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Proceedings of Students' Peace Conference

2025

Scottish Church College

KOLKATA, INDIA

DEPARTMENTS OF HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE
& PEACE STUDIES CELL

in collaboration with

University of Warsaw, Poland

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Present

**ANANTA KUMAR SARKER AND SNEHALATA SARKER
MEMORIAL STUDENTS' CONFERENCE**

On

**Peace and World Politics:
Changing Dynamics**



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[Endorsed by Prof. Annapurna Sircar]



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**Peace and World Politics:
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Principal

Scottish Church College

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Principal

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Principal's Message

At the outset I would like to express my appreciation for the initiative taken to create a platform through collaboration by the faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland and Scottish Church College faculty of departments of History, Political Science and Peace Studies Cell to organize the Ananta Kumar Sarker and Snehalata Sarker Memorial Students' Conference on 'Peace and World Politics : Changing Dynamics' held in our college on 22nd February, 2023.

'Peace and World Politics : Changing Dynamics' was indeed the need of the hour, given the current global scenario, with conflict and carnage everywhere jeopardizing the desire for Peace. The very purpose of humanity today should be to inspire children to become valuable advocates for tolerance and peace through education. The students of both institutions did a commendable job in their respective areas. It was very inspiring, insightful and made way for a platform for the youth to voice their opinions and take a stand to make our world a more caring, loving and livable one. I fully support this endeavour and encourage future such sessions to be organized. True peace can only be sought by recognizing and embracing our differences thereby leading to diversity.

'We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves' as expressed by the great Dalai Lama.

Special thanks go out to Dr. Aleksandra Jaskolska of University of Warsaw and Dr. Shrimoyee Guha Thakurta of Scottish Church College who acted as Nodal Members in the Conference, all the participants and back stage players who helped in making the conference a grand success. God Bless us all !!

Dr. Madhumanjari Mandal

Principal
Scottish Church College
Kolkata

Message from the Vice-Principal

In this conflict-ridden world of ours, sustaining global peace is a pressing need. Sustaining peace seeks to reclaim peace in its own right. Let us briefly examine a few points in this regard.

First, sustaining peace should be established as an explicit and deliberate policy objective for all states, regardless of whether they are involved in armed conflict. It would be supported by an infrastructure consisting of institutions, norms, attitudes, and capacities involving different areas of social organisation. This infrastructure should be under scrutiny, receiving continuous updates to adapt to changing contexts. Sustaining peace, a process that should take place internally, requires an able and inclusive national leadership.

Secondly, it can be argued that sustaining peace is applicable to all societies. Its focus must not remain confined to unstable environments only. It is a fluid, ongoing process that should be perceived as a shared responsibility of states and their citizens. This elicits a question: How do we sustain peace in practice?

It can be assumed that peace is a spontaneous outcome for states that have inclusive institutions, social justice approach in legal frameworks, prudent economic policies, the ability to accommodate diverse thoughts, and a culture of tolerance.

The final point that needs to be addressed is the role of the international community. Institutions across the world, both bilateral and multilateral, have sanctioned millions of dollars to carry out peacemaking, peacekeeping, and similar activities aimed at neutralising conflicts. Sustaining peace constitutes a paradigm shift in how we think about peace and how we address conflict. As a process and a goal, building sustainable peace is not the burden of outsiders. Even under the most urgent circumstances, external interventions should endeavour to build on what people know and what they have. Societies that have developed national infrastructures for peace offer valuable lessons for this eminently internal enterprise. More needs to be done to show up the concept at the national and global levels. I wish this students' conference a great success.

8th July, 2024

Dr. Supratim Das

VICE-PRINCIPAL
CO-ORDINATOR, OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Foreword

Why Peace Studies are crucial in today's world?

Peace is critically important in today's world for a multitude of reasons, reflecting the interconnected and interdependent nature of global societies. The significance of peace extends beyond the absence of direct armed conflict to encompass various dimensions of human well-being, social harmony and sustainable development. In an interconnected world, regional conflicts can have far-reaching consequences, affecting neighboring countries and potentially triggering wider geopolitical tensions. This is seen in case of the Russia – Ukraine War and the Israel – Hamas War. The latter escalating into a larger West Asian crisis with multiple countries involved now.

Peace promotes stability and helps prevent the escalation of conflicts into larger-scale crises. Peace is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. Countries affected by conflict often experience economic devastation, hindering progress in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Sustainable development goals can only be achieved in an environment of peace and stability. Peace is intimately connected to social justice and equality. In societies marked by internal tensions or discrimination, achieving lasting peace requires addressing underlying social, economic, and political inequalities. Peaceful societies are more likely to foster inclusivity and promote the rights of all individuals. Armed conflicts can exacerbate environmental degradation and contribute to resource scarcity. Peaceful resolutions and cooperative efforts are essential for addressing environmental challenges, promoting conservation, and mitigating the impact of climate change. Peace facilitates diplomatic efforts and conflict resolution. Negotiations and dialogue are more likely to succeed in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. Diplomacy becomes an effective tool for resolving disputes and addressing the root causes of conflicts. Peace is integral to the protection of human rights. In times of conflict, basic human rights are often violated, leading to displacement, persecution, and loss of life. A commitment to peace is a commitment to upholding the dignity and rights of every individual. Peace is closely tied to global health and well-being. During conflicts, access to healthcare is often compromised, leading to increased mortality rates and the spread of diseases. Peaceful conditions are conducive to the establishment and maintenance of robust healthcare systems. Peaceful societies are better equipped to counteract terrorism and extremism. Addressing the root causes of radicalization,

fostering social cohesion, and promoting inclusive governance contribute to preventing the emergence and spread of extremist ideologies. Peace encourages cultural exchange and international collaboration. In a peaceful world, nations can share knowledge, ideas, and resources, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures. In an era of rapid technological advancements, peace is crucial for ensuring that technological innovations are used for the benefit of humanity rather than for destructive purposes. Ethical considerations in technology use are more likely to be prioritized in a peaceful environment.

Peace has been a perennial aspiration in the realm of world politics, yet its pursuit is constantly shaped by the evolving dynamics of the international landscape. The interplay of historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and the emergence of new actors and technologies all contribute to the changing nature of global peace. The concept of peace has undergone a transformation, with early geopolitical structures emphasizing the balance of power. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked a pivotal moment, ushering in the modern nation-state system and shaping diplomatic norms. World Wars I and II necessitated a reevaluation of international relations, leading to the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. The Cold War introduced a new paradigm, emphasizing the balance of nuclear power and the intricacies of bipolarity. The post-Cold War era witnessed a rise in non-state actors challenging the conventional notions of conflict. Terrorism and extremism, fueled by ideological fervor and technological advancements, pose unique challenges to global peace. Despite efforts to establish international norms, regional conflicts persist. The Middle East stands as a focal point, with ongoing tensions, proxy wars, and geopolitical maneuvering impacting the broader quest for peace. Globalization has brought economic interdependence, but it has also widened the gap between the haves and have-nots. Addressing economic disparities is crucial for building a foundation of sustainable peace. The UN, born out of the ashes of World War II, plays a central role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Examining the successes and limitations of UN interventions provides insights into the challenges faced by international institutions. Regional bodies, such as the European Union and the African Union, contribute to peace building efforts. Understanding the role of regional organizations helps navigate the complexities of addressing diverse geopolitical realities. Arms control and disarmament treaties, along with climate agreements, showcase the potential of international cooperation. Analyzing these agreements highlights the diplomatic intricacies involved in shaping a peaceful world order. In the digital age, soft power and cultural diplomacy have gained prominence. The influence of media, arts, and cultural exchange programs contributes to shaping perceptions and fostering understanding between nations. Advancements in technology have transformed the nature of diplomacy. Cybersecurity

threats, social media, and cyber diplomacy pose challenges that demand innovative solutions for maintaining global peace. The tug-of-war between multilateralism and unilateralism influences diplomatic approaches. Examining the implications of these approaches provides insights into the shifting dynamics of power and cooperation. Globalization has intertwined economies, creating a complex web of interdependence. Evaluating the impact of economic ties on political relations offers a nuanced perspective on the role of economic interconnectedness in preserving peace. Cultural exchange, facilitated by globalization, contributes to a shared global consciousness. Analyzing the positive dimensions of cultural interconnectedness highlights the potential for mutual understanding and cooperation. As the world grapples with unprecedented challenges, the pursuit of peace in world politics remains a dynamic and adaptive endeavor. Acknowledging historical legacies, addressing contemporary challenges, and embracing the changing dynamics of diplomacy and globalization are essential steps toward forging a more harmonious and cooperative global order. In an era marked by uncertainty, the quest for peace requires continuous innovation, international collaboration, and a collective commitment to building a world where dialogue triumphs over discord.

Peace studies, as an academic discipline, have gained increasing importance in today's context due to several compelling reasons. In a world marked by complex geopolitical challenges, social unrest, and environmental threats, the relevance of peace studies becomes evident. Here are some key reasons why peace studies are crucial in today's world: Peace studies equip individuals with the tools and knowledge needed to understand the root causes of conflicts and to develop strategies for resolution and prevention. In a globalized world, where local conflicts can have far-reaching consequences, the ability to address and mitigate conflicts is essential for fostering stability. Armed conflicts and violence often lead to humanitarian crises, displacing populations and causing immense suffering. Peace studies provide insights into humanitarian principles and practices, enabling individuals to contribute effectively to relief efforts and work towards sustainable solutions to address the underlying causes of crises. The world is increasingly interconnected through trade, communication, and cultural exchange. Issues such as terrorism, climate change, and pandemics require collaborative international efforts. Peace studies help individuals understand the complexities of these global challenges and promotes cooperation among nations to address common threats. Peace studies often intersects with social justice issues, emphasizing the importance of addressing structural inequalities, discrimination, and injustice. By promoting inclusivity and equity, peace studies contributes to building societies that are less prone to internal strife and tensions. Environmental degradation and resource scarcity can be sources of conflict. Peace studies,

when integrated with environmental studies, explores the connections between environmental sustainability and peace. This interdisciplinary approach helps in developing strategies for managing natural resources and preventing conflicts related to environmental issues. Understanding the root causes of extremism and terrorism is crucial for preventing their spread. Peace studies delves into the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to radicalization, providing insights into effective strategies for countering extremism and promoting social cohesion. Effective communication and cross-cultural understanding are essential for preventing misunderstandings and conflicts. Peace studies often includes components that focus on intercultural communication, fostering mutual respect and dialogue between individuals from diverse backgrounds. Peace studies encourages the development of leaders who prioritize diplomacy, conflict resolution, and collaboration. By cultivating a new generation of leaders with a strong commitment to peace, the discipline contributes to creating a more stable and cooperative international community. With the persistent threat of nuclear weapons, peace studies plays a crucial role in advocating for disarmament and non-proliferation. Understanding the consequences of nuclear conflict and working towards global disarmament efforts are vital aspects of the discipline. Peace studies fosters critical thinking and encourages individuals to become informed global citizens. In an era where misinformation and polarization can contribute to conflict, the ability to critically analyze and engage with global issues is essential for creating a more peaceful world.

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Peace as Hegemony: Kautilya and India's Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract

The paper provides an exposition of Kautilya's strategic thought and how its essence and some of its prescriptions are capable of explaining the aspects of modern India's geopolitics. The Arthashastra, in its insights on peace, argues that peace is the by-product of Hegemony. Without hegemony, peace is unlikely. Hegemony is defined as peace on terms that are favourable to the Vijigishu i.e., the aspiring hegemon. Ironically, the pursuit of peace through hegemony may require the disruption of peace. But hegemony can be acquired with minimal disruption of peace i.e., by using covert methods of conflict. Covert warfare provides states with the benefits of conquest without the chaos and unpredictability of war. The crucial distinctions between Kautilya and the ideas of Nicolo Machiavelli have been briefly mentioned. The paper argues that the comparisons are unfair to Kautilya's ideas. Indian policy may often align with the prescriptions of Kautilya, But, modern Indian foreign policy may not be reduced to Kautilya. Hence, certain non-Kautilyan determinants of the same are also provided in brief. Thereafter, the paper discusses how India's neighbourhood policy advances and safeguards India's interests of acquiring hegemony over the subcontinent. We discover that the goal of Kautilya's Vijigishu-regional primacy by pragmatic means- is identical to the present goals of the Republic of India'.

Introduction

Many European students of world affairs, including my learned counterparts from Poland to whom the contents of this paper were first read out in a summarized form, may think of India's friction-ridden relations with her neighbours as, to paraphrase those ill-fated words of Neville Chamberlain, 'quarrels among exotic far-away countries, among people of whom they know little'. To match their curiosity for India's foreign affairs, an Indian perspective on our neighbourhood situation is in order. This article offers insight into an important brand of ancient Indian strategic doctrine-the prescriptions of Kautilya in his *Arthashastra*- on peace, war, and the grey space between the two.

Peace is a fuzzy concept. Beyond the 'absence of war', it is difficult to develop a consensus on what it means. For instance, we may insist for the sake of argument that Vladimir Putin also wants peace; BUT on the conditions that Ukraine will not join NATO, the

Donbas will belong to Russia, formal commitments of neutrality and demilitarization from Zelensky etc. Naturally, the other parties involved find these demands obnoxious. In effect, efforts to establish peace often become fruitless because every independent state pursues its national interests and so tries to establish peace on terms and conditions favourable to themselves. What then is peace and how do we achieve it? The following section answers that question from Kautilya's perspective.

The *Arthashastra* on Peace

On the topic of creating and maintaining peace, in the Indian geopolitical context, the ideas of Kautilya, one of India's ancient strategic thinkers, are worth visiting.

Kautilya outlines a policy of *Sandhi*, which means to accept peace under the protection of a rival power when the latter is stronger and will remain so in the foreseeable future. But, any aspiring hegemon (whom he calls *Vijigishu*) should not accept this type of peace because it is not favourable to his interests of regional hegemony. Further, the *Vijigishu* is surrounded by enemies. The immediate neighbour is the natural enemy. The enemies' eyes are always set on the territory and possessions of the *Vijigishu*. Even today, India's immediate neighbours- Pakistan and China, are our immediate sources of concern. Even the minor powers around India are not entirely innocent. Kanwal Sibal, former Foreign Secretary of India, conveys the unfortunate facts with precision when he says,

"Virtually all our neighbours, by choice or default, by acts of commission or omission, compulsions of geography and the terrain, have been or are involved in receiving, sheltering, overlooking or tolerating terrorist activities from their soil directed against India. These include even the likes of Bangladesh and Nepal".

To mitigate the enemy, The *Vijigishu* should rapidly accumulate power- economic, military and personal. The objective of Kautilya's foreign policy is to Hegemonize the Indian subcontinent by neutralizing all threats. Neutralization may be achieved by a variety of diplomatic tactics, which are called the *Shadguna Siddhanta* (Six-Fold Principles of Diplomacy).

We come to know from our deliberations thus far that peace is the by-product of hegemony. Without hegemony, peace is unlikely. Hegemony means Peace on our terms. How then to achieve hegemony? The next section covers Kautilya's answer to that question.

War vs Conflict: The Need for Covert Warfare

Kautilya says that all-out war should be the last resort of a state. Because the outcome of the war is never definitely predictable. War brings conquest and resources but it also disrupts the power equation among states. It makes neighbours and peers insecure i.e., the fear that they might be next.

Conflict is the natural condition of a state. This means that even during what is formally peacetime, the state must carry out conflictual behaviour like covert warfare, sending spies, honey-trapping enemy ministers and generals, manufacturing dissent in hostile kingdoms, diplomatic power projection etc. War is the last resort, but conflict is the natural condition. Covert warfare provides states with the benefits of conquest without the chaos and unpredictability of war. For this reason, Kautilya is not a warmonger. Covert warfare is an act of restraint- a delicate balance of peace and aggression.

To sum up the deliberations so far, hegemony is essential for peace. Without it, there is only subjugation and perennial warfare among states. But, the pursuit of hegemony may require disruption of peace. There is, however, a way out. Hegemony can be acquired with minimum disruption of peace i.e., through covert methods

Kautilya, in this way, impresses upon us the necessity to establish hegemony from a perspective rooted in the historical geography of Jambudweep- the name for Greater India in ancient documents.

Machiavelli: Not the European Kautilya

From this deliberation, a non-Indian or indeed even the uninitiated Indian may locate a great deal of overlap between Kautilya and Niccolo Machiavelli. However, Unlike Machiavelli, Italy's faux-Kautilya, who prescribed political realism only for the purpose of Italian reunification, and a Republican state after the unification project had been completed, Kautilya's Arthashastra is more consistently realist, more refined, and broader in scope. In terms of comparison between the two, Max Weber hits the nail squarely on the head when he says in his lecture 'Politics as A Vocation' that

"Truly radical "Machiavellianism", in the popular sense of that word, is classically expressed in Indian literature in the Arthashastra of Kautilya (written long before the birth of Christ, ostensibly in the time of Chandragupta): compared to it, Machiavelli's 'The Prince' is harmless".

Some Non-Kautilyan Historical Determinants of India's Neighbourhood Policy

Indian policy may often align with the prescriptions of Kautilya, But, modern Indian foreign policy may not be reduced to Kautilya. Kautilya is not the only influence on elite perception in South Block. The diplomatic quarters of New Delhi may be called 'Chanakyapuri' (literally Chanakya-City), but the historical legacies that influence Indian foreign policy are multiple. Apart from Kautilya's maxims, we may recall two such influences for paucity of space.

The first non-Kautilyan factor deserving of mention is the geopolitical legacy of British India. The Republic of India inherited multiple geopolitical imperatives of its predecessor state (not very differently from how the present-day Republic of Poland inherited its aversion

to Russia from the Second Polish Republic and the many Polish states before it which were similarly gobbled up by Russia's predecessor states).

A second determinant of South Block's actions is the ideas and decisions of certain enlightened Indian elites, such as General Krishnaswamy "Sundarji" Sundararajan and Shri Krishnaswamy Subrahmanyam, cornerstones of India's nuclear programme and strategic scholarship. These luminaries may be credited for shifting the paradigms of India's nuclear policy beyond the inane Gandhisms of their time by arguing that India, particularly after China nuclearized in 1964, also requires a credible minimum nuclear deterrent.

A third determinant of the Indian foreign policy is India's prime ministers. Since the time of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister has dominated India's external affairs behaviour. Exceptions to this trend, one of them being Pranab Mukherjee's stint as External Affairs Minister (2006-2009), are rare.

India's Neighbourhood Policy and the Quest for Hegemony

With other factors acknowledged, we may dovetail into how India intends to establish peace in our neighbourhood on terms favourable to us. India's present Neighbourhood Policy aims to produce renewed thrust on the economic front without compromising on the red lines of security.

India initially tried to connect the subcontinent *a la* European Union through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). That effort was frustrated by Pakistan's consistent terrorism against India and the low export base of the members. Pakistan's 2016 terrorist attack on the Indian Air Force base in Uri was the last straw that precipitated the SAARC's marginalization from India's neighbourhood policy. Thereafter, India turned to the BIMSTEC to achieve regional connectivity and development. The shift may be noticed in PM Modi's symbolic act of inviting the BIMSTEC Heads of State to his 2019 swearing-in ceremony in place of the SAARC heads, who were invited in 2014.

India's most recent attempt at regional integration is called the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). The goal of BIMSTEC is to produce economic benefits for India's neighbours so that they are convinced that India will not assert its hegemonic position without considering their interests. This reorientation has been a long time in the making. It was made clear since the tenure of Prime Minister Vajpayee that India was not going to castrate its natural might to please neighbourhood powers. The essence of the transition is from 'Big Brother' to 'Benign Brother' and provider of global goods in the neighbourhood. New Delhi understands now that our efforts at neighbourhood primacy are likely to be successful if and only if they are backed by economic benefits and good regional governance.

This does not mean that India has diluted her hawkishness. On the security front, since 2014, As a part of our Necklace of Diamonds strategy to counter China's expansionism, India has been flexing its covert muscle to support, using our external intelligence agency- the

Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), to advance and secure friendly governments in India's neighbourhood, like Sri Lanka (2015, 2018), Bangladesh (2019), and Bhutan (2018) and possibly Nepal (2022). This prevents neighbours from overplaying the 'China Card'. In subcontinental parlance, The China Card is when a neighbour threatens to develop closer ties with China if India does not sweeten its offers.

Today, finance and infrastructure have become indispensable currencies of national power. Indian diplomatic corps articulates these aspirations of India using terms such as 'Net Security Provider', 'Preferred Security Partner', and 'Net Development Provider' because they go beyond the rhetoric of security and force and emphasize the developmental and stabilizing aspects of a prospective Indian hegemony.

For all these reasons, India's Neighbourhood Policy today tries to balance regional prosperity with India's security interests

Conclusion

The initial goal of the paper was to provide an exposition of Kautilya's strategic thought and bring out the linkages of that ancient corpus with the aspects of modern India's geopolitics. It is fascinating that Kautilya's insights, centuries-old as they are, shed light on India's external affairs situation today. The ways of Kautilya, even if not explicitly in the minds of modern decision-makers, are effective in achieving certain of the goals of India's neighbourhood policy. However, times have changed and South Block has adopted new means, namely the route of economic and development diplomacy, in a complementary relationship with the old playbook. Even though South Block bureaucrats do not exclusively draw from Kautilya, the pragmatism of Kautilya is embedded in the strategic culture of India. Indeed, The Arthashastra continues to inspire because it continues to remain relevant. A Kautilyan articulation of India's neighbourhood policy would be that for India, regional peace at the expense of national interest is not worth having because it means compromises on elementary security interests i.e., strategically valuable territory, to Pakistan or China. That would simply be too high of a cost for peace.

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Buddhist Scriptures and their Propaganda of Peace

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Abstract

The religion-philosophy known to the West as Buddhism is in number of adherents and range of teaching one of the largest in the world. Born in India in the sixth century BC, Buddhism includes the most exalted philosophy yet achieved by man, a psychology from which the West is slowly beginning to learn, a religion which has satisfied untold millions for 2,500 years, a middle Way of self- development to self- enlightenment and a range and depth of spiritual science, mysticism, and religious art which cannot be found elsewhere. But to understand the reason for all the success Buddhism achieved till this date, we should certainly take a glimpse of how Buddhist scriptures and chronicles have played a huge part in attracting the mass. Buddhism was promoted by the state and the state was promoted by Buddhism. It is remarkable to see that ancient India's three most successful rulers Ajatasatru, Asoka and Kanishka (who have been the biggest patrons of Buddhism), used Buddhism and its doctrine of peace for building up their own public image (thus, consolidating power by being piety).

To begin with Buddha himself, we don't find any sources supporting his political views as such. India during Buddha's age had small principalities scattered across the Indian subcontinent. Most of these polities were either Monarchies or Oligarchies. If the chronicles are to believe, Bimbisara, one of the first Indian rulers who had began the task of unifying the country through conquests, was a disciple of Buddha. His son Ajatasatru inherited the throne by imprisoning Bimbisara behind bars. The next few years of this new emperor was spent in conquests and blood shed. When his dominions expanded to the point of saturation, the Emperor felt troubled enough mentally (as the Buddhist chronicles mention) for his past sins which included the bloodshed of his father and subjects. When medicines failed to cure, it was the light of Buddha which healed his heart. A similar framework of take is narrated by the Buddhist chronicles of another Indian ruler, Asoka, who ruled two centuries after Ajatasatru. Asoka too like Ajatasatru was a ruthless figure, rising to power by shedding the blood of his kins and subjects. His conquest of small state of Kalinga is considered to be a turning point in his life. The battlefield horrified this ruler at such level that he gave up arms (but didn't free the domain), and soon accepted the path of Buddha. Asoka, the ambitious and brutal pagan ruler

who dared to name his son Mahindra (Mahi meaning Earth , Indra being the king of Gods an Indian counterpart of Zeus) once , now bowed down to describing himself as Piyadasi (The beloved servant of God) in his inscriptions! Needles to say Kanishka too was given the face of a brutal pagan early life and a later benevolent, peaceful and just Buddhist life by these same chronicles.

Now inducting this framework of a savage pagan past and a serene Buddhist end of these rulers is something which makes us draw to a conclusion that this faith enlightens the dark and calms the wilderness of one's soul. But was that always the case? Weren't these chronicles very much acting as a propaganda towards the commoners, washing their fences white from front and not letting one see it's back? If Asoka really fell so much into Buddhist ideas why he didn't liberate the conquered land of Kalinga? The proud claim of the Orient for conceiving philosophical thought as a true necessity for life rather than armchair contemplation as their western counterparts are believed to have been seem to be partially true in this sense. Maybe, the thoughts and ideas in Orient, specifically for Buddhism rose from a genuine cause and inquisition, but it's application has never remained within the realms of spirituality. A huge nation like India Wouldn't have survived just by the establishment of fair international relations in ancient times, what it needed (or still needs) more was solidarity from within, and Buddhism might've been the best way an Emperor could've remained in his position securely. His act of embracing the faith was perceived and propagated by both the king and the Buddhist clerics as a mode of softening his rough gestures.

Coming to the part of how Buddhism became a mode through which political entities in ancient India kept peace or developed cordial relationship with each other is also something very interesting. It is unique to note here that Buddhism perceived peace as something which is featured by impermanence (anitya). Buddhism preached peace, like every other religious system in the planet. It is surprising to us as a civilization that how we have romanticized peace and always dreamt of achieving it, yet ending up to war against each other since our creation. We fight wars to protect our people, which end up with the loss of the lives of these very people. Then should we see human history to be a history of war and peace? Another aspect in Buddhist thought is it's preaching of middle path , a very important feature to understand international relations in today's date. Buddha himself spoke of being centrist in every approach of life. A very simple example is, unlike the Indian way of performing penances through fasting, Buddha achieved enlightenment without stopping the intake of food. This centrist approach can teach us a lot today in practicing our affairs, both domestic and international. But, it should we always kept in mind the narration made above is certainly not the ultimate way through which Buddhist ideas and their application to politics can be explored. No event in history has ever been so simple to narrate in a linear pattern, every event has it's own complexities of layers and directions, the more we understand this the more our idea of perceiving events would change, thus giving rise to something more analytical and genuine every time our thoughts and ideas are produced.

The softness of Buddhism appealed its audience, many a times we see rulers building monasteries on each other's land as a mean of establishing cordial relations with each other. For its conciseness and clarity, Buddhism certainly became an instrument which helped rulers of India and South East Asia to develop a fair public image for themselves within the country and building up peaceful relations beyond their realm of power.

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Moon Jae-in's Korean Peninsula Policy - An idea of reconciliation between the two Koreas

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Abstract

Due to its complicated and tangled history of the Korean War, the Korean Peninsula has long attracted international attention as a vital piece of the geopolitical puzzle of the great powers, as well as a potential flashpoint of a nuclear conflict. Throughout the years South Korea has implemented a variety of strategies and policies towards North Korea, some of which sought to achieve greater engagement and cooperation with the North, and others which have demonstrated a hard-line policy in their pursuit of complete denuclearization. As a president of the Republic of Korea from 2017 to 2022, Moon Jae-in supported a pragmatic and liberal approach towards the DPRK, aimed at achieving peace, stability, and prosperity via dialogue, cooperation and mutual trust, which eventually should result in the denuclearization of the Peninsula. Although his policy significantly improved inter-Korean relations and resulted in historic meetings and events, some critics note that the main goals of Moon's North policy were ultimately not met.

The origins and primary goals of Moon's North Korea policy

Moon Jae-in's North Korea policy is often referred to as "Sunshine policy 2.0" (or by his critics as "Moonshine policy") as its main objectives are similar to Kim Dae-jung's and Roh Moo-hyun's progressive and groundbreaking "sunshine policy"¹. In fact, Moon's views on enhancing cooperation with North Korea can be traced back to his early days in politics, when, as a member of Roh Moo-hyun's cabinet, he was heavily involved in the implementation of the "sunshine policy". His perspective on North Korea also had a personal dimension as he was born to North Korean refugees².

¹ Glosserman, Brad, "Japanese Views of South Korea: Enough is Enough" in "Joint U.S. -Korea Academic Studies. East Asian leaders' Geopolitical Frameworks, New National Identity Impact, And Rising Economic Concerns With China" (editor-in-chief: Gilbert Rozman), 2020, Korea Economic Institute of America, vol. 31, p. 192.

² Husarski, Roman. "Słoneczna Polityka 2.0. : Wyzwania I Zagrożenia Polityki Zjednoczeniowej Moon Jae-Ina." In *Raport : Wyzwania W Azji*, edited by Patrycja Pendrakowska and Jola Woźnica, 250–70. Warszawa : Wydawnictwo Asian Century, 2019, p. 253.

Although his approach to peaceful engagement with North Korea has been emphasized numerous times during the election campaign, it is the speech he delivered in Berlin on July 6, 2017, that can be viewed as an official introduction of North Korea Policy of South Korea's new administration. In his speech, the South Korean president advocated for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue, cooperation and an increase of people-to-people exchanges. Moon Jae-in addressed both criticism of North Korea's provocations that occurred on July 4th, days leading up to the meeting, and assurances of South Korea's sincere intentions for a dialogue. He highlighted that neither a North Korean collapse nor an unification through absorption are in South Korea's best interests. According to Moon, the only possible way of unification will certainly be a long-term process led by the Korean nation³.

An official outline published by the Ministry of Unification emphasizes three key principles of Moon's North Korea Policy, namely "peace first", "mutual respect", and "open policy"⁴. As Mosler indicates, the intention of Moon Jae-in's administration was to avoid making negotiation with the North difficult by prioritizing peace and co-prosperity, as well as trying to enhance inter-Korean relations through joint efforts and dialogue, over focusing on a heated issue of denuclearization⁵. Those three key principles played a crucial role in shaping Moon's strategy and fulfilling "three main goals", which were accordingly: "resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and establishment of permanent peace", "development of sustainable Inter-Korean relations" and "realization of a new economic community on the Korean Peninsula"⁶.

Besides principles and goals, four strategies were the means to ensure the fulfillment of Moon's policy: "taking a step-by-step and comprehensive approach", "tackling the issues of inter-Korean relations and the North Korean nuclear threat simultaneously", "ensuring sustainability through institutionalization", as well as "laying the foundation for peaceful unification through mutually beneficial cooperation"⁷. Contrary to the previous administrations of Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) and Park Geun-hye (2013-2017), this kind of progressive approach, which did not focus mainly on the uncompromising condition of denuclearization, served as an alternative to upgrade peaceful negotiations with the North and find different ways of communication in order to address the challenges of strained inter-Korean relations.

All in all, the overarching objective of the Moon administration's North Korea policy was to advance peace and prosperity in the entire region of Northeast Asia by strengthening inter-

³ Frank, Ruediger, "President Moon's North Korea Strategy", *the Diplomat*, July 13 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/president-moons-north-korea-strategy/> [access: 06.08.2023].

⁴ Ministry of Unification, "Moon Jae-In's Policy on the Korean Peninsula" https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/policyissues/koreanpeninsula/goals/, [access: 08.08.2023].

⁵ Mosler, Hannes B., "Lessons learned? South Korea's foreign policy toward North Korea under the Moon Jae-in administration", 2022, *Working Papers on East Asian Studies*, No. 132, University of Duisburg-Essen, Institute of East Asian Studies, p. 14.

⁶ Ministry of Unification, *op.cit.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Korean dialogue, deepening economic relations as well as considering North Korea rather as a partner rather than a threat⁸. Besides economic and diplomatic profits, this approach could also bring the two Koreas closer legally - by signing binding joint agreements between the countries. However, in order to achieve those goals, South Korea's strategy needed to be based on a few strong principles such as mutual respect, international cooperation, multilateral approach, as well as a strong alliance between the US and ROK in terms of national security⁹.

The era of high-level meetings

After nearly a decade of hostile relations between the two Koreas, Moon's bold plan to fundamentally improve relations with the North by prioritizing broad cooperation and dialogue was a breath of fresh air to the then-geopolitical environment. Numerous initiatives proposed by the Moon government included reunion of separated families, invitation of North Korea to the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, reopening the Kaesong Industrial Complex and more¹⁰. The only issue left to be resolved was North Korea's willingness to participate in and cooperate with South Korea's proposal, considering the fact that the provocations persisted throughout the early months of Moon's presidency in 2017.

Despite the progressive attitude towards cooperation with North Korea, Moon Jae-in did not remain passive in the face of North Korean provocations. South Korea strengthened the alliance with the US in the wake of ongoing threats. Accordingly, ROK has installed THAAD on its territory in response to multiple nuclear and ballistic missile tests. Contrary to previous objections to sanctioning the DPRK, President Moon has also agreed to put more pressure on the North Korean regime¹¹. Those decisions were a clear signal that although Moon is willing to resolve disputes and put a stronger emphasis on cooperation with the North, he will not remain indifferent to security threats.

Despite initiating first contacts such as providing humanitarian aid, it was only on January 3, 2018, when the two countries finally re-established dialogue over the phone in the DMZ¹². Another milestone in inter-Korean relations was the first high-level meeting between the officials from the two Koreas, during which they decided about North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics held in Pyeongchang in February 2018¹³. As a result, Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un's sister, met with Moon Jae-in in South Korea during the opening ceremony of the Olympics and presented him with a letter from her brother. Moreover, North

⁸ Mosler, Hannes B., *op.cit.*, p. 14-16.

⁹ Ministry of Unification, *op.cit.*

¹⁰ Hannes B. Mosler, "President Moon Jae-in – The Right Choice for South Korea", June 2017, *Asia Policy Brief*, p. 10.

¹¹ Roman Husarski, *op.cit.*, p. 258-259.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Hannes B. Mosler, "Lessons learned?" [...], *op.cit.* p. 17.

Korea and South Korea marched together in the opening ceremony of the Olympics¹⁴. This has eventually led to a period of high-level talks between North and South Korea.

A historical event in inter-Korean relations took place on April 27, 2018 when North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in signed the Panmunjom Declaration in the House of Peace¹⁵. Being the first time in more than ten years that North and South Korean leaders had met, and the first time when a North Korean leader entered South Korean territory, the meeting was viewed as a substantial improvement in inter-Korean ties. As a result of the signed declaration, the two countries pledged to work toward peace, denuclearization and improvement of inter-Korean relations. Leaders agreed to establish a Joint Liaison Office in Kaesong, modernize North Korean railway and road systems, put an end to military tensions as well as to restore reunion of separated families and work to improve mutual trust. Leaders met once again a month later, on May 26, on the North Korea's part of the DMZ, where they reconfirmed implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration¹⁶.

Another historic high-level meeting took place on September 18, when Moon Jae-in visited Pyongyang for the third inter-Korean summit and became the first South Korean president to shake hands with a North Korean leader at the legendary Mount Paektu and speak to North Korean citizens. As the result of the summit, both sides decided to sign the Pyongyang Declaration, which further expressed hopes for closer cooperation between the two Koreas and putting an end to military tensions in region¹⁷. As some indicate, the real reason of this summit was to facilitate cooperation between US and DPRK on the issue of denuclearization as the summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jon-un, which took place in Singapore on June 12, 2018, did not result in any spectacular outcome despite friendly character of the meeting and signing a joint statement on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula¹⁸.

Although 2018 was a crucial year in peace talks with North Korea, tensions rose again in 2019. Two high-level talks between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un, which happened respectively on February 27-28 in Hanoi, and then on June 30 in Panmunjom, failed to give any significant results and progress toward denuclearization as both sides seemed to have a different idea on how the process should look like¹⁹.

Despite Moon's ambitious attempts to deepen cooperation with the DPRK through high-level talks and joint agreements, factors such as ongoing missile tests, military drills in South Korea, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as mutual disagreement over certain issues regarding

¹⁴ Chung, Min Lee and Kathryn Botto, *"President Moon Jae-in and the Politics of Inter-Korean Détente"*, Korean Strategic Review 2018 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018), p. 18

¹⁵ Uk, Heo and Seongyi Yun, *"South Korea in 2018. Summit Meetings for the Denuclearization of North Korea"*, 2019, Asian Survey, 59(1), p. 54-56.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Chung, Min Lee and Kathryn Botto,, op.cit., p. 20.

¹⁸ Uk, Heo and Seongyi Yun, op.cit., p. 55.

¹⁹ Hannes B. Mosler, *"Lessons learned?"* [...], op.cit. p. 19.

economic cooperation have caused a dramatic deterioration in inter-Korean relations²⁰. When in 2020 North Korea demolished an inter-Korean liaison office located in North Korea's Kaesong Industrial Region, the already tense situation worsened²¹. A period of peaceful dialogue seemed to come to an abrupt end as North Korea's constant provocations once more started to draw international condemnation.

Moon's reconciliation policy - a success or a failure?

Undoubtedly, Moon's North Korea policy was a turning point in inter-Korean relations. During his presidency, a series of historic meetings between the leaders of North Korea and South Korea took place, which his predecessors were unable to do. As a result of the historic summits and his contribution to the decline in military tensions on the Peninsula, Moon acquired the title of "peacemaker". Not only did his efforts help him gain international recognition, but also contributed to an increase of his popularity among South Korean citizens²². His stance also made him win the sympathy of the conservative part of the political scene in the Republic of Korea²³.

Despite this, with his presidential term coming to an end, Moon Jae-in's liberal approach of engagement with North Korea has eventually drawn some criticism. In the face of North Korea's unyielding stance and the escalating threats, it seemed that Moon's efforts did not bring the expected results. Moon's administration was accused of not fulfilling the main objectives of his policies, having a too idealist approach, failing to recognize North Korea's true intentions, as well as focusing on matters which will not produce long-term outcomes²⁴.

As Eunjung Irene Oh mentions, Moon made two crucial mistakes when enacting his policies: "liberal premise" and "misalignment with Washington"²⁵. Many events have confirmed that maintaining the regime's legacy rather than improving the welfare of citizens is the primary motivation behind North Korea's operations. Throughout the years, the DPRK has been focusing on developing nuclear weapons, which serves as a bargaining chip in international negotiations. For example, in 2017 the development of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles considerably improved North Korea's strategic position and boosted its negotiation power, as well as the possibility to exert more pressure on the United States and South

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Shin, Hyonhee and Josh Smith, *North Korea destroys inter-Korean liaison office in 'terrific explosion'*, Reuters, June 16, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-southkorea-idUSKBN23M31Q>, [access: 14.08.2023].

²² Chung, Min Lee and Kathryn Botto, op.cit., p. 20.

²³ Husarski, Roman, op.cit., p. 259.

²⁴ Oh, Eunjung Irene, *Ambitions Are Not Opportunities: South Korean President Moon Jae-in's Failed North Korea Policy*, Yale Journal of International Affairs, January 14, 2022, <https://www.yalejournal.org/publications/ambitions-are-not-opportunities-south-korean-president-moon-jae-ins-failed-north-korea-policy> [access: 17.08.2022].

²⁵ Ibid.

Korea²⁶. Then, in 2019 North Korea refused South Korea's humanitarian offer of food aid as a result of its discontent with US-ROK military drills²⁷. Therefore, Moon's liberal policy, assuming that the intensification of economic cooperation between the two Koreas would eventually result in establishment of a peace regime on the Korean peninsula, failed as it misjudged North Korea's intentions and its willingness to integrate within the liberal international order²⁸.

Relations between the ROK, DPRK and the US have also been strained as a result of different perspectives on the subject of North Korea's denuclearization. Thus, the issue of denuclearization itself turned out to be a problematic factor for the execution of Moon's North Korea policy as the DPRK has never declared its clear stance on this issue. Whereas the US insisted on maintaining the policy of "maximum pressure" in order to make DPRK abandon its nuclear weapons programs via negotiations, Moon was an enthusiast of reducing tension and aiming to achieve CVID on the Peninsula through engagement policy²⁹. Although in general South Korea cooperated with the US to deal with North Korean provocations, unlike Trump, Moon always remained open to peaceful discussion with Kim's regime³⁰. However, both the American and South Korean governments were not likely to agree to North Korea's demands for denuclearization, such as abandoning its nuclear umbrella over South Korea, and vice versa - the US agreed to lift the sanctions only in exchange for the demolition of some of the nuclear facilities³¹.

Eventually, both sides failed to reach an agreement on how the process of denuclearization should look like, giving the impression that North Korea is using negotiations as a bargaining chip and wishing to achieve preconditions both the US and South Korea will never agree to meet due to security concerns.

Conclusion

Moon Jae-in's reconciliation policy, which aimed for improvement in inter-Korean relations, was a breakthrough in terms of establishing dialogue and negotiations with North Korea, as evidenced by the numerous meetings between the Republic of Korea and DPRK leaders held throughout Moon's presidency. His successful campaign was also reflected in an

²⁶ Choe, Sang-hun, "U.S. Confirms North Korea Fired Intercontinental Ballistic Missile", The New York Times, July 4, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/04/world/asia/north-korea-missile-test-icbm.html>, [access: 17.08.2023].

²⁷ Park, Han-na, "N. Korea rejects food aid over S. Korea-US military drills", The Korean Herald, 24 July 2019, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190724000638>, [access: 17.08.2023].

²⁸ Oh, Eunjung Irene, op.cit.

²⁹ Botto, Kathryn, "Moon Jae-in: Putting North Korea at the Center" in *Joint U.S. -Korea Academic Studies. East Asian leaders' Geopolitical Frameworks, New National Identity Impact, And Rising Economic Concerns With China* (editor-in-chief: Gilbert Rozman), 2020, Korea Economic Institute of America, vol. 31, p. 87.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Oh, Eunjung Irene, op.cit.

increase of support for Moon in the South Korean society. However, implementation of Korean Peninsula Policy faced many challenges and limitations. The unrealistic demands made by North Korea and the United States for each other, and lack of specific measures of denuclearization have eventually resulted in heightened tensions in the region and the negotiations were frozen again. Additionally, different perspectives on denuclearization have started to harm relations between South Korea and the US. Overall, Moon's progressive approach has shown that the policy of engagement with North Korea is a possible way for enhancing inter-Korean relations. However, reconciliation under the terms proposed by Moon should be a well-studied long-term process, rather than a policy which can be fulfilled within one term of presidency due to ideological and political barriers.

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Crisis of World Peace in 21st century

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Abstract

Prominent state of things established after end of The Cold War was a proper solution for thirty years. Nowadays that exact system is facing an enormous crisis, which appeared along with beginning of Russian-Ukraine war in 2022. Recognized as the first full scale military conflict between two major contrives in Europe after World War Two, Russian-Ukraine war broke a significant security code. Old foundations are shaking at the base and international view is changing on our eyes. Completely new situation is forcing international community to construct new paradigm imbued with pragmatism. World's need to establish new system of global security will be more and more visible in the future. Plenty of factors such as geopolitics, geoeconomics, political influence, meaning of specific areas will have to be included in process of constructing new system. Until Russian-Ukraine war will come to an end, plenty of things could change, but any consequences will be meaningful in future. Different areas will be important and influential enough to be considered in global security, among them areas of Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Europe. Due to importance of geopolitics a lot of different views and interests should be considered in case of building and prolonging next system of global security, and restoring of global peace.

Crisis of world peace is something we can discover right now. Russian-Ukraine full scale war broke a code that was established after 20th century. Code which remained untouched since the end of a cold war and was a major foundation of international security system. Nowadays we don't know on what conditions war will end, but we can already see the consequences of it in the future, especially in international relations, and international security ground. World peace is something that world especially Western part of it used to as something common and stable in 21st century. After Two World Wars and Cold War which was rivalry between United States and Soviet Union global security was considered stable and solid in view of international community. World wide peace was seen as a final state of things. 21st century wasn't a time for big political and military conflicts. Narration of pluralism, globalization and cultural integration was one of the most important topics on international ground. Sociologist Francis Fukuyama in one of his books – „The End of History and the Last Man”¹ said that we are facing end of a history itself. That conception assumes that there is no longer place for historical events as major as wars and global political rivalry. In Fukuyama's view humanity was meant to focus on integration and globalization. Nowadays we're able to

¹F. Fukuyama „The End of History and the Last Man” The Free Press 1992

discover that this theory is breaking apart, and apparently we are facing the same problems we had to face in past. 21st century turned out to be not only age of globalization and technological development but also an age of big political conflicts, which can violate global security system. War in Europe wasn't considered a possibility in view of public opinion before it happened. We were hoping we can rely on diplomacy and peaceful way of solving problems of international sphere. European Union policy was focusing on prolonging economic partnerships which was viewed as an insurance of peace and cooperation. That exact policy wasn't enough to omit a war and its consequences. Current situation is simply a crisis which will lead us to establish new terms of global security system. In accordance with Peter Hough's view on security „The meaning of 'security' is not just an arcane matter of academic semantics. The term carries significant weight in 'real world' political affairs since threats to the security of states have to be a priority for governments and threats to the lives of people are increasingly accepted as more important than other matters of contention.”² In situation of crisis we must consider completely new terms and options, such as new political players, new policies and strategies. We are facing an enormous shake of foundations in world geopolitics. Our global security system is changing, and we must consider every option and possibility. New pragmatic paradigm is emerging from crisis and world will soon need completely new foundations to establish another system of global security. Considering geopolitics in 21st century one should consider plenty of factors. Economy, regional and global policies, international organizations and cooperation, energy resources are one of the most important factors in geopolitics nowadays. Talking about international relations and geopolitics requires including political players among them, such as different countries and international alliances.

Role of geopolitics and geoeconomics in crisis

One of the biggest difficulty in restoring and reshaping global security system is importance geopolitics and geoeconomics. According to Aneela Shahzad, „When we talk of geoeconomics as a new global force that may be replacing geopolitics, the idea is easier to assimilate if we are thinking of an underlying phenomenon of power and control that works in all possible ways to make its gains through political, economic or any means at all including force. Like politics, economics too is moving globally and can be used to gain power over people and control over resources.”³ Further more, combining different geopolitics and economic interests of distinct areas, political blocks and countries is a challenge especially in times of crisis, which includes real military conflict. Re-establishing global security system requires reconciliation of different political and cultural views on situation. Global security policy should represent every option and every state which consider itself a part of global system. Dealing with that kind of diversity is a key to achieve success in establishing any international cooperation, which would have impact on global politics. In order to build new

²P. Hough "Understanding Global Security" Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.p.13

³A. Shahzad „Geoeconomics: The New Geopolitics" Policy Perspectives 19:2 (2022): 1-20, p.8

foundations of security system, one should consider every major opinion, background and environment in case of setting up new structures of any cooperation. Culture, religion, economy domestic policy, international policy, regional and global problems are a key to understand and to form new structure in future.

Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Europe as keys to global security

Looking into the future while considering possible next system of global security, we should first look at political players and different countries with their political and economic background. I will focus on specific areas such as Indo-Pacific, Middle East, and Europe. One of the major players nowadays is The People's Republic of China. Chinese growing economy and political influence is a major factor which situates this country on important position, when we are speaking of building new structures in future. India will also be one of most important players in case of building next global security system. Indian demographic and economical potential is growing every day, which can be seen on political and international ground. Importance of India role will be considered in establishing new international security structure. As for Middle East, important country is Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, mostly due to its energy resources and policy related to it. Middle East was always an important area for global politics, however in times of energy crisis caused by Russian-Ukraine conflict countries with high percent of energy resources will be a major actors in establishing global security system including energy security for international community in the future. New role of Türkiye as a mediator between Russian Federation and Ukraine in times of conflict, showed how that country holds one of most important role in area. Türkiye not only have economical potential and cooperation background which manifests itself in being member of NATO, Türkiye also holds a strong position in diplomatic and international ground not only in middle east area.

As for Europe we have one big organisation – NATO. Organisation redefined itself in times of war in Europe and growing military and economic pressure within European community. Last actions of North Atlantic Treaty Organization showed world that Europe and US can still cooperate successfully on every ground. Solidarity and tradition of cooperation can be seen in many events such as accession of Finland to NATO and new strategic plans for securing NATO territory. NATO as the biggest military international organization will hold a major role in creating and prolonging global security system. These are just a few examples, which shows us how important specific areas will be in a future. Without question areas of Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Europe will be included among others into process of organising, establishing and prolonging next global security system after crisis.

Conclusion

Crisis of world peace in XXI century stays as major event of our times. Russian-Ukraine war forced world to rethink and redefined its security system. Foundations constructed after cold war seems to be insufficient in times of crisis. Pragmatic nature of security shows as that geopolitics and geoeconomics are important factors in constructing any structure. Plenty of individual points of view can be seen in global politics, in order to establish and prolong new security foundations, international community must be open and cooperative. New assumption enquires new methods, such as diplomacy and deep political and economic cooperation. Areas like Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Europe will continue to be one of most important territories in the future. Nevertheless every statement of any area and country should be consider in establishing new structures. Every crisis is also an opportunity, as for global security war in Europe became major event to rethink its international security structure.

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Territorial disputes as a threat to peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region

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Abstract

Recent years have seen the rise in the significance of the Indo-Pacific region as a consequence of various factors, inter alia, due to the American administration making a strategic pivot to Asia or China's growing political and economic influence. Albeit no regular war being waged at the moment in the region, it is undeniable that the Indo-Pacific remains an unstable area. One of the reasons behind this instability are numerous territorial disputes in the South China Sea, the East China Sea and on the Asian continent. The aim of this article is the examination of the nature of territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific with regard to disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands. The Author provides a brief outline of these disputes, analyses factors catalysing territorial disputes, explores the potential for their peaceful resolution, and presents the use of force and militarisation in territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

In recent years the importance of the Indo-Pacific region has been significantly elevated due to multiple factors, some of them being: American administration making a strategic pivot to Asia, China's growing political, military and economic influence, and the resulting Sino-American rivalry, overhaul of Japan's security and foreign policy, increase of India's population, rapid economic development of the Asian countries. All the aforementioned phenomena have been accelerating the centre of contemporary international relations moving towards the Asia and the Pacific. Nonetheless, while becoming so significant for global politics, the Indo-Pacific still remains one of the least stable areas of the world. It should be noted though that no regular war is being currently waged in the region. One of the signs and, simultaneously, causes of this instability are numerous territorial disputes between different states of the Indo-

Pacific¹. This article aims to examine regional territorial disputes focusing primarily on their nature, and why they constitute a threat to peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The author will explore the subject with reference to the following territorial disputes: the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands (including maritime claims made by states in the East China Sea and the South China Sea).

Firstly, for the purpose of this article it should be established what is meant by the term *territorial dispute*. In a report entitled *The Use of Force in relation to Sovereignty Disputes over Land Territory* published by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law a territorial dispute is characterised as “a legal dispute between two or more States over the acquisition or attribution of territory (continental or island), or to the creation, location and effect of territorial boundaries”². This definition distinguishes two types of disputes: a disagreement about the position of a border dividing two countries, and a disagreement about the control of a particular continental or island area, with the disputes over islands involving dissension over surrounding maritime areas. In the scope of this paper it is solely the latter type that is being considered. By the expression *threat to peace and stability* presented in the title it is implied that a particular dispute endangers the security of the region, disrupting peaceful interstate relations, development of these states or increasing the risk of the outbreak of an armed conflict.

Overview of the territorial disputes

Secondly, it is crucial to provide an overview of the three territorial disputes mentioned in the introduction:

- The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: the Senkaku Islands (or the Diaoyu Islands as they are called in China) are 8 small uninhabited islets and rocks located in the East China Sea. The Sino-Japanese disagreement over the islands dates back to the end of 19. century. China claims to have discovered the islands in 1372, which were then “placed under the jurisdiction of China’s naval defences as affiliated islands of Taiwan”, whereas Japan attests to have occupied and acquired them as *terra nullius* in 1895. It was not until 1971 that China and Taiwan raised titles of sovereignty over the islands. It is suggested that their unforeseen interest may have resulted from a geological report drafted three years earlier by the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East showing high likelihood of the

¹ Kaczmarek, M. (2018). Bezpieczeństwo Azji Wschodniej i Pacyfiku. In R. Zięba (Ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku*, p. 355. Wydawnictwo Poltext

² Yiallourides, C., Gehring, M. & Gauci, J.-P. (2018). *The Use of Force in relation to Sovereignty Disputes over Land Territory*, p. 3. The British Institute of International and Comparative Law. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.biiicl.org/documents/156_territorial_disputes_web_ready_version.pdf.

continental shelf in the area of the islands containing abundant oil reserves. The dispute over the Senkaku Islands is inseparably connected to the dispute over delimitation of Japanese and Chinese maritime boundaries, including continental shelves and exclusive economic zones³. The disagreement turned into a more confrontational and tense phase after a collision of a Chinese fishing trawler with Japanese Coastal Guards in the disputed area in 2010 and Japan's nationalisation of the islands in 2012⁴.

- The Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands: the Paracel Islands are a group of 15 coral islands situated 325 km to the east off the coast of Vietnam, claimed by Vietnam and China. Beijing maintains that the archipelago was discovered by the Han dynasty more than 2,000 years ago, and to have had sovereign rights to the territory already in 17. century. In 1974 China seized control over the whole territory, but one year later after its unification Vietnam regained power over 13 islands. The Spratly Islands are an archipelago of around 100-170 small islands, coral reefs and shoals located in the South China Sea as well, with Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines competing over the title of sovereignty of them. Chinese, Taiwanese and Vietnamese claims are based on material and historical evidence of these nations' presence in the area in the past. The Philippines invoke records of activity of a Filipino lawyer and entrepreneur Tomás Cloma in the region in the 1940s and 50s. Malaysia, apart from historical arguments, cites interpretations of international treaties regarding maritime boundaries - as does Brunei. Territorial disputes around the South China Sea archipelagos intensified at the time of publication of the aforementioned report by the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East⁵.
- The South China Sea: in addition to the disputes over the mentioned islands, China claims its right to a substantial part (around 80%) of the South China Sea delineated by the so-called *nine-dash line*. Entitlements marked by the line first appeared on maps in 1947 when China was still ruled by the nationalist government of Kuomintang, then in 1949 with the proclamation of the People's Republic of China the claims were taken over by the communist regime.

³ Grieger, G. (2021, July). *Sino-Japanese controversy over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai Islands. An imminent flashpoint in the Indo-Pacific?*, pp. 1-5. European Parliamentary Research Service. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696183/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696183_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696183/EPRS_BRI(2021)696183_EN.pdf).

⁴ Hall, T. (2019). More Significance than Value: Explaining Development in the Sino-Japanese Contest Over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 4. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://tnsr.org/2019/09/more-significance-than-value-explaining-developments-in-the-sino-japanese-contest-over-the-senkaku-diaoyu-islands/#_ftn5.

⁵ Bonikowska, M., Gerlach, T., Szczygielski, M. & Śniadowska, A. (2016, May). *Morze Południowochińskie: serce potencjalnego konfliktu w Azji*, pp. 8-13. Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://csm.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Raport-CSM-Morze-Poludniowochinskie.pdf>.

However, China has not yet formally made claims to the entire area demarcated by the nine-dash line, which clearly overlaps with exclusive economic zones and continental shelves claimed by other states⁶.

Factors driving territorial disputes

Different states lay claims to the same territories, which leads to states having contradictory interests and antagonising views. That, in turn, creates territorial disputes. We can distinguish several factors influencing and perpetuating territorial disputes. By all means power and a quest for it is one of the drivers of territorial disputes as states want to occupy a privileged position in regional and global affairs⁷. Countries want to attain and maintain a desired reputation, status or prestige within the international community and be regarded and treated with deference in international relations⁸. Jurisdiction over a particular territory may give a state the upper hand in negotiations with other countries, ability to monitor and control the state of affairs around the territory or be a direct source of wealth for the nation. The last two are equally interwoven with a state's need to survive in the international environment: a country might necessitate supervision of a specific area to secure its national interests e.g. economic ones. Besides, in the world of progressive resource scarcity it is stressed that countries seek additional sources of food, gas, petroleum or raw materials to fuel their developing economies and nourish growing populations. Another determinant of territorial disputes lies in nationalist policies utilised as a tool of uniting and mobilising the country's citizenry⁹.

If we look at particular cases of disagreements over the islands in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, we will discern that the aforementioned factors play a key part in sustaining the territorial disputes. The South China Sea constitutes an area of paramount importance from economic, political, security and strategic viewpoints, and domination over it allows for control of major trade routes, natural resources reserves,

⁶ Bogusz, M. (2020, July). *Dziewięć kresek. Roszczenia Pekinu na Morzu Południowochińskim*, pp. 8-12. Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Prace-OSW-Dziewiec-kresek-net.pdf>.

⁷ Mancini, F. (2013, June). *Uncertain Borders: Territorial Disputes in Asia*, p. 5. Italian Institute for International Political Studies. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/publicazioni/analysis_180_2013_0.pdf.

⁸ Hall, T. (2019). More Significance than Value: Explaining Development in the Sino-Japanese Contest Over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 4. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://tnsr.org/2019/09/more-significance-than-value-explaining-developments-in-the-sino-japanese-contest-over-the-senkaku-diaoyu-islands/#_ftn5.

⁹ Mancini, F. (2013, June). *Uncertain Borders: Territorial Disputes in Asia*, pp. 6-7. Italian Institute for International Political Studies. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/publicazioni/analysis_180_2013_0.pdf.

fisheries as well as for control of naval and airborne activity of other states. 15% of global trade goes through the South China Sea with goods worth 5 trillion USD transported annually (which emphasises its importance for global trade and chain supplies) while the seabed holds enormous amounts of oil and gas¹⁰ (American estimations point to 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 11 billion barrels of oil in proved and probable reserves)¹¹. Moreover, the fact that 80% of China's imported energy resources are transferred via the South China Sea demonstrates the significance of the area for China's economic growth and stability. Also, fishery resources found in the South China Sea happen to be one of the primary sources of income for local fishermen and Southeast Asian nations¹². Beijing perceives establishing its authority over disputed territories of the South China Sea as one of its main foreign policy objectives and as a key to recognition of its superpower status internationally and domestically. Already in 1949 Chinese plans of regaining control of territories lost in 19. century were aimed at legitimising the Communist Party of China, and it could be advanced that contemporarily, apart from the possible strategic benefits, Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea serve similar nationalistic purposes¹³. The symbolic and reputational component appears to wield pivotal influence on the Senkaku Islands dispute as well, both in Japan and China. Averting the other side from achieving superiority in the disagreement is a matter of honour and pride for the Japanese and Chinese, including authorities and societies likewise. Furthermore, the dispute in the East China Sea presents domestic opportunities for politicians to earn societal support and popularity¹⁴. All the factors mentioned above impact the behaviour and policies of Indo-Pacific states, significantly influencing territorial disputes in the region.

Peaceful resolution of territorial disputes

¹⁰ Bonikowska, M., Gerlach, T., Szczygielski, M. & Śniadowska, A. (2016, May). *Morze Południowochińskie: serce potencjalnego konfliktu w Azji*, p. 3. Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://csm.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Raport-CSM-Morze-Poludniowochinskie.pdf>.

¹¹ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative. (n.d.). *South China Sea Energy Exploration and Development*. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://amti.csis.org/south-china-sea-energy-exploration-and-development/>.

¹² Bonikowska, M., Gerlach, T., Szczygielski, M. & Śniadowska, A. (2016, May). *Morze Południowochińskie: serce potencjalnego konfliktu w Azji*, p. 3. Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://csm.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Raport-CSM-Morze-Poludniowochinskie.pdf>.

¹³ Bogusz, M. (2020, July). *Dziewięć kresek. Roszczenia Pekinu na Morzu Południowochińskim*, pp. 5, 8. Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Prace-OSW-Dziewiec-kreszek_net.pdf.

¹⁴ Hall, T. (2019). More Significance than Value: Explaining Development in the Sino-Japanese Contest Over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 4. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://tnsr.org/2019/09/more-significance-than-value-explaining-developments-in-the-sino-japanese-contest-over-the-senkaku-diaoyu-islands/#_ftn5.

The Charter of the United Nations in Article 2 (3) affirms that states should “settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered”¹⁵. In Article 33 (1) methods of pacific settlement are listed, namely negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and resorting to regional agencies or arrangements. It is further stated that any other peaceful means may be applied¹⁶. In addition, it should be underlined that international law does not differentiate between disputed territories and those not subject to dispute in terms of prohibition of the use of force¹⁷. In case of territorial disputes international norms and institutions, including courts such as the International Court of Justice or the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, have an essential part to play - they provide a framework for prevention and resolution of conflicts and disputes between states.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific, however, struggle with forming formal structures and mechanisms of cooperation on a regional level due to, inter alia, their preference for bilateral solutions instead of multilateral ones to address disagreements or inclination towards consensus-based decision-making processes¹⁸. It is contended that the Asia-Pacific region exhibits a weak institutional level of multilateral governance with institutions such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) lacking the ability and prerogatives to effectively impose restrictions on their members’ activity¹⁹. What further exacerbates the impasse are Chinese diplomatic actions that successfully prevent the ASEAN from formulating a unified stance on the South China Sea disputes. Although ASEAN member-states attempted to decrease the risk of a conflict with China by signing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in 2002²⁰, ongoing negotiations since then to develop meaningful, comprehensive and binding mechanisms of confidence building and conflict resolution have not been particularly successful²¹. The existing international tribunals and courts seem to be ineffective

¹⁵ United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*, art. 2, para. 3. 1 UNTS XVI. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

¹⁶ United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*, art. 33, para. 1. 1 UNTS XVI. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

¹⁷ Yiallourides, C., Gehring, M. & Gauci, J.-P. (2018). *The Use of Force in relation to Sovereignty Disputes over Land Territory*, p. 23. The British Institute of International and Comparative Law. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.biiic.org/documents/156_territorial_disputes_web_ready_version.pdf.

¹⁸ Ziętek, A. (2009). Region Azji i Pacyfiku. In I. Topolski, H. Dumala & A. Dumala (Eds.), *Regiony w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, p. 175. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie

¹⁹ Farley, R. (2015, February 7). *Could East Asia's Weak Institutions Be a Blessing in Disguise?*. The Diplomat. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://thediplomat.com/2015/02/could-east-asias-weak-institutions-be-a-blessing-in-disguise/>.

²⁰ Bonikowska, M., Gerlach, T., Szczygielski, M. & Śniadowska, A. (2016, May). *Morze Południowochińskie: serce potencjalnego konfliktu w Azji*, pp. 16-17. Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://csm.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Raport-CSM-Morze-Poludniowochinskie.pdf>.

²¹ Chatys, M. (2023, July 4). *The Code of Conduct - a way to move forward with the South China Sea Dispute*. Casimir Pulaski Foundation. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://pulaski.pl/the-code-of-conduct-a->

instruments as certain states involved in the territorial disputes are unwilling to acknowledge legitimacy of their rulings or simply bring cases to the courts. This can be exemplified with the instance from 2013 when the Philippines sued China to the Permanent Court of Arbitration over Chinese activity in the South China Sea. The Court accepted the majority of Philippine claims and found China's historic rights inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea from 1982. Nevertheless, China did not participate in the arbitration and ignored the ruling²². On top of that, resolution of the Senkaku Islands dispute by judiciary means is equally hard to envisage. While China appears distrustful of submitting the case to the International Court of Justice, which, as Beijing sees, constitutes a part of the Western-dominated international law, Japan rejects the existence of any such dispute and hence has refrained from taking the case to the ICJ. Both countries seem reluctant to opt for any judicial settlement of the disagreement²³. It is therefore apparent that weak regional institutions (or lack thereof) and ineffectiveness of international conflict-resolution mechanisms substantially impede settlement of territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific.

Use of force and militarisation in territorial disputes

With reference to the UN Charter, the treaty in Article 2 (4) forbids the threat or use of force in international relations against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country, or in any other way incompatible with the UN Charter²⁴. However, in the Indo-Pacific instances of use of force, ranging from battles to killing foreign civilians, have been a relatively common occurrence since the beginning of the territorial disputes. To give a few examples: in 1988 China and Vietnam waged a naval battle over 6 Spratly Islands²⁵, in 2013 the Philippine coastguards killed a fisherman from Taiwan who was allegedly engaged in illegal fishing in a disputed maritime area²⁶, China used force to take control of the Mischief Reef in 1994 and Scarborough Shoal in 2012

[way-to-move-forward-with-the-south-china-sea-dispute/](#).

²² Bogusz, M. (2020, July). *Dziewięć kresek. Roszczenia Pekinu na Morzu Południowochińskim*, p. 13. Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Prace-OSW_Dziewiec-kresek_net.pdf.

²³ Grieger, G. (2021, July). *Sino-Japanese controversy over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai Islands. An imminent flashpoint in the Indo-Pacific?*, pp. 5-6. European Parliamentary Research Service. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696183/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696183_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696183/EPRS_BRI(2021)696183_EN.pdf).

²⁴ United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*, art. 2, para. 4. 1 UNTS XVI. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

²⁵ Bonikowska, M., Gerlach, T., Szczygielski, M. & Śniadowska, A. (2016, May). *Morze Południowochińskie: serce potencjalnego konfliktu w Azji*, p. 12. Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://csm.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Raport-CSM-Morze-Poludniowochinskie.pdf>.

²⁶ Mancini, F. (2013, June). *Uncertain Borders: Territorial Disputes in Asia*, p. 2. Italian Institute for International Political Studies. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_180_2013_0.pdf.

(Spratly Islands)²⁷. Moreover, China has been involved in various activities (some military-related ones) to coerce and intimidate other claimants in the South China Sea, and to legitimise its claims in the region. This includes the so-called *salami-slicing* tactic, which through small but pertinacious steps, none of which is *casus belli*, aims at amassing proof of China's persistent occupancy of disputed territories²⁸. Among others, Chinese Maritime Militia composed of fishermen has been instructed to cause international maritime incidents²⁹ while the China Coast Guard (CCG) sent regularly to the vicinity of disputed areas possesses boats equipped with 76 mm cannons and capable of incorporating anti-ship missiles³⁰. Recently in 2023 CCG employed a "military-grade" laser against a Philippine Coast Guard ship. China's aggressive expansionism and ambitious plans are mirrored in large-scale building of artificial islands and militarisation of the islands in the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos³¹. Chinese constructions have been turned into military bases and provided with, inter alia, anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, laser and jamming equipment³². While perhaps not all presented examples and events rise to the level of Article 2 (4), such incidents negatively affect regional security, endanger stability and peace in the region of the Indo-Pacific, and render disputes harder to extinguish.

Conclusion

In conclusion, territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific constitute with no doubt a major challenge for the states of the region. Countries with competing entitlements to the archipelagos in the South China Sea and the East China Sea have diverse interests in gaining control of the islands and maritime areas, and whilst the region suffers from lack of strong institutions and peaceful means of dispute-settlement, military incidents in the South China Sea and the East China Sea introduce serious risks of aggravating the tensions. We cannot deny that the examined territorial disputes have the potential to escalate into an armed conflict of regional or global scale, which would impact not only

²⁷ Chatys, M. (2023, July 4). *The Code of Conduct - a way to move forward with the South China Sea Dispute*. Casimir Pulaski Foundation. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://pulaski.pl/the-code-of-conduct-a-way-to-move-forward-with-the-south-china-sea-dispute/>.

²⁸ Haddock, R. (2012, August 3). *Salami Slicing in the South China Sea*. Foreign Policy. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/03/salami-slicing-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

²⁹ Odom, J. G. (2017, June 24). *Merely Avoiding Conflict in the South China Sea Is Not Good Enough*. The Diplomat. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/merely-avoiding-conflict-in-the-south-china-sea-is-not-good-enough/>.

³⁰ Cave, D. (2023, June 14). *Beijing uses its more militarized coast guard like navy*. The Japan Times. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/06/14/asia-pacific/beijing-militarized-coast-guard-navy/>.

³¹ Chatys, M. (2023, July 4). *The Code of Conduct - a way to move forward with the South China Sea Dispute*. Casimir Pulaski Foundation, Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://pulaski.pl/the-code-of-conduct-a-way-to-move-forward-with-the-south-china-sea-dispute/>.

³² Guardian. (2022, March 21). *China has fully militarized three islands in South China Sea, US admiral says*. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/21/china-has-fully-militarized-three-islands-in-south-china-sea-us-admiral-says>.

the countries and economies of the Asia-Pacific, but also the ones on other continents, presumably dragging into war another superpower, namely the United States³³.

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Global dynamics – the change of Poland’s role in Peace and World Politics in the Context of the War in Ukraine

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Abstract

Global dynamics – the change of Poland’s role in Peace and World Politics in the Context of the War in Ukraine

The conference was held only two days before the anniversary of the Russian invasion on Ukraine, but now it has been already over 18 months since its commencement and I am even more sure that it should be considered crucial event for contemporary international relations. It brought numerous changes and started various socio-political processes not only in Europe, but on the global scale. Continuous and vibrant political tensions, re-armament of the European continent, energy and food crisis or migration are their prominent examples. It also naturally put more focus on the region of Central Eastern Europe (CEE), where Poland is located (EuroVoc, 2019) and made it a vital point of interest for many states. Therefore, the war in Ukraine undeniably shapes current global affairs having changed status of Poland and its role in peace and world politics what I will discuss in the paper.

To begin with, it is significant to understand why Ukraine matters to Poland and to the West. Some of the reasons overlap, though few of them are unique for the CEE and based on a common historical experience of the region which was subjected to Russian imperialism for decades. Poland itself was under Moscow’s rule for 123 years when it disappeared from the maps after the three partitions initiated by Russian Empress Catharine II, only to regain its independence for less than 20 years and fall under the Russian regime again after 1945 for the next 44 years. It totals for 167 years of dependence from Kremlin which are definitely the darkest time in Polish history as the state was exploited, its development constrained, and its people were oppressed. And we shared this burden with other states of the region which were in similar or even worse situation. Ukraine was not ever a sovereign state until 1991 (Kubicek, 2023) and interestingly Poland, together with Canada, was the first state to recognise its

independence (Solchanyk, 2000). Having considered these facts, it is necessary to acknowledge a common sense of experience and approach of CEE states towards Russia, which under such circumstances is naturally seen as the biggest potential threat to their sovereignty. Moreover, it unites CEE and facilitates cooperation between members of this community. Meanwhile, analysing it from the perspective of other states interest, the war in Ukraine is important because current international order is at stake. Russian aggression is against fundamental rules and principles of international relations, is illegal from the international law perspective and threatens global security net established by the UN. Therefore, Russia's success in the conflict would significantly undermine the whole system of international relations which is rooted in the UN Charter. Hence, the war in Ukraine tops global agenda and is one of the most important topics in contemporary international relations.

Poland is situated in the very heart of Europe. It borders with both Ukraine and Russia and is a border state of NATO and the EU as well. Therefore, its geopolitical position inherently contributes to its strategic significance. Not only Poland is important for Ukraine as a vital route for the transfer of military and humanitarian aid and a gate to the West, but within outbreak of the war became also crucial for NATO. It is clearly visible as Poland's defence capabilities are being constantly increased within its framework. It receives various forms of the most advanced equipment such as Patriot missiles or Leopard tanks and the presence of allied soldiers on our soil increased as well (NATO, 2023) (NATO, Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023). These actions are a part of a gradual strategic transformation of the alliance sparked by the war, for which Poland was actively lobbying since its beginning. The new strategy shifts NATO's approach towards the sense of its deterrence – from building deterrence mainly upon the pledge of executing collective self-defence based on article 5 of the Washington Treaty, to deterrence through making an attack on its soil literally impossible and maximally irrational by increasing military capabilities on its borders. Obviously, the new concept only adds to the previous one and does not mean that other states would not actively engage in collective self-defence.

Moreover, Polish Government undertakes actions aimed at increasing military capabilities domestically. The main target is to reach 300,000 active military personnel by the end of 2023 (PAP, 2023). This enlargement is simultaneously accompanied by gradual modernisation of the armed forces and an increase in military spending, including RDT&E (Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Obrony Narodowej, 2023). Polish Ministry of Defence has signed numerous contracts for new weapons including: KAI T-50 Golden Eagle or F-35 fighter jets, K2 Black Panther tanks and various types of missiles. Some of the equipment has been already dispatched to Poland and is in use, though a part of it is still yet to join the service (Saballa, 2023) (PAP, 2023). These changes have been noticed worldwide and included in the most significant military rankings in which

Polish position has gone up. Currently it is ranked 20th in the Global Firepower ranking and a 6th most powerful army in NATO (Global Firepower, 2023), with a perspective of almost certain further increase of power along with the process of modernisation.

Another important aspect is that the ability of Poland to influence and be a bigger part of crucial political decisions has increased since the war started. Warsaw has become a red pin on the map of Europe, where numerous important political events take place. The state visit of POTUS Joe Biden or the Bucharest Nine summit which took place one after another in February 2023 are great examples and symbols which prove the increase of Poland's position in contemporary international relations. Poland has also become a visible leader of the CEE countries. It is the state which often takes lead in negotiations and is considered the main representation of the region (Francis, 2023). Nonetheless, Poland remains in continuous contact with other CEE states and treats them equally, as reciprocity and cooperation with them are considered crucial for Polish foreign policy and achieving mutual goals of the region.

This position is strictly linked to the Polish stance and behaviour towards the war. Warsaw is extremely engaged in helping Ukraine since the very beginning of the conflict and maintains its support until today. Polish delegation was the last to visit Kyiv before the war commenced and the first to do so after it erupted. Moreover, it was the Polish President who initiated Ukraine's fast-track accession to the EU and gained support from all of the Eastern European EU members (President.pl, 2022), and it is the Polish Government that was actively lobbying for Finland's and Sweden's accession to NATO, and still is to present an accession plan to Ukraine. Poland is also putting pressure on states that hesitate or are at times reluctant to provide military equipment to Ukraine such as Hungary or Germany and provides

various forms of it itself, being among the top 6 donors and the first one of them concerning aid to GDP ratio (Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2023). Additionally, Poland provides tremendous humanitarian aid – mainly food, medicine and clothes. These are also mostly non-governmental initiatives. Moreover, Poland is open to receive Ukrainian refugees and approximately 3 million of them have crossed the border and stayed in the country after February 24th 2022 (Rzeczpospolita, 2023). These actions have also contributed to building Poland's position. They definitely have boosted its reputation and soft power. They are also a fundament for further strength of its statements, as they legitimise claims and propositions.

Finally, the war in Ukraine has also changed the economic situation and perspectives of Poland. Despite the fact that it first caused inflation problems and energy crisis, it now seems that it may bring more benefits than harm to the Polish economy in the long time perspective (2023). First, it caused a big migration and people flow which supplied the labour market in demand. Additionally, if the government will manage to keep these people in the state after the end of the war, it would partially solve the problem of shrinking labour force caused by aging population. It also boosts

consumption and constrains deterioration of GDP at the time of a slow-down. Moreover, many businesses moved from the East to Poland, as economic activity in Ukraine is limited due to the war, and in Russia or Belarus due to the imposed sanctions. Additionally, strengthening of the Eastern flank of NATO assures greater security and Poland is proved to be a safe place for investment even at a time of war in a bordering state, what encourages FDI.

To conclude, the war in Ukraine definitely changed the status of Poland in international relations. The role which Poland plays in peace and world politics has changed, as an increase of its power and influence can be observed. It gained more significance in various fields including military, politics and diplomacy, involvement in peace and humanitarian actions or economics. I am full of hope that Poland will continue utilising such increase of power in order to end the war as soon as possible and will significantly contribute to assuring international peace and security.

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UN-Successful, UN-Convincing, UN-Deterred: Critically Analysing the United Nations

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Abstract

'We the peoples of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'. With this line was laid the ideological foundations of an international organisation that has tried to remain significant, in one way or another, through contemporary times. The United Nations was formed after World War II, for safeguarding world peace and stability. It has repeatedly been touted as a global forum where every distressed voice is lent an ear to. And, in many respects, the UN has been successful in furthering humanitarian objectives. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has recently provided essential facilities such as clean drinking water, health services, essential supplies, etc to earthquake-hit children in Türkiye and Syria. In addition, the UNICEF website is host to a multitude of other achievements, including 39 million safe births in 2021 and the provision of safe drinking water for 39 million people in the face of humanitarian crises in 2021. Much in a similar vein, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has valiantly worked towards containing endemic cholera outbreaks, especially in Africa, besides of course, initiating a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the form of the COVAX programme.

A cursory glance, thus, makes the notion that the United Nations is a failed institution, in fact, idiosyncratic. But, further in this paper, the other side of the argument has been expanded upon. The paper features a general division between the structural fallacies eerily prominent within the organisation, and the deeper question of the relevance of the UN in today's world system, as well as the mentality and the concepts which apparently justify its presence.

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In lay conversation, the United Nations can be equated to a sort of a global parliament, consisting of all the 193 member states of the United Nations, with the basic concept of one vote for each member nation. The General Assembly can host Regular, Special and Emergency Special Sessions, the last variant being brought into force by the controversial 'Uniting for Peace' Resolution in 1950. Representatives of member nations establish their stances on matters of international concern, and an

agreement in principle is given concrete form in the shape of a General Assembly Resolution. Criticism has often been directed the General Assembly's way, and some have even gone as far as calling it a "talking shop." The rationale behind such a jarring stance may lie in the fact that the body can only issue recommendations or express collective opinions such as dissension on a humanitarian crisis. Coupled with it is the fact that GA resolutions are legally meaningless, and a strong, binding resolution has to pass through another body of the organisation, the United Nations Security Council. The inefficacy of the General Assembly was laid bare when the sole result of a 3-hour informal session was the decision that a special session would be held on the subject of the Syrian crisis after more than 400,000 people had died. Furthermore, a study of the Resolutions passed in the General Assembly on the Syrian crisis between 2011 and 2016 reveals a somewhat lackadaisical attitude. It was only in the resolution 'A/RES/71/248'(December 21st , 2016) that concrete mechanisms were put in place for crisis mitigation. No Special Sessions were held on two of the most gruesome acts of violence in recorded history, the Rwandan and Sudanese genocides. The GA was even used as a battering ram by the United States of America in 1950, when the aforementioned "Uniting for Peace" was passed in the Security Council without the presence of the Soviet Union, vesting residuary powers in the General Assembly in case of a deadlock within the Security Council and thus enabling the United States to send 'peacekeeping troops' in the Korean War. The Resolution has been used sparingly since then, last being invoked in 1997 on the issue of Palestine.

Now, after having a glimpse of one of the premier bodies of the United Nations, the argument might be made that the General Assembly isn't constitutionally empowered to undertake proactive measures at a scale expected of a world parliament. That, in fact, is the onus of another crucial organ, i.e., the Security Council. The next part of the paper looks at how the Council fares at tackling world issues, given its executive importance, in the context of humanitarian complications.

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can be referred to as the executive wing of the UN for the sole purpose that the UN Charter enables it to make decisions that member nations are expected to abide by. The Council consists of 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members selected for two-year terms. The Council functions on the basis of the Provisional Rules of Procedure (S/96/Rev.7) last revised in 1982. One of the prominent aspects of this body is the possession of the power of a negative vote (a 'veto') whereby the permanent members of the Council (the United States, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom) can discard a resolution that they are opposed to. This can often destabilise consensus among the General Assembly and the rest of the Council. Article 27 of the UN Charter indirectly recognises 'veto' power by making the passing of a resolution impossible until it

receives the “concurrent” votes of all the permanent members in matters excluding procedure, which, as a consequence, can lead to the repudiation of proposals in circumstances of peace, conflict resolution, sanctions and the entry of new members. However, an overlooked aspect of the Council Procedure is the fact that non-permanent members possess a ‘Block Veto’ power. Since even the unanimous vote of the permanent section wouldn’t reach the constitutionally mandated 9 required for the crystallisation of a decision, the non-permanent members can technically refuse to vote in favour, which would lead a resolution to remain in suspension unless an amicable compromise is realised. The right to veto was apparently included for the continuance of the maintenance of international peace and security by the permanent members who had assisted in the materialisation of the organisation and were hence endowed with special status. Essentially, the constitution of the permanent members or the P5 nations is supposed to be a reflection of the ‘spheres of influence’ evident in world politics. However, contrary to the post-WWII era, regions such as the ‘Indo-Pacific’ and the Middle East or West Asia have emerged as centres of power, and this development has often showcased elements of what John J. Mearsheimer terms as ‘offensive realism.’ In conjunction, the veto has often been transformed into a crutch for supporting nation-specific interests.

Mearsheimer and Walt (2006) have shown how the United States, with the efforts of the ‘Israel lobby’, moulded its foreign policy to align with that of Israel, and in the process, defended the nation tooth and nail in front of the international community, vetoing 32 Security Council resolutions critical towards Israel since 1982. While on the one hand, an intricate intertwining of foreign policies is visible, the opposite is seen in the case of Rwanda, where even acceptance of the term ‘genocide’ by the United States bureaucracy was in itself a gradual process, besides of course, the fact that tabs were kept by the government on every minor development in Rwandan politics.

A discussion on the UNSC wouldn’t be complete without mentioning the exploits of the Russian Federation, the erstwhile USSR. According to Security Council records, Russia/USSR has made use of the right to veto 121 times, so it shouldn’t be a surprise that eminent diplomats such as former Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and former Soviet Premier Vyacheslav Molotov earned the nicknames Mr. Nyet and Mr. Veto respectively. In light of the relatively recent entry of the Federation into the Syrian Civil War, the al-Assad regime found a vehement supporter in Vladimir Putin’s government, which between 1946 and 2016, according to Nneka Blessing Iyase (2017), vetoed 6 UNSC resolutions on the subject of a UN demand for ceasefire in Aleppo. Moreover the USSR throughout its existence repeatedly vetoed on entry of prospective member states such as Portugal, Ireland and Finland, among others. The Security Council according to the tenets of the Charter was dubbed to be the ‘wise sage’ everyone would look up to. Has it really

been that? So far, that notion is questionable, particularly after examples have been shown of its systematic manoeuvring by rivals of the Cold War.

THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCES

It would, in line with the flow of this paper, be necessary to transition from discussions on national and international security at government level to the implementation of policies by UN instruments at the ground level to maintain stability in affected regions, one of such germane instruments being the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, deputed under the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

Historically, the Peacekeeping Forces have often suffered from confusing mandates, ranging from observation and protection to active intervention. Lessons learned from botched operations have resulted in the formulation of the Capstone Doctrine in 2008, the guiding light of the Peacekeepers, outlining approaches to a variety of problematic situations. However, the adoption of documents is not confirmation of apt action, as has been seen throughout history, and complexities of target regions raise more questions than answers. Recently, owing to the Russia-Ukraine 'conflict,' several contributing nations withdrew from MINUSMA, the peacekeeping mission in the Sahel region of Mali, reinforcing the notion that national political decisions play a part in determining the sustenance of such missions. Moreover, as developments in Mali indicate, lines have definitely been blurred between neutral peacekeeping in line with international law and active enforcement of 'peace,' coloured by deliberate political decisions.

Now, on to one of the more curious stories surrounding peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to be specific. During the time of the genocide in 1994, the Peacekeepers were tasked only with protecting foreigners and act in self-defence, but owing to the obviously chaotic situation where innocent lives were being lost by the second, soldiers had to intervene. Had it not been for individual pragmatism, eventualities can only be imagined. One such example is of Peter Sosi, a retired Ghanian army officer, who negotiated with Hutu child soldiers to transfer Tutsi civilians to a UN safe zone with apparently a formidable bargaining chip – a can of Coca-Cola. Such instances are unfortunately not uncommon, mandates being far removed from the gravity of circumstances. The deeper problem, as Sosi has pointed out, lies in the glaring existence of a cultural gap between the locals and the officers, in spite of official training targeted towards cultural sensitivity. The reasoning behind such a proposal becomes clearer when the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is examined. The United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) hasn't been successful, as local activists Espoir Ngalukiye and Sankara Bin Kartumwa point out. The local populace hasn't responded well to MONUSCO's presence, in large part due to the uselessness of said presence, as conflict among

armed groups is still a reality and anti-MONUSCO protests have been brutally suppressed by the forces in conjunction with government. Combined with questionable decisions such as the deployment of troops where consent of all warring factions hasn't been considered (in obvious violation of the Capstone Doctrine), the viability of peacekeeping operations is certainly put into question. A 2021 Council on Foreign Relations report stresses on the dearth of troops from nations which actually fund operations. Such initiatives usually involve troops from countries affected by the conflict zone, though their influence on the mandate, surprisingly, is minimal. Then there is the ever-present tendency of troops to indulge in acts of sexual violence since UN accountability in such cases is negligible, the burden of trial being shouldered by contributing nations themselves. As far as inefficiency mitigation is concerned, it remains to be seen how the A4P initiative (2018) pans out. In addition, solutions such as greater coordination with regional blocs, leadership of behind-the-scenes nations in providing military training to peacekeepers, inclusion of women in the forces, etc must be considered. However, such an examination of this organ of the UN raises an important question – Is the UN's path towards peace sustainable?

THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY & THE NEED FOR REFORM

For the purpose of this section, the Oxford Union Debate of 2016 on the topic "The UN is a failing institution" should serve as a guiding light, but instead raises more questions than answers. The paradoxical proposal of upholding the United Nations as a beacon of international democracy was put into question, and rightly so, since a considerable portion of participating member states aren't freely functioning democracies themselves, according to most international metrics. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example, remained a part of the Human Rights Council till 2020, the human rights violations recurrent within the country being ignored. The irony of Iran's membership in the Commission on the Status of Women is also discernible, given the 2022 anti-hijab protests, and the violent aftermath. The organisation is faced with an additional dilemma, that of deciding whether to focus on region-specific conflicts or global challenges, the latter being the basis of the UN's ideal which is indeed taking a backseat in the face of rising populism and nationalism among nations, an ideology not always accommodative of compromise. Does the onus, then, lie on the member states or the structure of the UN itself with its lack of membership criteria?

The mirror gets hazier when the implementation of reforms is discussed. Most suggestions have naturally recognised the need for shaking up the extant Security Council hierarchy. The African Union, in as far back as 2005, had drafted the Ezulwini Consensus, essentially agreeing that two permanent UNSC seats must be granted to African nations, the Union itself being responsible for selecting the representatives. Similarly, in 2013, France had proposed the practice of Voluntary

Restraint, or the imposition of collective limitations on veto power by P5 nations in cases of mass atrocities. Despite being backed by 100 nations, such a move would later stall. As recently as last year, Liechtenstein had proposed a sort of Veto Review, which would be conducted by the General Assembly, and would be non-binding on P5 nations. Even though it was eventually adopted by the Assembly, this resolution hasn't had much of a tangible impact. The G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, Japan, India) have all vied for a permanent spot in the Council at different points in time. Such developments clearly indicate that the convention of the 'West versus the Rest' needs to change.

When it comes to bureaucratic efficiency, the Polish Institute of International Affairs has proposed the drafting of a resolution outlining key global objectives, as well as the creation of a uniform communicating platform connecting various subsidiary organs under the larger ambit of the UN system tasked with the realisation of said objectives. What hasn't been talked about at large is the obvious indifference towards internal auditing and investigation. The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (UNOIOS) has a vacancy rate of 27 per cent and its website hosts evaluation reports for 30 days. In a 2008 New York Times article, a former UNOIOS investigator claimed his report on abuses by peacekeepers in the Congo was whitewashed. Such occurrences only reinforce the claim for the need of internal investigations independent of UN bureaucracy.

CONCLUSION

Through a reading of this paper, it may be felt that the existence of the UN as a global mediator is being questioned, but it is certainly not so. In its current state, the organisation isn't functioning at its highest capacity, to say the least. As has been focused on throughout the paper, it is observable that multiple layers of the organisation need reframing and reworking. In the present day, the UN is often made a subject of ridicule when it fails to take a stand on burning issues. But that shouldn't make it necessary to turn a blind eye to the sheer humanitarian impact the UN has made at the grassroot level. There are indeed a lot of dimensions to the problem, especially when aggressive nations are factored in. The idealism of the UN as a harbinger of peace is being opposed by the very nations that helped build it, and still remain its constituent parts. Reform thus needs to be centred on creating a resilient structure which would effectively counterbalance the currently restless world, and, though it may be a controversial opinion, vesting more powers in the UN as a body to act as preventive check. It needs to shed its reactive tendencies in favour of a confident, proactive approach. If an optimistic conclusion is to be drawn from such a pile of criticism, it is that if the United Nations wasn't here at all, we surely would've been trying to invent something like it.

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Realities of Peace Under The Current World Order: An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

This research paper examines the realities of peace under the current world order from an Indian perspective. It analyzes the challenges and opportunities faced by India in maintaining peace in a rapidly changing global landscape. The paper explores India's historical approach to peace, its involvement in peacekeeping missions, and its role in regional and global peace initiatives. It also highlights the impact of geopolitical tensions, technological advancements, and socio-economic factors on India's pursuit of peace. The research concludes by emphasizing the need for a collaborative and inclusive approach to peace building that considers India's unique geopolitical position and its aspirations for regional and global stability.

INTRODUCTION

***"You will find peace not by trying to escape your problems, but by confronting them courageously. You will find peace not in denial but in victory."* (J. Donald Walters)**

Now peace as a concept is very dicey to begin with. It doesn't have a uniform explanation. The concept of peace often becomes a tussle between the idealistic metaphysical conceptualization which is the positive definition of it and the strategic National Interest oriented conceptualization which is the negative definition of it. And history bears testimony to the fact that it's always the latter which has been proven instrumental when dealing with questions of geopolitics or International Relations.

There's a new understanding of peace and security which has faced a paradigm shift from only considering military threats and includes much beyond that such as terrorism, insurgency, health epidemics, narcotics trade and even irrational use of natural resources. So, traditional understanding and standardization of peace processes seldom works under the new world order.

Peace is a fundamental aspiration of humanity and plays a crucial role in fostering global stability, development, and cooperation. However, achieving peace in today's world poses numerous challenges due to the complexities of the current global order. This research paper aims to examine the realities of peace under the current world order, specifically from an

Indian perspective. India's unique historical experiences, cultural diversity, and geostrategic position make it an important player in the pursuit of global peace.

It was in 1954, post-signing the Panchsheel agreement that India's foreign policy finally underwent a major shift from idealism to realism due to security pressures from the international and regional systems. The Republic of India initially did not attach significance to military capabilities; however, border skirmishes and nuclear proliferation drove the nation in adopting a realist approach by focusing upon matters concerning national security. As a result, the reign of idealism ceased to exist in India's foreign policy. Realism in Indian Foreign Policy has been apparent in certain instances which dwells deeper into the shift that one may observe in the current times. The Battle of Kashmir and the consequent four wars against Pakistan combined with the early nuclear policy of the country, which was rather distinctive and dependent on the role of science in modernity, paved the way for realism as a governing concept. India then displayed its 'sense' of realism time and again while confronting numerous issues in the political sphere prompting the adoption of a realist approach which is currently observed through military realism, multi alignment and India's power asymmetry with China.

India's realist foreign policy is inspired from the ancient political thinker of India '*Kautilya*' or '*Chanakya*'. It also draws its inspiration from the strands of Kenneth Waltz's theory of defensive realism and John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism. It tries to create a synthesis among the theories keeping in mind the area of application. Hence, this paper tries to show how India's conquest of peace or formulation of foreign policy is based on Realpolitik rather than Idealpolitik.

UNDERSTANDING PEACE AS A CONCEPT

Peace is a fuzzy concept. Almost everyone wants peace but on her own terms. Even Adolf Hitler was committed to peace but in a Jews free world and Nazi supremacy. Thus, the proposal of peace sometimes gets rejected, quite justifiably due to the terms and conditions attached to it.

Many people believe economic interdependence promotes peace both between and within countries, an idea that Russia's invasion of Ukraine casts doubt upon. The reverse is more likely to be true: Peace makes interdependence more feasible and allows us to enjoy the benefits of economic exchange at lower risk. When the danger of war declines, investors can safely send capital to other countries; governments can worry less about whether their trading partners are gaining a bit more from the exchange; states can welcome foreign visitors and students without concern that rivals will be acquiring knowledge that might be used to harm them; elaborate supply chains are less risky; and everyone can pursue joint gains instead of constantly striving for relative advantage. The absence of serious rivalry among the major powers facilitated the recent era of globalization, producing enormous benefits for

mankind despite its deficiencies. And when war is off the table, societies can be more open to exchanging ideas and lessons from cultures that are different from their own.

There is constant competition for power and influence among nation-states that sometimes leads to conflict and requires a strong military but used cautiously. Realists believe that military power is sometimes necessary, since there are always some people who do not play well with others. However, they are cautious in using military force only when it serves the national interest, and they are also willing to use diplomacy such as the nuclear agreement between India and USA, treaties such as the Law of the Sea Treaty (UNCLOS), alliances such as QUAD, and international organizations such as the UN, World Bank and IMF to advance national political and economic interests. National interest is the foremost factor.

Hence, peace as a concept cannot be moulded in a uniform structure. It's not a meta concept rather has many layers and perspectives to it.

INDIA AND CURRENT WORLD ORDER

Now coming on to the current world order, for the ease of understanding I have divided the global security environment with relation to India based on the current world order, into 6 major areas. Quickly if we surf through those, we will see that:

- 1) India has important political, economic, commercial and social interests in the **Indo Pacific** and has a stake in continued peace and stability of the region.
- 2) When it comes to the **Central Asian** region, the region has gained salience due to the presence of hydrocarbon and mineral resources. India maintains strategic economic and security partnerships with the central Asian republics.
- 3) The **west Asian** region continues to face volatility and instability in the wake of the changes brought about by the Arab spring. Hence, this area is of serious security concern for India especially due to the presence of nearly 7 million Indians in the region who live and work there.
- 4) With regards to **Africa**, the growing nature of non-state actors in the region due to prolonged unrest is a matter of concern for India and so is the unchallenged intrusion of China.
- 5) Europe is considered to be a good source of economic, defense and social cooperation for India. A stable Europe is important for India.
- 6) The Indian Ocean Region is very vital to India's security and prosperity. As a maritime nation by historical traditions and by its geo-physical configuration and geo-political circumstances, India is dependent on the Ocean's surrounding it. Maritime security and stability of this region is of utmost importance.

The reason behind explaining the global security environment and its implication on India is to establish the fact that India's experimentation with peace will not depend on some lofty and heuristic parameters set out by the western world. It will depend on the National interest

of the State. India has been inherently a peace supporting and peace-loving nation, we have always maintained a non-interventionist policy and have promoted the culture of peace, but not at the cost of our own National interest. We have the metanarrative of Gandhian Nonviolence which is often justified by using a Sanskrit shloka which says Ahimsa Paramo Dharma (i.e., Non-violence is the ultimate dharma (ideal situation)) but conveniently forgets the other part which is - Dharma himsa tathaiva cha. Which means, so too is violence in service of Dharma (or reaching to that ideal situation).

INDIA'S PERSPECTIVE AND APPROACH

Realist perspective views survival and security of state as supreme national interest in international system characterized by anarchy. Each nation state attempts to maximize its power to promote its national interest at the expense of others. The international system is defined in terms of great powers like bipolar, unipolar and multipolar world and that great power tends to exercise hegemony. Any foreign policy and decision of political leaders must be assessed in terms its outcome. This perspective became dominant framework for explaining foreign policy behaviour after Second World War.

India faces numerous challenges in maintaining peace under the current world order. Firstly, geopolitical rivalries and power struggles among major nations often undermine peacebuilding efforts. India's proximity to volatile regions such as the Middle East and South Asia further complicates its role as a peacekeeper. Additionally, transnational issues like terrorism, climate change, and cyber warfare pose significant threats to peace and require collective global action.

INDIA'S MILITARY REALISM IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Realists put military power at the centre of their theory; be it as a defensive strategy for survival (Kenneth Waltz) or an offensive strategy for power maximization (J. Mearsheimer), as a means to an end or as an end in itself. Power is important but the most important power of all, as per most realists is hard power. India, striving to be a great power, needs to match its aspiration with practical military strength. It is not only a matter of status but also of survival. It has had a history of violent territorial conflicts with its neighbours, specifically China and Pakistan with due diligence in occasional skirmishes, the latest being the Galwan Valley debacle. Consequently, India has acquired the combined power of nuclear, missile, and conventional arms along with infrastructural support such as the strategic roads in Ladakh to improve the military's movements in sensitive areas to complement the military build-up across India's northern borders.

Military strength has helped India acquire the status of a regional power in South Asia and acts as a significant unit in today's multipolar world. Due to the unpredictability and transitory nature of the border with China and Pakistan, India has invested heavily in border security and infrastructure. It has also entered into bilateral defence deals with various

powers, notable amongst them being the United States of America (USA), Russia, Israel, and France; with the recent arrival of French Rafale jet planes bearing witness to India's strategic partnership. Being the second-largest arms importer, India is dependent on foreign technology making itself vulnerable in the defence sector and susceptible to foreign influence. Thus, to counter this asymmetry, India has sought to develop indigenous capacities such as hypersonic missiles by the DRDO to enhance indigenous innovations to pave the way for future exports and defence engagements in its neighbourhood. Like the land border to the North, the sea border to the South is also an arena of power struggle. India carries out several naval exercises in its waters to deter China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean region. This validates India's engagements in military drills (Exercise Milan), Quadrilateral (QUAD) Security Dialogue and bilateral logistics agreements with QUAD members, France, Singapore, South Korea, and an upcoming agreement with UK and Russia.

Adhering to its policy of 'no first use' in case of nuclear weapons, India though heavily reliant on military power is smart when it comes to timing and dosage as though adapting itself to the anarchical structure laid out by Kenneth Waltz. By wielding diplomacy to diminish border tensions, India showcases a nuanced understanding of military realism.

INDIA'S STRATEGY OF MULTI-ALIGNMENT

India recognises the need for structural change in the international system to create a cohesive international society. This underpins India's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' to capitalize on the synergies emanating from the multiple poles of power. India's aspiration towards NORMS (New Orientation for a Multilateral System) has raised the ante for consensus in principle and practice on issues such as cross-border terrorism, climate change, vaccine development, for instance. The Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Solar Alliance, QUAD, multilateral and plurilateral engagements in disaster diplomacy, vaccine development and medical aid while supporting the efforts of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to coerce Pakistan on regulating terrorist activities showcases India's realist pragmatism in using the multilateral and regional forums to advocate for common norms. Hence, developing the wherewithal in political, economic and military spheres is India's real challenge which India seeks to rectify through its multi-alignment strategy. India's pursuance of 'strategic autonomy' can be seen in being a participant of various regional groupings. India's invitation to G-7, QUAD and D-10 frameworks while being an active participant of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), SCO, RIC and BRICS indicate India's geopolitical standing in the international state of affairs. India's membership in these USA-exclusive forums indicates India's aspirations to be a leader of the Global South while attempting to maintain the balance of power with China. This is further evident in India's development partnerships and aid programs in South Asia, Africa, Central Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to be at par with China's Belt and Road initiative.

India's instrumentality in rebooting South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the continuance of engagement with SAARC countries indicates the pragmatic morality that has been produced by the urgency of power projection in South Asia in the wake of the hedging strategy adopted by SAARC members with China. India has been fracturing its regional outlook through its Act East policy evident through Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) and BIMSTEC while devising joint cooperation with ASEAN and Japan in the development of North-eastern states of India.

INDIA'S POWER ASYMMETRY WITH CHINA

Given India's expanding and developing military capacities and upgraded infrastructure in the Himalayan border zone, this entire contention of 'an asymmetrical threat perception' between India and China ought to be considered in the light of the recent events. The two military stalemates in 2013 and 2014 during the scheduled visits by Premier Li Keqiang and President Xi Jinping to India and the following Chinese standoff into the Indian side of the northern border with China in 2017 and 2020 can be interpreted as China's response to India's enhancing ties with USA, capacity building and improving infrastructure, reinforcing India's will to utilize realism and engage with China.

The former Foreign Secretary of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar has been the country's longest-serving diplomat to China since 2009. On recalling his experiences with China, he is of the view that the challenge for India is "to manage a more powerful neighbour while ensuring its own rise" and "in doing so, there must be an understanding on our part that this search for equilibrium is an infinite process", thereby emphasizing on the fact that realism should shape India's China policy. India, hence, ought not to be seen simply as a "respondent to China's tactical changes" but rather evolve itself to provide a well-established strategic response rooted in realism. In order to contemplate Chinese 'overt and covert' objectives, India's response seems to be aligned with the six principles invoked by Hans J. Morgenthau as it defines its national interests in terms of national power showcased through QUAD engagements and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Thus, India's experimentations with peace will consider all the abovementioned opportunities, realities and hurdles.

CONCLUSION

Maintaining the idealistic norms of peace is not a one-way road. It's like telling someone to clap using one hand. India's security environment is very complex to say the least. For far too long, the Western world has wanted a "peaceful and amicable" solution to the Kashmir issue while supplying arms and aid to the nation which uses terrorism as a tool of proxy war against India. It took years for some countries to recognize Kashmir as an integral part of India because they were busy milking benefits from their camaraderie with Pakistan, until they provided shelter to Osama Bin Laden in their territory. Here comes the same question, who decides the terms of peace? The lived experiences and the situation of different countries

are different in nature, so are the conflicts faced by them. A unilateral opinion on the issue pushes to an ethnocentric, rather a Eurocentric view of the same.

India's continued strategic partnership with the Russian Federation has often been dubbed by the western world as being on the "wrong side of history" and an act of promotion of war but wonder why the same voices don't stand up on similar regional issues like the Doklam Standoff between India and China. Although, In the former conflict, India has time and again issued statements calling out the aggressive nature of the situation and has called for unconditional ceasefire.

It's surprising that the only users of nuclear weapons in this world, reprimanded and sanctioned a responsible state like India for the possession of nuclear weapons knowing the fact that both the threatening neighbours, China and Pakistan already possessed one. Why is the standard of peace with regards to US policy of deterrence not applicable here? Mere possession of weapons is not an indication of rejecting peace, it can be an attempt to maintain the peace, or balance the power as well. The user decides the fate of the weapon, not otherwise.

The lofty and idealistic theory of peace has been often used as a veil to dictate the policies of other nations to further the interests of some nations. But India by the virtue of its foreign policy is determined to not fall into such idealistic traps. The stability and maintenance of National strategic interest is the primary concern for India.

India's perspective over peace shouldn't be dubbed in any way as a supporter of conflicts and war because India happens to be the largest contributors to the topmost peacekeeping and peace building force in the world, the blue helmets. India's commitment towards achieving a stable, secure and peaceful world is undeterred but it's based on Realpolitik, not idealpolitik.

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The Relativity of Peace

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Abstract

"Peace" is a timeless human aspiration that transcends political ideologies, philosophies, and religions. It has been a sought-after ideal since ancient times, with different cultures and societies interpreting it in diverse ways. This article explores the relativity of peace, examining how distinct interpretations have shaped the world's quest for universal harmony. The Western perspective on peace sees it as the absence of war, often enforced through treaties and force. This concept has guided Western nations in shaping international relations, with stronger powers dictating terms to weaker ones. In contrast, the Middle Eastern interpretation ties peace to divine Favor, intertwining religious devotion with societal order. This view expands the scope of peace to encompass justice and the well-being of all. Asian cultures, such as India and China, emphasize inner tranquillity and harmony as central to peace. Their focus on individual development and social harmony diverges from the Western notion of political order. Japan similarly sees peace as an active, ongoing process rooted in ethical principles. These diverse interpretations highlight that the understanding of peace varies across cultures, influenced by religious, philosophical, and social contexts. Achieving universal peace is hindered by this relativity. Additionally, the world's multipolar nature, historical injustices, and the complexity of resolving microscopic conflicts within societies make the pursuit of universal peace a daunting task. While progress has been made in conflict resolution and inclusivity, it is not a constant. Progress often gives rise to new conflicts, and political shifts can reverse advancements. Thus, the only constant in human history is conflict, and peace remains a relative concept, forever shaped by evolving paradigms. In a world marked by diverse interpretations and shifting dynamics, achieving universal peace requires acknowledging its relativity and understanding that peace, like conflict, is an ever-evolving concept.

Achieving or establishing "peace" is the ultimate goal of all political ideologies, philosophies and religions. The aspiration for peace has been a long-standing human desire since ancient times, for instance, the Roman poet Virgil from the first century BCE, had firsthand experience of the horrors of civil strife and saw the potential for peace with the establishment of the Roman Empire. Virgil's work, particularly his collection of poems known as the Eclogues, reflects his yearning for peace. The Eclogues often contrast the tranquillity of an idealized Arcadia with the turmoil and unrest of the real world. The fourth eclogue, in particular, prophesies the return of a Golden Age and the cessation of all wars. It envisions a future where a new ruler governs a pacified world, and peace and justice prevail, eliminating the need for trade and agriculture. However, an argument can be made that in no phase of history

was peace achieved universally, even the so-called “golden ages” is very subjective to interpretation as to if they truly represented an era of peace. Despite this, peace has been the goal of mankind from ancient to modern times and we have witnessed several attempts to establish it. One begs the question why has it not been attained?

The answer to that is not simple the complexity of the answer is what this paper is about. Peace and conflict are the two variables whose interpretation is the key to achieving the theoretical concept of universal peace. Understanding what constitutes as conflict is key to eliminating it and understanding what constitutes in a peaceful society is the key to establishing it. However, the understanding of these key variables is very relative in nature, it depends from society to society based on several factors. Interpreting conflict and how to mitigate it has been subjected to much research and deliberations but one must ask the question what is next or what happens when you eliminate (theoretically) conflict, is it enough to achieve peace? Or is peace in a universal context impossible, if yes then why? These are questions that this paper attempts to answer.

Interpretation of what is peace has been very different from society to society. However, if we talk in a broad, generalised sense, one can identify three interpretations which have driven the political ideologies of those who subscribe to it. The western interpretation of peace, the middle eastern interpretation of peace and the Eastern interpretation. However, one must understand these interpretations are not the end and there are several such interpretations, but these interpretations more or less find their way into the other interpretations as well, because they are also some of the oldest ideas of what peace actually stands for.

In Western civilization, peace has often been perceived as the absence of war and has been associated with treaties and the use of force to secure peace. The Western understanding of “peace” as a political order is derived from the notion that human beings are inherently in a state of war. Thus originated the Greek and Roman concepts of the term. The Greek word *Eirene* interprets that the state of peace is order secured by an interlude in war. Like the Greek word *Eirene*, the Roman word *pax* refers to a state of affairs. Thus according to this ancient civilisation, peace is secured by an agreement or compact. In fact, “pact” is derived from *pax*. From the Greek and Roman point of view which informs Western civilization, peace can be easily thought of as “the absence of war.” This concept has been adopted and implemented throughout European history, with agreements and treaties ending conflicts. some notable examples are the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 to establish peace after the quarter century of turmoil from the Napoleonic wars or the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 to bring an end to the first world war. Treaties and agreements need not necessarily being an end to a conflict but also served the purpose of preventing it throughout European history. Western philosophy views a peacemaker thus as someone who makes and honours a treaty. One of the most striking features of this political order of peace is that the terms of the treaty are often dictated by the more powerful nation or the victor in a conflict, often making it the treaty of unequals. Both the Treaties of Vienna (1815) and the Treaty of Versailles (1919) were dictated by the victors and sought to crush the opposing force preserving their own national

interests, many leaders from Alexander the Great to Julius Caesar and Napoleon believed peace could only be secured by force. In some Western classics it is taught that peace is obtained through strength: "Qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum" (Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, III, Prologue). While Western concepts of peace have referred to treaties, the peacemaker has been seen as one who negotiates from a position of strength, for example, Thomas Hobbes argued that peace is obtained through strength, and Hans Morgenthau's deterrence theory suggests that peace can be maintained by demonstrating military capability. Post-second world war, western democracies thus have taken up the role of peacemaker from a position of strength both militarily and economically, imposing their will and furthering their own national interests. We have seen numerous examples of American intervention as a 'peacemaker' in middle eastern politics to further their own influence in the area

While the Western idea of peace is political, the middle eastern nation's interpretation has a religious background. The most widely accepted view is that when the gods are pleased, peace is achieved in the world. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "shabm" implies living in a covenantal relationship with Yahweh, while in Islam, "al lstem" can mean both being at peace and giving absolute devotion to Allah. These two meanings are considered closely interconnected. The effort to live by the "will of God" has often meant going to war for God, whether it be a Christian Crusade, settlement and defence of Israel, or the Islamic jihad which can be translated as "a fight for the code of Allah." Hence in the middle east, peace does not necessarily refer to an absence of war. Religious definitions of peace often go beyond the mere absence of war. For example, the Jewish concept of shabm encompasses notions of wholeness, justice, and meeting human needs within a socio-political order based on a covenant that ensures the well-being of all. Some modern Islamic scholars interpret jihad as a nonviolent struggle to realize the will of Allah, which includes the absence of war. Christianity has also played a role in promoting nonviolence. The teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, have influenced historic peace churches and individuals who adhere to nonviolent principles. The key difference between the Western concept of peace and the Middle Eastern is that it increases the scope of the concept of peace. Following the "will of god" includes living in a particular social order and the individual development of a human being and not just a component of international relations. Here there is no negotiation from a position of strength to be imposed on the weak, peace is universal for both the weak and the strong and even though national interest still dictates international relations in the middle east, it is restricted by the religious concept of the "will of god". Hence one can argue that this concept of peace is much more equitable.

Moving on to the Asian countries, in India the Sanskrit word "shanti" refers to peace which is interpreted as a state of mind rather than a political order. Here religious philosophy plays a part as well with the individual at its centre. India's role in international politics for the longest period has been neutral taking no active part in conflicts even as a mediator. India's involvement in the war is only when it is to protect its national interest but seldom it has been the aggressor in any major conflict both historically and in recent years. This again highlights

a major difference between Western political thinking and Indian political thinking, apart from non-intervention, India's position in conflicts is to protect its national interest and not further it like the Western nations. The emphasis is more on achieving inner tranquillity and harmony rather than focusing on external conflicts. In Chinese, the word for peace is "ho fing" or "fing ho," which carries cosmological significance even without a belief in God. It refers to obedience to the cosmic order, and it can be understood as maintaining "right relationships" within a social order or cultivating a harmonious state of mind. In both cases, peace is seen as an active and ongoing process, rather than a static or passive state of being. Similarly, in Japanese, the word for peace is "heiwa." It has been applied by different groups, including samurai warriors and Buddhist monks. Samurai warriors, despite their involvement in killing as part of their profession, sought a state of harmony and peace according to their understanding of heaven. Buddhist monks, on the other hand, renounced violence and dedicated their lives courageously to serving others, embodying the concept of peace. These cultural perspectives highlight that peace is not solely defined by the absence of conflict or war but encompasses inner tranquillity, harmony, and adherence to cosmic or ethical principles.

These three different interpretations of peace highlight that understanding of peace varies across cultures, is influenced by religious, philosophical, and social contexts, and can be approached through different paths, whether through introspection, social harmony, or compassionate actions. The understanding of what peace is, not only determines the vision of the society a particular country has but also its role in different conflicts. One can ask the question is universal peace possible when we have such different interpretations of what peace is, I argue it is not possible.

For universal peace to exist first there should be a universal understanding of what peace is. In a world where the idea of peace is so varied to have a universal approach one must have a unipolar world. However, a unipolar world with one ideology is not possible, because an ideology would always have an opposite reaction to it. If we divide the phases of modern history, we can see a pattern of the world being in a multipolar state, for example, after the first world war we see a rise of fascism which was countered by the idea of democracy, similarly, we post second world war we have the narrative of democracy vs communism. In these phases of history, one side can be more powerful than the other but the weaker side will never cease to exist because it is in the law of nature itself. To suggest universal peace is achievable is also to suggest that so-called "historical injustices" are resolved, how and why will a particular society measure the extent of such injustices have no answers and how can one resolve the historical prejudices arising from those due to what we understand as societal memory, for example as long as the memory of the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre remains within the Indian society it will be at a conflict with the ideology that shaped Britain as to what it is today.

Even a bottom-up approach to achieving peace seems impossible because each member of a society has different interests which are in conflict and competition with each other. Some of

these conflicts are religious or based on class. Resolving such microscopic conflicts is the key to achieving peace in a society but the complexity of such conflicts itself makes the task impossible. Intersectionality of conflicts is the most important barrier to solving such conflicts. For example in a conservative Indian society, A upper caste man will be in conflict with a man from a lower caste, and that same upper-caste man will also be in conflict with an upper-caste woman due to the patriarchal nature of the Indian society, similarly, the man from a lower caste will be in conflict with another woman from the same caste, but the upper caste woman will also be in conflict with the lower caste man, and caste differences may prevent an alliance between both the woman to challenge the patriarchy in place. This is just one hypothetical example of a complex conflict in a society, in reality, there are far too many variables to even consider and understand let alone solve it.

Another argument for universal peace is the progress that human civilization made, there are set of principles placed which address such complex conflict and recognises how we as a society should co-exist with one another, an idea of another global conflict like the previous world wars seems far-fetched today because of organisations and principles which are established to prevent such large-scale conflicts. Even at a microscopic level, peace studies, conflict mitigation and inclusivity have become mainstream compared to the previous century. The human race has certainly progressed and it is not too delusional to believe that this progress would one day solve the problem of universal peace. However, progress seldom passes the test of the Political status quo. Progress itself is an ideology adopted by certain sections of politics and once that section of politics is overthrown, progress is threatened. One of the most relevant examples of this will be the case of the Roe v Wade precedent in the USA, it was a true example of progress in terms of women's right to bodily autonomy however it failed the test of political longevity and the progress is reversed. Progress is not constant. One must also understand as the wheels of history turn, progress gives rise to new conflicts, if we take the example of the French or Russian revolutions, we can observe that particular society had to tackle the challenge of dictatorships as a consequence of those even though the revolutions represented progress in its truest manner. Therefore the only constant is conflict, and what we understand is peace is just an opposite reaction to it conflict itself is dynamic and alters with the changing paradigms and hence we will have a relative understanding of what peace is and we will never achieve universal peace.

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