Dear students,

From 18 February 2020, beginning of the second semester, up to 12 March 2020 when the school had to close due to coronavirus pandemic, you never showed up during those 4 weeks, so this is your 1st Course for the semester. Given your level in English, I simplified it and shortened it to the maximum. Should you have any question, please contact me by email to life875@yahoo.fr. All questions are welcome!

Course 1: General Introduction to Regional Organizations

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been an increase in the number of regional organizations in the Americas, Asia, the Pacific and Africa. Many factors contributed to the emergence of such organizations. The Cold War, the failure of the Security Council of the United Nations to preserve international peace and security, the strong desire of the newly independent states to cooperate, all indeed provided a stimulus for the creation of such organizations.

Important Regional Organizations

Europe: NATO, OSCE, EU, CIS

Americas: OAS, NAFTA, Mercosur, Andean Community, the Union of South American Nations

Asia: ASEAN, ARF, APEC, SCO, SAARC

Middle East: Arab League, GCC


In Europe

1. The European Union (EU) was created when the Maastricht Treaty entered into force on 1st November 1993. It comprises 27 European countries. It is important to note however that at the start that is 1951, only Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands cooperated economically. Over time, more and more countries joined. The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union on 31 January 2020 (Brexit).

2. The Council of Europe (COE)\(^1\) established in 1949 with extensive cooperative aims. Currently, there are forty-six member states in the Council.

3. The Western European Union (WEU) founded in 1948 as a defense plan. Today it is a defense constituent of the EU, and a means for reinforcing the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance.\(^2\)

4. The Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OCSE)\(^3\) appeared in 1995 from the Helsinki Process initiated by the Helsinki Conference of European states (in addition to the United States of America and Canada) in 1975. It is concerned with three main areas: security questions in Europe, cooperation in the fields of economic, science and technology, and cooperation in human rights, humanitarian fields and democracy. Nowadays, the Organization has 55 member states.


\(^2\) See Archer, chapter 10, and Shaw, pp. 1170-71. See also //www.weu.int/

\(^3\) See Shaw, pp. 1179-81; and OCSE web site at //www.osce.org/.
5. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) created in 1949 as a defense force to counter the Soviet’s threat. Originally, it comprised the Western European States, Greece, Turkey, US and Canada. Today, it includes the Western and Eastern European States, Turkey, US and Canada.

6. Finally, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) created following an agreement signed by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in Minsk on 8 December 1991, to which other states adhered. Currently, it comprises all the former Soviet Republic apart from the three Baltic States.

In the American continent

We find the Organization of American states (OAS) created on April 14, 1890 as the International Union of American Republics. It became the Pan American Union in 1910, then the Organization of American States in 1948 with the adoption of the OAS Charter in Bogotá, Colombia. Its purpose is to promote economic, military, and cultural cooperation among its members, which include almost all of the independent states of the Western Hemisphere.

In Asia

1. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 as an organization for both economic and political cooperation. Nowadays, it is composed of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

2. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. It includes 8 Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Among the main goals of the Association (outlined in the SAARC Charter): the promotion of self-reliance among the countries of South Asia; the improvement of the people’s quality of life; the acceleration of economic growth; social progress and cultural development in the region; the promotion of active collaboration and mutual trust, and the cooperation with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

In the Arab World

1. The League of Arab States or Arab League was founded in 1945. It has 22 members: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The idea of the Arab League was suggested in 1942 by the British in response to some postwar colonial divisions of territory as well as strong opposition to the emergence of a Jewish state on Palestinian territory. The British then sought to mobilize Arab countries against the Axis powers. However, the league did not take off until March 1945, just before the end of the Second World War.

2. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also known as the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) was created on 25th of May 1981 following a historical meeting, in Abu Dhabi, of the heads of states of the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait. The GCC main objectives are to enhance coordination, integration and interrelationship among member states in all fields with the aim of achieving unity. It also aims at intensifying and consolidating existing inter-relations and links among their people in all areas. Another of

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4 See The NATO Handbook, Brussels (2002); Archer, chapter 9; and Shaw, pp. 1168-70. See also NATO website at //www.nato.int/


7 The concept of an integrated Arab polity based on shared culture and historical experience however dates to the Islamic caliphates under the disciples of Mohammed. Modern pan-Arabism, or Arab nationalism.
its purposes is the establishment of laws and regulations in various fields and finally the promotion of scientific and technological progress in many fields.

Related to the Islamic World

There is the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The idea of the OIC was put forward by King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia in 1969 as a reaction to an attack against the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. It was consolidated into a formal establishment in 1971, and in the mid-1970s, new members mainly from Africa, including a number of nations which were not necessarily majority Muslim, joined. The OIC’s greatest intervention was its humanitarian response to the famine in Somalia in 2011.

In Africa

500 intergovernmental organizations have been created. Today, well over 200 of these still exist, and new ones are emerging. The most prominent is the African Union (AU).

END OF COURSE I