Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I," Philosophy and Public Affairs, vol. 12, no. 3 (Summer, 1983), pp. 205-235. Reviewed by Daniel E. Ho.

The argument: Liberalism has achieved extraordinary success in maintaining peace among liberal states, while contributing confusion to (and perhaps even exacerbating) the relations between liberal and illiberal states. Doyle traces the liberal legacy to Kant's notion of a "pacific union," arguing that Kantian liberalism provides a better explanation of the liberal peace than Realism.

Liberalism is characterized by a commitment to three sets of rights:

a) Rights of "negative freedom" - freedom from arbitrary authority (e.g., free speech, press, equality under the law, property rights);
b) Rights of "positive freedom" - rights necessary to protect and promote the capacity and opportunity for freedom (e.g., social and economic rights, education, health care, employment); and
c) Rights to democratic participation or representation.

Balancing these three sets of rights is the challenge for liberalism, which has led to two broad schools: (1) laissez-faire or "conservative" liberalism, and (2) social democratic or "liberal" liberalism. Both schools share a commitment to four essential institutions:

a) Juridical equality;
b) Representative legislatures deriving authority from the electorate;
c) Private property; and
d) Economic decisions determined by supply and demand.

Notwithstanding domestic shortcomings of balancing these rights and institutions, Doyle seeks to outline the international implications of these institutions. Most importantly, liberal international theory posits that "states have the right to be free from foreign intervention." (p. 213) Doyle argues that Kant's "pacific union" of states has emerged amongst liberal states:

> "*Even though liberal states have become involved in numerous wars with nonliberal states, constitutionally secure liberal states have yet to engage in war with one another.* No one should argue that such wars are impossible; but preliminary evidence does appear to indicate that there exists a significant predisposition against warfare between liberal states."

(p. 213, emphasis in original) Doyle contrast his Kantian theory with Hobbes' Realism. In his view, Realism, which concludes that the effects of domestic regimes are overridden by international anarchy, cannot explain the phenomenon of "liberal pacification." Kant's "Perpetual Peace" allegedly provides a better foundation. Kant holds that a natural evolution to a pacific union will occur from three sources:

a) Constitutional law - republican representation and separation of powers will tame self-interested individuals and contribute to international peace by decreasing the role of personal animosities and distributing the cost of war across a greater number of people;

b) International law - a guarantee of respect, strengthened by "publicity," will morally integrate nations [ed.: a very dubious proposition];
c) Cosmopolitan law - the right to hospitality and associated spirit of commerce will lead states to promote peace.

In short, the effects of international anarchy have been tamed between liberal states, through these mechanisms. (p. 232) Lastly, Doyle warns that "the decline of U.S. hegemonic leadership may pose dangers for the liberal world." (p. 233) Doyle is by no means deterministic about the growth of a liberal pacific union, claiming that a change in hegemonic powers may erode the basis for a liberal peace.

Some critiques:

I. Doyle's definition of liberalism, failing to provide some principle for balancing the three sets of rights and four institutions, arguably falls apart on itself. A Marxist critique may actually agree with the Doyle's principles, but find merely that conservative and even liberal liberalism fail to weigh the positive freedoms sufficiently.

II. Doyle's operationalization of liberalism (via four institutions) fails to clearly separate the causal variables of why a liberal peace may exist: is it the institutions or liberal ideals that contribute the alleged "pacific union"? Given the imprecision as to the variables at stake, Doyle's theory remains hard to falsify.

III. Doyle's failure to provide some balancing principle between liberal rights (see Critique I) does not account for an interactive effect between liberal ideas and institutions across time. Does the notion of liberalism (e.g., the tradeoff between economic and political rights) change across time? This seems to be borne out historically. If yes, is it not the perceived relative difference in "liberalness" across states that may contribute to war, rather than absolute liberalness? For example, post-Glorious Revolution Great Britain may have approximated ideal liberalism (however defined) more than any other country *at the time*, but such as state would be perceived as illiberal today, and therefore fall under the second more volatile relation between liberal and illiberal states. In particular when examining international wars across such extensive space (p. 214-215) and with such low incidence rates, the opaqueness as to the interaction between ideas and institutions is a major shortcoming of Doyle's work.

IV. Doyle's account of the liberal pacific union is arguably internally inconsistent. He concedes that a liberal peace is also conditional of a liberal hegemon that can export liberal values and institutions - in short, without controlling for hegemonic power, the evidence he presents may not tell us anything at all. Doyle ultimately seems confused as to what really matters (power, institutions, or ideas) and does not reconcile these views terribly well. Perhaps Part II of this Essay clarifies some of these issues.