end of the Cold War do not always have the predictability of 'clocks' but have much of the randomness of 'clouds.'" See Gries, Charting China's future 147.

Gries that theorists are not "mere soothsayers." International politics is not all clouds; there are enough "clocks" (regularity) to make scientific inquiry about the future possible."<sup>39</sup>

IR theory, therefore, has not yet run its full course. On the contrary, they are now developing more rapidly than ever before. As summarized by Stephen Walt and Jack Snyder, the current post-Cold War world of politics has "many theories" and "rival theories"<sup>40</sup> competing for each other in accounting for certain aspects of international relations. Although most IR theories failed to predict the end of the Cold War, they have tried to seek explanation for it as well as modified their theory in order to cope with new challenges. International practice in the post Cold War era has proved that realism is still the dominant theory in IR since power and interest still influence state's behavior in international politics. Liberalism is also very persuasive in explaining democracy promotion or state cooperation in multilateral institutions. Constructivism and critical theory, by combining both theory and history, is now seen as the biggest challenge to the traditional rational theories (which comprise of realism and liberalism) as well as one of the most convincing theories in forecasting and explaining for changes.

### Conclusion

Alexis de Tocqueville - an international historian and futurist once predicted that Russia and America would one day dominate the destinies of half the earth. In 1945, it seemed that his prediction had come true with the emergence of a bipolar Cold War. The sudden and peaceful end

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> See Stephen Walt, "One world, many theories" and Jack Snyder "One world, rival theories".

of this Cold War, however, surprised everyone, most notably IR theorists who used to think that this bipolarity was more stable and deemed to endure. This failure rendered IR theory being named “soothsayers” and throw into doubt its predictability and accountability by John Lewis Gaddis. Against this background, Francis Fukuyama proposed the idea of the end of the Cold War as the “end of theory” and the “end of history” whereby with the collapse of the USSR and communism, the world would now speak with one voice - liberalism and liberal democracy. This paper as well as reality over the past two decades since the end of the Cold War has proved that the end of the Cold War has not rendered theory and history irrelevant. In fact, it served as an alarm call for both IR theorists and international historians that they should work together rather than boycott each other in order to find out the truth - a multidimensional perspective comprising of diverse factors i.e. military, economic, ideological, moral, domestic ones that may tell us more about the end of the Cold War. Constructivism and critical theory, as argued in the paper, has been somehow successful in bridging the gap between the two disciplines.

Theory has not ended because it has found ways to modify and adapt to rising challenges posed by the end of the Cold War and we still badly need them as a research methodology of social science. Neither has history ended because lots of Cold War mindsets and remnants, more or less, still affect the current international order. Although I agree with Fukuyama and more exactly, with Hegel and Marx that theory and history would someday have to come to an end with the evolution of human societies, there still seemed to be a very long way to that end and the end of the Cold War was simply not the right point of time. With this increasingly shared awareness, the *Newsweek* recently raised an

interesting question about ‘the end of the end of history’ and ‘the beginning of history’ in its interviews with Fukuyama on how he views the current Arab spring revolutions and China’s rise.<sup>41</sup> And even earlier, a no less well-known American colleague of his Robert Kagan already published his book, entitled “The return of history and the end of dreams.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See *Newsweek* on April 10, 2011, available at <http://www.newsweek.com/2011/04/10/the-beginning-of-history.html>.

<sup>42</sup> For details, see Robert Kaplan, *The return of history and the end of dreams*, Random House, Inc., New York, 2008.