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GLOBAL POLITICS AND TRADE

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Principal's Note

It gives me much delight to address the readers from this platform on the first-ever issue of the magazine of Political Science society - POLIENZ.

As a discipline, Political Science recently has proved to be the most sought-after subject amongst all social sciences at the University of Delhi. Here, especially at our college, I have observed the enthusiastic participation of faculty members and students of the Political Science department to take meaningful initiatives with a positive consequence within and beyond the ability of the classroom. The planning for launching this magazine, I believe, is yet another step towards consolidating those academic activities.



It has been a glorious history for student-centric magazines, such as this, over the centuries and across the nations, to have produced epoch changing discourses and transformed the public sphere by the sheer power of political arguments between the pages. Its agency informing opinion is undeniable. To that end, it has an enormous potential to initially engage with the relevant debates, analyse facts and supply us with balanced observation to a better understanding of our past and present. I would invite all its readers to be involved with the debates here and make this magazine a referential point in academic discourses of the discipline.

I thank the Editorial Team particularly and extend the same to the entire Political Science department in general for bringing out this magazine.

My best wishes for a successful journey ahead.

Regards

Dr. RAJIV AGGARWAL

Principal, Deshbandhu College

Convener's Note

An accessible environment for students and teachers to interact freely to discuss and debate in and outside classrooms contributes towards meaningful academic life and qualitative growth of academic institutions. The presence of well-informed, knowledgeable, scientific tempered, and public-spirited students are the hallmark of a healthy and democratic tradition. Various ideas and issues come up not only from the classroom teaching but also from students that force teachers to de- and re-construct their ideas and arguments. Debates and discussions happen in face-to-face interaction of the classroom setting and through writings in journals, books, blogs, Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, and other social media platforms. Intensive debates and accessible communication of ideas happen through essays published in a journal.



Apart from providing ready access to well-researched ideas on critical issues by prominent social scientists, the academic journals provide space for upcoming scholars to take part and contribute to the debate by expressing their opinion on contemporary issues. Besides becoming a platform for organised, free well-argued discussions, it also becomes the archive of ideas. They are the living archives: the pages are inscribed with contestation of ideas and meanings those transcend the pages and locality to reach out to the national as well as international readers who participate in debate directly or indirectly.

Polienz, the first-ever students' managed online journal of the political science department, would be a step in this direction. It was not an accident but the conscious decision and choice of the members to actively contribute to the existing vibrant academic life of the department. The students have made strenuous efforts to provide it with the final shape. They have passed through bouts of strained and anxious moments, conflicts of opinion, disagreements, diligence, perseverance, and finally, cooperation among the founding members of Polienz to pull off a success story. As the Convener, the association was limited to an advisory role.

Nevertheless, the teaching fraternity of the department cherishes association with it and wishes them all success. So, likewise, the Political Science collective wishes them luck and hopes they would carry this wonderful endeavour forward.

Regards

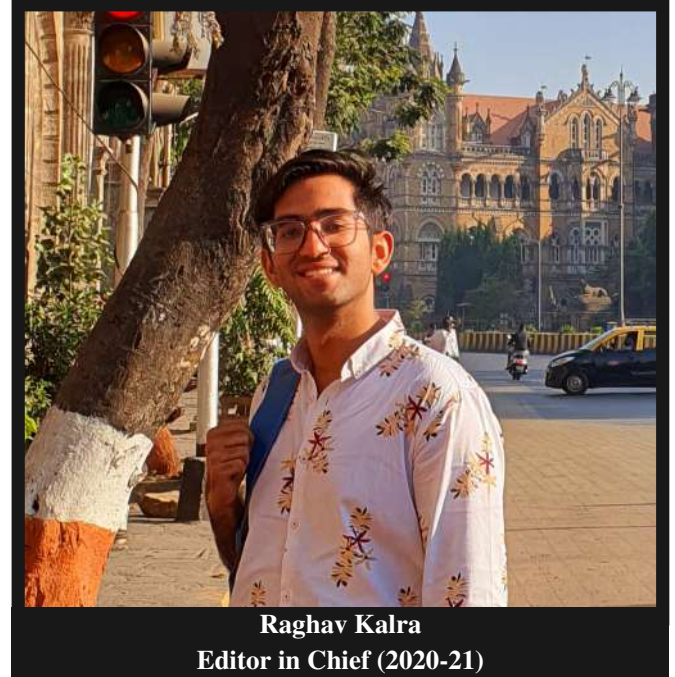
Dr. BISWAJIT MOHANTY

Teacher in Charge, Department of Political Science

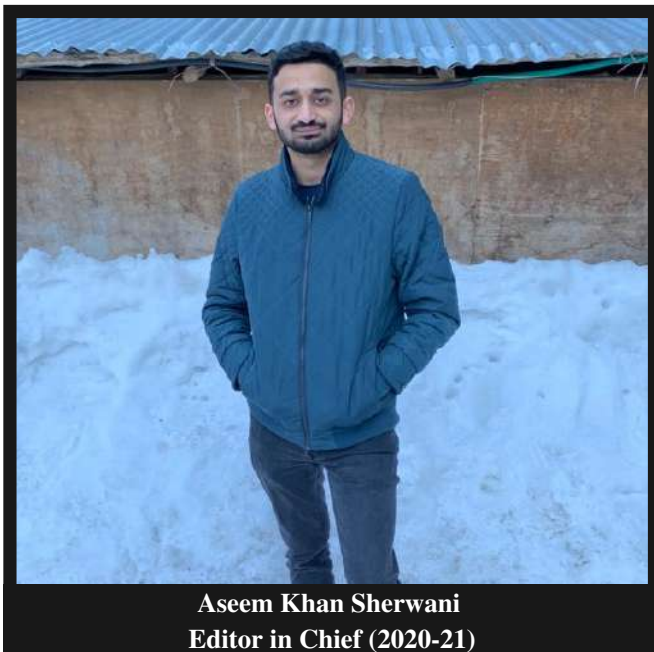
Convener, POLIENZ - The Political Science Society of Deshbandhu College

Chief Editors' Note

A world filled with conflict and struggle was brought at hold by the pandemic. It took us off guard, tested the best in us and is still on a track, yet to leave. This hold has taught us that more than any other policy change, that we might require today, we need representation. Representation of the young and creative who can change scenarios and remake institutions. 'Our Rationale' is just an attempt in that direction. We choose to speak the truth with command of research and analysis to bring forth realities as they exist. It is a project that is as powerful as the people who work for it's vision. A vision that craves to create an open space for dynamic discussions and non-combative argumentation. A safe space that acknowledges dissent with respect and dignity for the equal other. Our Rationale is a platform in making for those who hold their eloquence as a means to enlighten. I am delighted and honoured to be at service for this project as the first Editor in chief.



Raghav Kalra
Editor in Chief (2020-21)



Aseem Khan Sherwani
Editor in Chief (2020-21)

Usually, we present our thank you note toward the end of our speech or any write-ups. It has almost become a ritual, done more out of practice than due to ardent appreciation. The very act of thanking loses its essence in the end and when I say that the Editorial board was the best team one could ever hope for; it is an understatement. It is also due to pure gratitude that I say our teacher-in-charge- Dr Biswajit Mohanty was the brightest light that guided us onto the untrodden path. I would also like to convey my regards on behalf of our team to our Principal- Dr Rajiv Aggarwal, who acted as our cornerstone and enabled us to stimulate our creativity and intellect.

With a cluster of thoughts, months of preparations, discussions upon ideas, arduous work, and patience, we finally present the first E-Magazine of our college "Our Rationale" which bears the theme "Global Politics and Trade." It is the project of a Political Science based Society- Polienz, through which we have tried to present a panoramic view of the world order, it's effect on the masses and the changing scenario. I wish to see that some years down the line, this publication becomes deeply ingrained in our culture and continues as a "legacy" that will see an upshot in quality. Ending on that note, I request the students to write and express as much as they can through the upcoming editions of the magazine, for all times to come.

Overall Coordinators' Note

I take great pride in presenting POLIENZ's annual magazine, OUR RATIONALE ,2020-21", to our readers, who will find it insightful and help them redefine their worldview. The theme of the magazine of this session is - "Global Politics and Trade". This theme highly includes in-depth analysis and debate of geopolitics, International trade and global affairs. This Magazine is the first ever successful Project of POLIENZ, a student- based society of Department of Political Science, Deshbandhu College.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Principal, Dr. Rajiv Aggarwal, and our Polienz Convener, Dr. Biswajit Mohanty, for their advice and assistance in times of need. We were able to reach our objectives more quickly as a result of their assistance. I finally want to congratulate each and every member of our team and express my gratitude to them for their contributions, which has helped us reach our objectives inspite of all the hardships which came along the way.

We hope you enjoy reading our magazine "OUR RATIONALE ,2020-21", which we have put together with utmost enthusiasm, to take you with us to witness the successful project of POLIENZ. Let's join hands and make this success more pleasurable for each of us.



Sagorika Konwar
Founder & Overall Coordinator, POLIENZ (2020-21)



Nilesh Kumar
Overall Coordinator, POLIENZ (2020-21)

“He who wishes to serve his country must have not only the power to think, but the will to act” — Plato.

With such inspiration I welcome everyone to Our Polienz, the political science based society which aims to inculcate the rationale of thoughts, imbibe the seed of confidence, enhancing viewpoints with knowledge by providing different opportunities. Our society has been actively organising webinars, fruitful discussions on various political dimensions, our journal updates the readers with news of national and international importance.

In the series, I am extremely happy to present our newest edition of our magazine "Our Rationale" with the theme "World Politics and Trade". The articles included, covers almost all the dimensions which are presented with extensive research and surely will provide enough opportunity to readers to immerse themselves into these topics of present global importance.

I would like to thank our principal sir, teacher in charge, core group members, members of polienz without whom it would not have been possible. I am sure with the cooperation of all and blessings of the almighty polienz will continue to grow in the years to come.

INTERVIEW WITH OUR PROFESSORS



Dr. Seema Narain is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi. She did her Master's in International Affairs, with specialisation in South-Asia from the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, New York.

Dr. Manish Kumar is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi. Dr. Kumar has been a student of the University Of Delhi and has completed his Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Department of Political Science, University Of Delhi. Dr. Kumar was also awarded the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), conducted by the University Grant Commission (UGC) in 2010.



DR. SEEMA NARAIN

Ma'am, could you please explain to us what this concept of alternative globalisation really means?

Alter-Globalisation is also known as Alternative Globalisation, or the Global Justice Movement. To explain the concept of Alternative Globalisation, we must understand the various novel features of alter-globalisation. I would lay emphasis on the following points: Alter-Globalisation as a Social Movement. Social Movements are a very contested subject. There is no agreement on what it is and when it has emerged, its form is very complex. Social movements may not be organisations but organisations can be in social movements and can include interest groups as well as political parties. They are very diverse both in form and in orientation. Studies have indicated that a social movement is an ongoing-process and diversity builds the strength of such movements. There is a recognition that participants see themselves in a social movement as part of a wider movement on the terrain of civil and political society. They try to mobilise others who identify with their struggle. From this perspective, alter-globalists can be acknowledged as [participants of] a social movement. Alter globalisation exponents support global cooperation and solidarity. They are against the negative effects of contemporary globalisation, alleging that it often works to the disadvantage of human values such as environmental protection, economic justice, labour protection, protection of indigenous cultures, peace and civil liberties, and so on. Alter-globalist however, do not want to be known as 'anti-globalist' i.e. opposing the concept of globalisation. They find this label quite inaccurate to describe them since they actively support human-activity on a global scale. Thus they are in support of globalisation, although in a different form. They do not oppose economic globalisation as such, but most alter-globalists oppose 'corporate-globalisation', which is imposed by the industrial countries and large

Multinational companies . So they target the core institutions of the dominant capitalist system. Anti-globalist demand the debt-cancellation of the countries in the Global South, they demand dismantling of tax-havens and corporate-havens, and they reject Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as well as the manner in which they are implemented by bodies such as the World Trade Organisation. This is basically what they aim for- Alter-Globalisation as a 'Counter-Hegemonic' movement. I find this quite important as a matter of study for students of Political Science and International Relations. I would like to conceptualise the movement within the Neo-Gramscian framework of counter-hegemony. Anti-Globalists are trying to oppose the dominant ideology of market globalism or neo-liberalism (in its dominant form). Counter-hegemony is basically the creation of an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society, in preparation for political change. Neo-Gramscians used the Machiavellian terms 'war of position' and 'war of movement' to explain how this is possible. In a war of position, a counter-hegemonic movement attempts through persuasion and propaganda to increase the number of people who share a dislike of the hegemonic order. In the war of movement, the counter-hegemonic tendency is to overthrow violently or democratically the current hegemony and then try to establish themselves as a new historic bloc. So the public space of civil society can be used to build a counter-hegemonic movement against the dominant ideology through a struggle of beliefs and ideas to create a new hegemony. They [anti-globalists] are trying to break-up the general consent of the public, rebuilding it anew since knowledge is a social construct and ideas and beliefs can be reshaped. These are the crucial points in my view to understand Alter-Globalisation.

What are the positive and negative impacts of globalisation when we look at it's application in full force?

Globalisation has its advantages and disadvantages, for instance, if we talk about negative impacts first there has been a lot of global dimensions like we have faced global terrorism, environmental degradation, violation of human rights and growing injustices and inequalities between the north and south (core and periphery) as well as within the countries. On the other hand, if we talk about the advantages the first one would be the launch of the COVID-19 vaccine by the international scientific corp., generic globalisation has given us the knowledge of media technology, digital technology has revolutionised the way we connect, also in e-commerce sites like Alibaba or Amazon, etc. To conclude my view I would say that the world has been viewed as the global village and is being seen as a single social space and hence it has both, good side and a bad side to it.

What are your views about the recent Suez Canal incident where a single ship caused a global halt in trade? Do you think that this indicates the vulnerability of our current system of trade?

The Suez Canal is a critical point in global trade, being the shortest and a cost-effective route among the global supply chains. It is very important since it connects Europe and Asia, leading to nearly 30% of the containers/ships and 12% of the world trade passing through this route. The recent incident involving the ship has highlighted the vulnerability of the global supply-chains and global trade via sea. Since the international sea traffic was disrupted, the loss incurred to global trade had reached billions of dollars. Secondly, it led to an immediate hike in oil-prices, which had a cascading effect on the world trade and global economy. There was a financial fallout since the container-ships from different parts of the world were stuck.

These were the immediate implications, which also highlighted the vulnerability of global trade. I also think that it points out how dependent the world community is, on these supply-chains and on the shipping-industry for the continuation of global trade. It was also very crucial for Egypt since it is financially dependent on revenues from the trade happening via the Suez Canal. Many wars have been fought for the control of Suez throughout history. The Suez also holds symbolic importance for Egypt since the two are closely identified with each other. Apart from that, it has exposed the enormous challenges of navigating through the canal. Also exposed was Europe's over-dependency on the supply-chains from China and East Asia. The need of the hour is to bring certain improvements, perhaps by expansion to improve the route. The world community should also come together to think and find alternative routes to smoothen out world trade and to decrease the dependency/pressure on the Suez Canal. Various routes such as via the Northern Sea are being pondered upon. However, challenges like lack of security, time-consumption, and cost-effectiveness have downplayed other alternatives like the route via the Cape of Good Hope. Interestingly, China is trying to revive the old Silk Route by investing in infrastructure. However, its progress is being hindered by geopolitical concerns. So, this issue of rerouting global trade needs to be looked at with greater gravity.

Today an opportunity of profit maximisation for some corporation trickles down to become a human rights crisis in another nation. For example, how a darker side of Bangladesh's booming economy is its loose labour laws that indirectly allow for child labour. Do you think global justice movements have a solution for this?

The primary focus of alter-globalists is to draw benefits from globalisation but at the same time, they stand for economic

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growth along with the ecological balance and protection of human rights. Hence, globalisation that is devoid of social protection is not supported by alter-globalists. In today's world, rich countries can outsource their industries. Although Bangladesh is a leading manufacturer of apparels, at the same time it has a poor record in terms of labour rights. They are violating basic human rights in terms of wage protection, working conditions, safety parameters and so on. The paradox of the new liberal model is that setting up industries in Bangladesh would lead to the empowerment of seamstresses, benefits to the producers and consumers as well. In the western society children working in factories is seen as a violation of the basic human rights of children. Hence, there is a universal appeal for the protection of children against cruelty. Now in the context of Bangladesh, this scenario will not be considered a violation of human rights because, in a poverty-stricken country like that, children working in factories will bring more income and help them to sustain a better life. The concept of violation of human rights can't be universalised because it will vary according to various cultural contexts. The international labour organisation which sets standards for labour laws cannot do much to prevent such violations of labour laws and all they do is naming and shaming. The anti-globalists advocate for multiple actors to be active and international labour organisations, the EU and powerful organisations to play a key role . regulating these issues. Example- Nike is a company that had gained benefits by establishing industries all over the world but at the same time Nike is criticised for creating poor work conditions, for human right violations and not maintaining proper labour standards. The anti-globalist made Nike their poster child to expose the violations of human rights in multinational companies. So alter-globalist want a world where human rights and labour standards are respected and enforced accordingly.



The world today faces a massive crisis of climate change, which will be disproportionately affecting the global poor making large parts of our planet inhabitable. Do you think there is some window of solution in the concept of alternative globalisation for the world leadership to look at to build cooperation?

This is again an important issue, since it is the central nerve of the movement of alter-globalism. Alter-globalists often talk about greenwashing, green-economy, and decentralised national developmental models that encourage local participation. Climate Change is Globalisation's single biggest challenge. Global Warming has already produced record-breaking temperatures in recent years, and has increased the susceptibility of phenomena like forest-fires. These phenomena serve as signals of uncontrolled global warming that threatens our society and our capacity to exist as a viable species. Global warming, ecological degradation are products of continued carbon-intensive economic growth. These problems are not happening because of a fossil fuel-based economic model or organisation, this is primarily due to globalisation. With the expansion of the global economy, this phenomena has all been linked to carbon emissions and environmental degradation, all of which has primarily been caused by globalisation. Radical measures have to be taken to curb greenhouse emissions. This being a huge challenge, alter globalisation has an alternate vision about trying to create a greener, better economy. One of the major goals under this vision is to abandon the fundamental assumption of limitless potential and production for economic growth i.e. a decrease in the urge for unlimited growth in the modern economy. Secondly, they point out that interventions (from the international organisations, states, and local communities) and democratic planning (from the global to the local) will have to be taken. Thirdly, long-term planning is also necessary for achieving ecological goals.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan in India is an ideal example of how local measures can help to reverse the harmful effects of neo-liberal globalisation. International platforms like the World Social Forum have helped anti-globalists to express their views and achieve solidarity and cooperation for their causes.

Stories from the world, about inequality, poverty, and human rights violations, break our hope for a new world order. With this as status quo what can we do as followers of this approach to find solutions for this.

The alter-globalists are trying to present an alternative form of globalisation for the world. They target economic injustice, global justice, equality, participatory democracy, local governance and building solidarity. So there is hope, but the moment in terms of its political ideology is still embryonic and the need of the hour is to advocate it for an organisational form of structure. They are postmodernist in terms of their methods and goals and have certain anarchist elements in their movements. They advocate for direct action and civil disobedience. When they meet at the world social forum, they don't come out with a charter or declaration. The alter-globalisation is being driven at international, regional and local levels also. There is a systematic critique of new liberal capitalism being done and about its impact. Indian analysts like Ashish Kothari have come out with a systematic critique of the impact of new liberalism on India and an economic model that will be an alternative model to new liberal globalisation known as RED(Radical Economic Democracy). This model focuses upon the green economy and linking development to environmental goals and local governance issues. In the Indian context, we have an example of the RTI Act which brings more transparency, accountability in decision making and more participatory democracy. Programmes like NREGA are seen as signs of the fact that changes

begin to happen around the fringes. So the movement is still nascent and there is a need to strengthen it and we still have a long way to go.

What do you think can be the mantra for the success of the global justice movement or the alter globalisation movement?

From a theoretical point of view, social movements like alter globalisation have not been studied and researched upon in the domain of International Relations. Surprisingly, social movements have been studied in the domain of sociology by sociologists, activists, environmentalists, etc. I believe that Political Science and IR need to bring these issues into their discipline, integrate them into the mainstream, and need to interrogate these issues and map out their political ideologies. By doing this, we will be able to understand more comprehensively the various social and political forces that define such movements. Even scholars and activists are [political] actors, who can self-reflect on these issues and help in increasing the salients of such movements and reshaping ideas. Ideas and actions are linked, and I think that is one area where there is complete lacunae. Speaking of International Relations in particular, the post-colonialists need to interrogate the issue more thoroughly because alter-globalists also see neoliberalism as a continuation of the colonial structures of domination and inequality in the neoliberal form of globalisation. The subalterns need to interrogate it further because it will lead to looking at the power-structures and to bring into salience the voices of the marginalised. Secondly, from a practical perspective, we need to create more solidarity because sometimes these movements are hindered by setbacks. Another step forward would be to generate more grass-roots democracy, by means of linking the local with the global.

DR. MANISH KUMAR

According to you what is the meaning of “Kautilyan Realism”?

That’s an interesting question, but before answering that I would like to talk a bit about what is Kautilya's Arthashastra at the first place, I'll start with the text itself- Kautilya who is also known as Chanakya, the teacher of Chandragupta Maurya, his text is basically discovered by R Shamasastry who was a librarian at the orient research institute of Mysore. Some believe he found his books which were lying in the library in the form of palm leaf documents, whereas some believed that he discovered these texts from a Pandit in Thanjavur in 1904-05. This made it evident that it was R Shamasastry who discovered these documents and was the first to translate the books in the English language. Post this there are several other works that are done on Kautilya. Even when I teach Indian political thought to my final year students I ask them to go through these classical texts, like RP Kalmleys Kautilyan Arthashastra or the Patrick Olivelle translation, changing governance and law in ancient India which is again Kautilya's Arthashastra's translation. These are certain works that you can use and refer while understanding Kautilyas Arthashastra, of course there are other secondary works as well. Another interesting fact about the document is that there is a controversy over its date and authenticity and this has been prominently debated, even till now. When I studied the last readings by Patrick Olivelle, even he mentioned regarding the debate if whether the Arthashastra belongs to the Maurya period or the pre Maurya period or even the post-Mauryan period. This is primarily because there is a huge controversy about the dating of this document, in terms of when it was written. So if you ask an Indian scholars, they would claim that it belongs to the Maurya period because he was the teacher of Chandragupta Maurya but if you ask a western scholar they would claim that it is a document written four or five centuries later. Hence, this is again a very interesting fact that we must keep in mind.

Another unique thing that one should pay attention to is that this document belongs to the Arthashastra tradition period and therefore has evolved through a period of time. Hence if you look at the text, Kautilya himself has referred to 5 generations of Arthashastra tradition including 13 individual writers. This tells us that how unique that tradition was and it is really pity that we have lost such a great work. Another interesting fact is that, if you read Riya Mehta who talks about the authorship of Chankyaniti, he talks about how there are some who believe that both these texts have been written by the same person and some argue that the authors for both are different. Hence we can all see how Kautilyan Arthashastra is a living classical text with so many debates surrounding it and I deliberately use the word living because it is still posing so many questions and that is why we are here discussing about this legend text.

Now allow me to come to the idea of Kautilyan realism. I hope till now you have been introduced to all the tenants of realism through International Relations because only then you can make some sense out of Kautilyan realism. On a contrast, Kautilyan realism has more to offer than classical realism's emphasis on aggregate power because if you read Morgenthau it is all about power. If you step one foot further in past, Hobbes and Machiavelli both talk about power as an end. Even structural realism which is an advancement from classical realism, has power at its core, where they place power as a means to achieve security. Kautilyan realism goes beyond this obsession of power that contemporary realism has, because it is more than power, security and material concerns. Along with these objectives, it emphasis on moral and ethical questions in state craft.

When I was in research, I was reading the Volume of Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) which talks about the concept of Artha and Dharma in Kautilyan Arthashastra. Artha is not merely the science of wealth but is about ethics and morals. Hence, it is more than what the classical and contemporary thought of

realism has to offer in one sense. For example, Kautilya acknowledges anarchy but gives due importance to dharma, morals, nonviolence and duty along with law. In fact he used the means of dharma for statecraft and international relations. So if you look at Kautilya, unlike realist, political thinkers, he adopted a holistic concept of power and security. So Arthashastra is not just about wealth and power but is about striking the balance Dharma and Artha. This balance becomes necessary for managing the affairs of a state and that is exactly what is highlighted by Kautilyan Arthashastra.

Kautilyan Arthashastra talks about the fundamentals of statecraft, can those fundamentals be applied in contemporary times?

I think the answer to your question is both yes and no. Yes, because if you look at the text, in terms of ideas, recommendations and advice, in the domains of politics, diplomacy, war, peace, etc, you will find enormous wisdom and depth. You can even find learnings from those texts, experiences, and wisdoms, but if you compare the context and settings of the ancient world with that of our world, much has changed. Hence as the time has changed along with the context, the rules of engagement have also changed. I even urge all of you, you can disagree with me on this, that it is important to read Kautilyan text within its context. Do not read it from the presentist understanding of mind, the vantage point of now, where you exist with modern context. Because only then you will be able to engage and reflect towards the modern challenges and not the vice versa. So, what I am trying to explain you is to place the text in its authorial location, derive wisdom out of it, and while engaging in contemporary challenges you can apply that wisdom. Not that you see the problem first and then go back to the text for answers. That is my humble submission, and my answer is both yes and no, as explained earlier, I say this because when you look at all these classical texts, they have raised a fundamentally eternal question, for example, what is justice? Plato, Aristotle, Rawls, Amartya Sen, all of them

talk about it. It's the same question with different answers. Why? Because it is context sensitive.

Many leaders such as JL Nehru, were inspired by Kautilyan thought for building strategic economic growth. In that context, can it be said that Kautilya was a proponent of capitalism, or the market economy?

That is a very interesting question. To answer this question, I would like to refer to MP Singh, Indian Political Thought. When he said that Kautilyan thought has a specific reference to the idea of ownership of property or labour, he puts it very specifically that the institution of private property and state ownership both existed in Kautilyan Arthashastra. We need to understand this dynamic, because at one level he is criticising the Marxist thinkers and simultaneously he is hinting that what India adopted its economic policy has roots in the ancient time. Let me contextualise this concept and relate it to your question. If you try to understand Nehru, as the first Prime Minister of our country, because he played a very important role in not just devising our foreign policy but also our economic policy, you can convincingly say that he was inspired by Kautilya but he was also a hostage of the developmental challenges of his time. When we got our independence the cold war was in full swing, and there were two camps, the socialist and the capitalists, one had market led capital and the other had state guided planning. Nehru wanted to devise the economic policy in a way that it could deal with the basic challenges that India faced or for the matter any other newly independent country would have faced. So, the task was to industrialise along with bringing modern technologies and he believed in doing that, the state could play a crucial role. That is exactly why we adopted the model of a mixed economy. Kautilya did talk about the balance of market along with state control of economy, but that is not the only reason why India opted for a mixed form of economy under Nehru. There is a historical context to that too.

A lot of conservatives today try to defend themselves with Kautilyan thought. Do you think that it is a deliberate attempt or is it a mere coincidence?

I'll answer this briefly. Because this is a tricky question. One thing as a teacher or as a theorist, you must understand is that as an ideology; conservatism or conservative right aspire to enhance a settled tradition or an ancient tradition. Kautilyan Arthashastra supplements so many questions levelled against Indian political texts in that direction. So, if you look at western scholars, or left intellectuals, they have argued that Indian literature, history or India in general is politically discourse-less. We have texts that are only filled with religion and spirituality. There is no political engagement or discourse and hence I find the claim of conservative right very interesting by settling it with the example of Kautilyan Arthashastra.

Kautilya in his Arthashastra, never condemned the institution of caste. Many believed that the text should be looked within the context of its time, what according to you is a right approach?

There is no denying the fact that Kautilya strongly believed in the caste structure. He also approved of the lower caste doing menial jobs which is reflected in his theory of work and commerce. He also believed in the relative position of a man and a woman in the structure of caste. Let me be very clear about that. But, as I mentioned in the beginning, every scholar, philosopher, thinker is a product of his/her time. Every text that they write has a certain context and therefore we must situate that text in that particular context. We should avoid judging it through the lens of modern concepts and values to get hold of a better understanding.

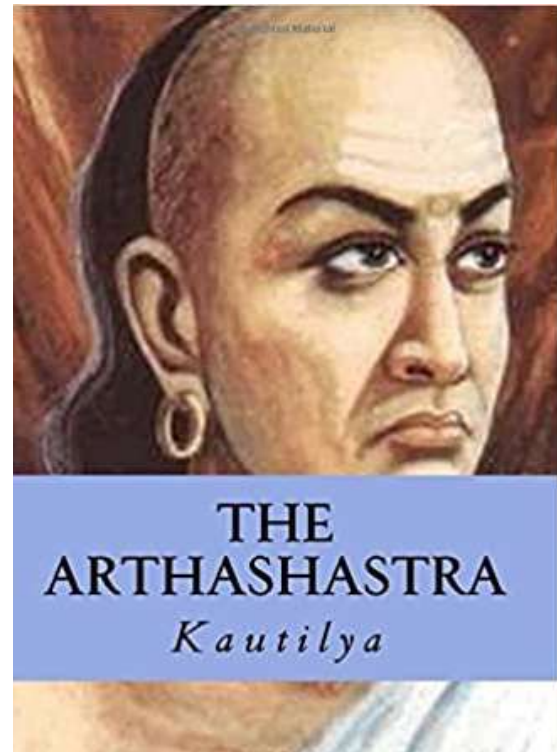
Do you think there is a particular reason that Indian Political Philosophers are so less worked on?

I'll talk not just about philosophers but ideas and philosophies in general, and I talk about this in my class as well. I have read various authors that have argued the reasons in terms of why this happens and is still happening. First and foremost, reason is euro-centrism. The idea that the centre of knowledge creation is Europe. This mind set of authority, that what is knowledge is being defined by someone else, texts to be read, not be read, the meaning of knowledge itself is held by some as their property. The enterprise of knowledge itself is controlled by the west and hence if something doesn't fit that lens, it is not treated as important. Once you consider something as not important you do not give it due importance. So, you ignore that. That is exactly what has happened with non-western philosophies, theories, scholars, including Kautilya. Alongside that is the sheer power and resources that the academia of the west has, which help them to achieve this hegemony. That we aspire to get published in a western journal, to speak in English, to want to study more about Plato and Aristotle but not at all about Gandhi, Tagore or Kautilya. Because we think that when we talk in their language and idea, we only then feel comfortable and knowledgeable. That hegemonic status has been achieved by the west and we do lack in that. The way courses are designed in the global south, in India, too much emphasis is given to western theories and scholars as compared to ours.

Sir one question on the lines of how the Arthashastra is a living document. Do you think there is scope for re-imagination of the Kautilyan School of Thought as there has been of Socialism?

There is a trend of reimagining everything, reimagining IR, sovereignty etc. My own Ph.D was on reimagining sovereignty.

I think reimagining Kautilya is possible, because it should be as when Kautilya was thinking, that time there existed monarchy, autocracy. When you look at the modern world today, there are different forms of democracy. We must contextualize Kautilya by applying his ideas in modern settings for example many have argued that Indian foreign policy and relation can be understood with 'Kautilyan Mandala Theory'. Also what I did was that I reimagined the concept of sovereignty which is the basis of today's nation state system. The legal political sovereignty that a state is made of, highlights the boundaries of a territorial community. In the same way if you look at the fundamentals of Kautilyan Arthashastra, it is the Saptang theory. He realized the state through seven elements and not the modern four elements through which sovereignty is defined today. Hence there is scope and domains through which we can revisit and reimagine the Kautilyan thought.



TOUCHING
THE
SURFACE

RISING ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

BY: ANANYA KAUSHIK

From a time when society frowned upon even the idea of women going to work, we have come to an age where women are the ones responsible for shaping the important laws, fighting for people's rights and are the rising leaders of this new era.

While this may sound simple to say but this journey has been extremely arduous for women, mainly because of the patriarchal mindset that almost everyone in this world has, treating men as superior and believing that they are the ones meant to guide society while women were only there to be a caring wife and a mother, they were not given a choice because of the patriarchal structure our society is built upon where men perceive themselves to be superior to women because of certain misguided notions formed in the past.

Iceland was the first nation to break such patriarchal notions when Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected as the first woman president in the year 1980 and from then women have begun more active participation in this key area where women make the laws that govern us and thus affect the entire country's politics.



Though women have become such a key figure, it is still a fact that they are still underrepresented in almost all areas of politics. They serve as the Heads of State or Government only in 22 countries, and 119 countries have never even had a women leader and even in the countries that have women leaders, only 14 have managed to get more than 50 per cent or more women in cabinets. At this rate gender equality in politics won't be achieved in the near future and looks more like a faint dream for this generation.

Even studies show that women's leadership in political decisions improves these decisions and they demonstrate political leadership through parliamentary women's caucuses, even in those politically hostile environments and by raising issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws and electoral reforms. They tremendously increase both the decision making and the issues covered by the government and by tackling them in new ways thus slowly yet steadily the role of women is increasing in politics.



STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS THAT SOUTH ASIAN DEMOCRACIES FACE

BY: SUPARNA M NAIR

The South Asian region is witnessing some kind of democratic upsurge. For the first time, all the countries in the region have embraced democracy. Yet, democratic transitions in the region are filled with uncertainties and fragility. Although elections are held at regular intervals in a free and fair manner with record participation from citizens, the democratic and electoral processes are beset with serious challenges. Issues of violence, corruption, lack of governance, flawed systems of representation, the role of money, dynastic and family-centred politics seem to be eroding the initial democratic gains in most countries of the region.

South Asia as a regional entity presents two challenges: The disparate levels of democracy and development between South Asian nations; and the disparities within the South Asian nations. While there is widespread acceptance that democratic and developmental deficits should be addressed within individual nation states, there is much less acceptance of the idea that disparities between countries in such geographical proximity and with shared borders might jeopardize the prospects for democracy or development in each country.



Terrorism or, more broadly speaking, the problem of security is undoubtedly the most significant and overarching challenge in South Asia at the moment. The security problem in the region has many layers, which in the recent past have become intermingled in complex ways. There are at least three sets of causal factors that contribute to this problem.

The first involves developmental deficits, which arise, in turn, out of institutional deficits. The second involves the situation of minorities all over South Asia. The conflicts in Kashmir and Sri Lanka as well as other insurgencies inside India – and until recently in Nepal – are indicative of these tensions between states and minority populations. The third involves the effects of US foreign policy and democracy promotion projects and their symbiotic relationship with the global rise of extremist Islam.

A second set of challenges involves incomplete democratic transitions which result in the inadequate development of the institutions of formal democracy. This is evident primarily in Afghanistan, but also in the Maldives, Bhutan and Nepal albeit to different degrees.

A third set of challenges involves the failure of institutions to fulfil their democratic mandates, such as the present state of the parliament in Pakistan, the functioning of judicial systems all over South Asia, abuse of power by state institutions, and so on.

OUR RATIONALE



A fourth critical challenge arises from the disparities in the nature of the South Asian democracies. India and Sri Lanka have ensured reasonable electoral democracy and a fair amount of political stability with a free press and an Independent judiciary, but the transfer of power to the people has not been deep enough. The institutions of democracy that were meant to serve citizens have in many cases become instruments of misgovernance. Pakistan and Bangladesh have had a meandering path to democracy. Even during periods of formal democracy, the script is often determined by the armed forces. Nepal's experience with constitutional monarchy was not conducive to parliamentary democracy. In Bhutan and Maldives, democracy is still in its infancy but current movements in Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal have generated revolutionary aspirations. The challenge for the political leadership of these countries is to consolidate democratic gains through constitutional and institutional arrangements and to ensure the legitimate interests of the historically marginalized. In Afghanistan, the forces of extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism are so strong that powerful members of the international community are engaged in a collective manner in promoting and ensuring sustainable democracy in a hostile environment.

The fifth critical challenge to democracy in South Asia is the pervasive failure of human development. In fact, many of the challenges outlined above derive from developmental deficits, although a narrow view of development and development deficits will not assist democratic progress.



The main challenge for democracy in South Asia is the contradiction between the ever-increasing robustness of its civil society and the deep inequities and developmental deficits that prevent the majority of this civil society from effective democratic participation and inclusion.

IS THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA REALLY THAT GREAT?

BY: ADITYA SINGH

The communist party of China recently celebrated the official end of extreme poverty in China with a propaganda campaign that praises President Xi Jinping's role, part of efforts to cement his image as a history-making leader who is reclaiming his country's rightful place as a global power. The party announced in November, with little fanfare, that China no longer had anyone in extreme poverty. That was down from an official estimate of almost 99 million living on annual incomes of less than 2,300 Yuan (\$355) per person a decade ago. The big question here is whether China is really able to eradicate extreme poverty or they have presented false data on poverty to allure the international organisation. The money flows through China's Rural Subsistence Allowance System based on an application, its review and approval and distribution of funds, a process that moves through China's three basic levels of rural governance – village to township to county. Rural households apply for subsidies by providing township officials with household registration, disability documents and endorsement from their village governments. The paperwork goes to grassroots level administrative offices such as the department of civil affairs. Township officials review the applications and submit them to county-level government officials for approval. The reality is different because several people in one family share

the money that arrives as a cash payment or bank transfer. Neither Xi nor state media explained how the figures were calculated and what threshold was used, prompting questions about the metrics. Poverty in China has a very long history. Migration was one of the major reasons for poverty, rural China is a relatively less developed and backward region of China. Rapid urbanization also led to underdevelopment of rural areas and increased the number of poverty stricken people.

According to the U.N. Special Rapporteur, the situation of Tibetans and Uighurs is deeply problematic. Similar to most Chinese citizens, ethnic minorities do not have the right to freedom of religion, expression and peaceful assembly. Over 150 Tibetans have and continue to protest repressive laws by self-immolation. After a national crackdown in July 2015, over 250 human rights protesters were detained, nine of which were convicted of "subverting state power." Some detainees admit to being tortured or forced to confess. Though many have since been released, they continue to be isolated and monitored. Lawyers of protestors are often harassed and intimidated by authorities. Workers cannot vote for trade unions while the right to strike usually goes unacknowledged.



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According to various human rights groups, China violates workers' freedom of association. This is due to China's prohibition of independent union organizing and Trade Union Law. This law requires the All-China Federation of Trade Unions to maintain communist leadership. The human right situation continued to be marked by a systematic crackdown on dissent. The justice system remained plagued by unfair trials and torture and other ill-treatment in detention. China still classified information on its extensive use of the death penalty as a state secret.



China has been using the financial tool of debt to gain influence across the world and grab considerable power in India's neighbouring countries, thereby increasing the amount of political and security threats the nation is exposed to. In a push to gain rapid political and economic ascendancy across the globe, China is dispensing billions of dollars in the form of concessional loans to developing countries, mostly for their large-scale infrastructure projects. Often, developing nations are lured by China's offer of cheap loans for transformative infra projects, which involve a substantial investment. These developing nations, which are primarily low- or middle-income countries, are unable to keep up with the repayments, and Beijing then gets a chance to demand concessions or advantages in exchange for debt relief.



The dominant features of Chinese politics in this decade have been the rise of Xi Jinping, the return of repressive autocracy, and an inconclusive effort to re-engineer China's economic model. The anti-corruption campaign has killed tigers, swatted flies, intimidated Chinese officials, and unsettled entrepreneurs. Perceptions of heightened political risk now inhibit deal-making and exacerbate the slowdown of the Chinese economy. Many of China's wealthy are hedging by shifting part of their wealth abroad. India is giving a tough competition in military and soft power. India is aware of China's aggressive style, India have maintained a cordial relation with Chinese neighbours. Indo-pacific region is the bone of contention between China and US. The US is investing in India who will keep check on China's expansionist policy. Indo-China relations have worsened in past few years, both countries have the capability to be next superpower.

LGBTQ COMMUNITY- AN IMPORTANT SECTION

BY: NIYATI GAMBHIR

Talking of this section of the community one thing which first strikes up our mind is vulnerability which more or less has been a very important part for this society. If we talk about it globally, yes there are many countries certainly which have progressed provided them a very imminent status within the society. But there are many countries Asian countries where this community is not given very wide acceptance. They are often criticised for their gender, their attributes and what not apart from this they are even reduced to a status very low in a society.

When we talk of feminist approach over here than one thing which we cannot deny is women getting “rights in society a respectable position and getting an equal status as men”; to gain and achieve all this their journey has undeniably very long though they still have not got a very huge share but the share they have now in a society is quiet huge to what they had in past. Their equality started way back in 1970's and it's still on and on this long way they had proved to be enormously victorious. But one section of feminist who extend their support and are helping LGBTQ community of any society; are still in a battle with past stereotypes and conventions which advocate to treat they section of human society inhumanely.

Recently worldwide acceptance of transgendered population has been humungous and appreciable. Apart from just US accepting this section there have been many other socialists and socialists' societies which have brought into account their unequal treatment in front of the state and their unrecognised status and problems too.



The most recent development regarding this was seen in one of the densely populated countries of the world "India" where the LGBTQ community have recently got lawfully recognised status. Apart from this UN has passed several resolution which states that transgenders shall be given equal rights and recognition. To this many countries of the world responded by organising rallies for recognition of transgender community, which guaranteed them of diplomatic assurance, and ensuring them to be treated well and just like any other individuals.

But yet these steps still do not solve the problems which are being faced by them. Just like any other being even they have several ailments and they are not provided proper treatment for it.



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A few months back an Indian chef and director “Vikas Khanna” released a movie called “The Last Color”. The movie was released globally at a very small level but left a very huge impact on how a transgender is treated in a society like India where they might be sexually ill-treated, abused and yet their problems and issues are unheard. Although providing them with reservation and equal recognition in society that too lawfully is under legal process but isn't it too much to when we hear that any other human is being treated untimely or may be as a “unwilling joke”. All these things might sound aesthetic to some or over exaggerated but the truth is none of us extends our helping and kind hand to them, no one sees them as respectful human beings.



Apart from these issues, biasness of vocabulary discriminates them to an extreme extent. For instance, often there are articles which say “Men shall be treated equally” earlier statements like these discriminated against only females who had no right but contemporarily it had severe impacts on this section of the community too.

To address these problems, this section shall be given the freedom to participate by assimilating laws, and shall not be used as a means of criticism. For example, social media influencers who are cosmo queens or may be who are aware of people in their favour, especially men, are frequently labelled as transgender, but the truth is that whether you are of one gender or another, it is your natural right to have dignity and keep your integrity, and you should not be hurt by any section of the society in any way.



ROLE OF YOUTH IN INDIAN POLITICS

BY: SHRESTHA ROY

Is youth necessary for Nation Building?

A nation is not known by the assets it possesses but by the very own people it has. The youth of a country is the future of that country which further gives new developments and an evolved structure to the country in a positive way. Youth is the backbone of a nation that acts as the spring of life. In the case of India, it is the world's "Largest Democracy" but to be governed systematically, people who are accountable and responsible enough about their position and power should be taken into consideration. The youth is the generation of innovations and visions that can positively transform the nation to give it a new face. The participation of young people in a growing economy is an important aspect of national development.

For instance, Swami Vivekananda who grew up as a youth symbol and even hoisted the flag of the culture of India in countries abroad dwelt on the capabilities and capacities of the youth and wanted the youth to train themselves to serve humanity. He regarded the youth as having "iron muscles" and "steel nerves." He emphasised the ideals of sacrifice, selfless service by the youth as the most important aspects for the nationwide renovation. He looked for just one quality in the youngsters and that was to cultivate and nurture the ability to 'feel'. According to Swami Vivekananda, there are three most influential P's which is to a great extent inculcated in the youth of recent times. These P's are Purity, Patience and Perseverance. The availability of these skills is evident from their willingness to engage in activities that bring a positive change to society.

Role of Youth in Indian Politics

As we all know that India comprises a large section of Youth that is nearly 75% of the total population who are well educated and knowledgeable people. However, the fact that Indian Politics has been for a long time dominated by elderly experienced people has led to the availability of only a few young people in politics. Indeed the reason for this constant decline of Indian Politics is none other than the takeover of power by people who have constant greed for power compared to that of the true political leaders who wish to work for the betterment of society. It is evident these days that in the politics of India, patriotism has been exchanged with casteism.

If we look at times during Independence, we know youth leaders such as Subhash Chandra Bose, Chandrashekhar Azad, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and many more who had a constant fascination towards working for the betterment of the society and bring about a revolution by playing a major role in politics of the then India. However, the current generation, they are rarely aware of the major concerns of the country which must be taken care of by them especially to keep corruption and dirty politics aside. Due to this lack of awareness, the youth of India is nowadays focusing more on settling abroad instead of staying in their home country. This is because they just want to keep a long distance from the corruption taking place in the country rather than taking a step to end it.

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Not just this, the citizens between the age group of 18 - 35 years of age, who are officially recognised as the "Youth of The Nation" are not even sure while casting their votes in India because they hardly have any knowledge about the needs of the country and making judgements about which candidate would do justice to the position. Therefore, it must be taken into consideration that, beyond communalism and politics, the youth is in dire need of widening their perspectives.

Now, we are very much aware of the fact that in a country like India where corruption is prevalent, there are instances wherein bribes are offered to get jobs and those who can't bribe look for opportunities abroad. This point encourages us to guide and motivate our fellow youth citizens of the country to help them learn the differentiation between good and bad practices which might ultimately help assist in moving the country forward on the path of progress. As it is often said, "Every moment is correct to do the right work", we should finally begin to encourage our Youth to come out of the world of Social Networking sites and enter the world of politics to make India a much better place to live in that would be free of any kind of injustice.



Conclusion

If we aspire to transpire our country as a global superpower, we must join hands in harmony and assist the government in uplifting the country. This requires a lot of hard work which isn't possible to do with just only a few people. Every citizen must aim at contributing in whatever little way they can as small things lead to a bigger picture. The rural youth should step forward and come out of their relaxing zone and the urban youth should think out of their material satisfaction. The remaining population must work towards encouraging the youth of the nation as well as themselves to perform a little better every day.

India today is poised to take its rightful position in the group of nations. The youth is talented enough to bring about positive changes in the society, make sure that they are being seen and heard and also possess the spark and courage to explore the world and identify that in what ways they can use their potential in the right direction. Despite this, there are several hurdles to be crossed. Some of the major concerns involve a complex security environment surrounding India, the internal contradictions faced by the nation and society and deterioration in the quality of politics. The role of youth in nation building is very essential and must be given much-needed importance. However, this can only be achieved with fellow youth and surely the backing of the government. Youth is surely the most precious gift to a nation and we must realize very soon and utilize their innovative potential and ideas for faster progress and development of our nation.

RIDE OF CAPITALISM IN THE TRAIN OF GLOBALISATION

BY: RAGHAV KALRA

Capitalism is a system that promotes free markets or lesser regulated markets so as to leave price determination at free flow of demand and supply. Globalisation as a process can be defined as increasing interconnection between the world. This interconnection majorly happens in terms of trade and commerce but along with it there are other salient aspects involved.

Capitalism in the context of globalisation would be defined as a structural change in the interaction of domestic markets. Since the advent of modern technology for communication and transportation this process has been speeded to many folds. It can be legitimately said that profit motives now dominate the world market where companies and governments have a large pool of options in both production and consumption.

Certain features of capitalism in the context of globalisation are:

Decreasing role of governments: Companies and stakeholders today have eroded large sections of powers that the governments used to enjoy in early times. Governments today are highly depended on luring big giants to produce in their country as they want their population to get employment especially in developing countries. To do so they provide these corporations with tax cuts, immunity against various laws and cheap labour market.

Rising inequality: Another salient feature of rising capitalism in times of globalisation is the widening gap between the global rich and the global poor. Individuals on the top of financial ladder in the world own more than the total poor in the world. This has changed the dynamics of the world and tilted the advantage axis more towards the privileged section. This has caused not just economic turmoil in various nations but has also been a cause of political unrest. With rising inequality and more wealth being absorbed by the people at the top, poor people are left at the mercy of their broken governments. Various economists have also predicted that this inequality will be the cause of future civil wars.

Asymmetrical distribution of resources: With governments becoming more and more inefficient and bureaucracies failing, domestically rich and privileged individuals become stronger. This further contributes to the large problem of unequal resource distribution. Individuals who can afford to accumulate resources end up monopolising markets and regulate supply as they wish to.

Cultural erosion: Capitalism focuses on profit maximisation and accumulation of resources. This principle allows giants to flood the markets of developing countries with cheap alternatives for existing commodities in that market itself. This causes citizens of developing countries to change their identity in respect to what they wear, how they speak, their festivals and various other aspects. This furthers the solidification of grip over these markets as cultures get eroded and ethnicities are diluted.

Conclusion

Although capitalism has proven to have various benefits they also come with a cost. The cost increases when capitalistic forces move beyond nationalities and are given a free hand to exploit resources of lesser developed nations. These salient features as are mentioned above are not the ones which we are told when the rosy picture of capitalism is put in front of us and hence are the salient features.

In the context of globalisation it is proven that capitalism generates profit at the cost of not just individuals but nations. These salient features are highly important to understand before we come to a conclusion about capitalistic structures.



GLOBALIZATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

BY: SAGAR KUMAR PASWAN

Globalization and Multiculturalism are terms that may seem to be different, though, the evolving world that we possess today the synergy of these words is shaping the world around us to understand these terms thoroughly in the context of the same. We shall discuss them through this piece.

Globalization

Globalization in the context of multiculturalism essentially implies the elimination of barriers and integration of different cultures. It tends to bring varying people from various cultural backgrounds in contact with each other and this further, may lead to acceptance or rejection of outsiders by the original people. Mutual coexistence and a healthy presence of diversity lead to multiculturalism which may be defined as the ideology by which all the cultures exist in an open, self-critical and interactive manner in their relations with other cultures.

Bridging the gap

As technology has progressed, the world has seen diminishing boundaries and coming together of people of different psycho-social makeup. Sometimes, they intermix with each other while maintaining their own cultures while at other times they may not like each other at all and quite often it has been the case that a new culture is born out of the intermingling cultures. Throughout history for instance, we have seen different homogeneous cultures interacting with various heterogeneous cultures and leading to a new way of life, as for example the Indian and Persian culture came in touch, a new Urdu culture was born.

In the modern term of context cultures are interacting vigorously through social media and leading to trends which are followed across the globe. Like the Tik - Tok phenomenon which is followed everywhere from USA, China to India or how a fashion trend which is famous in the USA would become a trend across the globe through social media on the same day.

Criticism/cultural acceptance

Though there is criticism in the UK, Germany and elsewhere in Europe of multiculturalism. Critics say that it failed and the proof is extremism- London and Oslo killings. In July 2011, a 32 year old Norwegian "Anders Breivik" indiscriminately shot at civilians and killed many people. Take into account the recent policies of the USA government under the leadership of Ex-President Donald Trump who wanted to build a wall across Mexico or their strict stance on providing visas to individuals from certain countries or taking in refugees from war affected countries. Such incidents have done a lot to strengthen the belief that multiculturalism brought by globalization is unworkable in times of recession when opportunities dwindle and there is socio-economic and political pressure on leaders seeking election or re-election in their countries.



Multiculturalism as an solution

Multiculturalism, in reality, insists that no culture is perfect or represents the best life and therefore it can always benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures. India is a shining example of multiculturalism where variety of cultures have coexisted for centuries and have mutually enriched themselves. It is thus, fittingly said to be the land of "Unity in Diversity." But we cannot have a healthy diversity without tackling inequalities. It is these inequalities in the society which lead to frustration and this gets manifested in the form of intolerance and prejudices in the minds of people. In the time of recession when many Europeans lost jobs, unemployment became a huge stressor. When they saw a few people of other nationalities living as Blacks or Asians, prospering in their countries, this stress became manifested in the form of prejudice against foreigners. Though such beliefs are thoroughly unfounded as they tend to ignore many other suffering foreigners and prospering nationals and also lack any logic or rationality.

Multiculturalism has always brought in newer ideas and healthy changes in ailing societies. Change is always a bit difficult so people tend to resist it, but culture must develop. It brings innovations and leads to advancements. It is the technological advancement only that has led to diminishing barriers and thus, globalization and globalization further brings cultures together coupled with multiculturalism. Thus, it is a never-ending cycle of events that will keep nations developing and cultures getting closer. Some of the tribal cultures have succeeded in remaining isolated in the world but at the same time, their growth stories are also not encouraging. The countries which have chosen not to adopt globalization to preserve their own culture have also been left far behind. The social evils like Sati, Dowry, Gender Equality, Slavery, etc could become issues only when our culture came in contact with modern western cultures.



Also, there have been sharing of things like various food delicacies, new styles of clothing, concepts of partying and get-together, new forms of entertainment etc. Even in the workplace multiculturalism is a welcome thing. Different skills and attitudes bring diversity which adds to the quality of work. The emancipation of women has been possible only if cultures interact and view each other closely.

Multiculturalism does not divide nations. Neither is it the cause of ghettoization, ghettos and slums that have existed for centuries and segregation among different ethnic groups has existed before the time of multicultural politics. Multiculturalism is, in fact, a reaction against racism and seeing people in terms of their ethnic backgrounds. It is an inclusive philosophy. Its potential for integrating new covers and minorities into society is undermined by false notions of its tendency to produce separatism and poverty and this role evolves constantly in the 21st century.

Multiculturalism is a valuable tool as it stimulates society members to appreciate diversities and celebrate the differences among individuals and each element of diversity provides for and adds a unique and essential component to benefit the society at large.

SOUTH KOREA

BY: NIYATI GAMBHIR

After the Korean War (1950-52) the then Korean peninsula was divided into two halves widely known as North and South Korea. On one hand, South Korea became an extensive democracy; on the other hand, North Korea continued its dictatorship. South Korea has one of the heavily militarised boundaries with North Korea.

When it comes to South Korea, one fact that cannot be overlooked is its technological advancements, which have expanded the country's boundaries widely and successfully; the country's capital, Seoul, serves as a magnet for many tourists, not only because of its vast technological advancements, but also because of the great extension of its ancient culture and tradition, which is well preserved not just for tourists attraction but for the maintenance of its cultural diversity.

South Korea trades for products of oil, natural gas, semiconductors etc.; with its major trading partners that is China, United States, European Union nations, Saudi Arabia and members of ASEAN. After the two blocs drifted away South Korea quickly aligned itself with various world organisations. Apart from being a trade oriented country South Korea is also a very strong supporter of multilateral trade and has also been able to recover itself from the financial crisis by the means of multilateral trade in 2007-08.

Apart from having a better policy for trade with other countries; the country is also equipped well with its foreign policies for sharing healthy diplomatic relations. This can be traced through several events; for instance South Korea and Russia (USSR in 1990) shared diplomatic relations since 1990's as the president of two countries focused on reversing the nation's histories.



Currently the diplomatic relations are well maintained through economic cooperation. Apart from Russia, South Korean and Indian relations have also improved over years, South Korean companies L.G. and SAMSUNG not only have a very large market in India but are also major contributors to countries economic development. The trade relations between India and South Korea are majorly carried through ports in the eastern part of the country.

South Korea has strong trade and foreign policy which diplomatically and economically makes the country an invariable part of the world. The country over years has developed well to make significant



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contributions in the world for maintaining global peace and encouraging worldwide development. During the 1950's the country lagged behind in many aspects due to the Second World War and Korean War; but initially its economic rate became steady and started increasing after the 1960's wherein the country progressed well and came up as one of the most technologically developed countries of the world.

Apart from succeeding to develop its economic and technological resources the country had also achieved significant contributions in UN's peacekeeping forces. Earlier South Korea was only the receiver of security but with its greater economic development it has succeeded in providing for world security. South Korean contribution to the UN can be traced out from the fact that Ban-Ki-Moon, the eighth Secretary General of the UN, was also the former Foreign Minister of South Korea.



A
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IMPACT OF CIVIL WARS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

BY: AFZAL PARVEEZ



Abstract

The relationship between international trade and international conflict has been a significant point of discussion in the understanding of the contemporary world order. The role of civil wars and bilateral trade are paramount in changing the face of the Global Political Economy. This article seeks to shed light on the relationship by examining how civil war in one country impacts the total bilateral trade between the afflicted state and its trade partners. Further this article shows the evidences from the Nigerian Conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to support the above statement. One key finding from the analysis of 120 countries (1950-1992) is that civil wars decrease bilateral trade between states by one-third. In addition, the survey also indicated that the effects of civil war on trade are not just limited to countries where the civil wars are occurring but also the adjoining countries and countries associated with it.

Introduction

It is suggested that nothing has such a cavernous effect on international trade as 'war'. Many studies have examined the effects of inter-state conflicts on economic interdependence. At the same time the scholars documented the economic consequences of civil wars. One key finding from the analysis of 120 countries (1950-1992) is that civil wars decrease bilateral trade between states by one-third. In addition, the survey also indicated that the effects of civil war on trade are not just limited to countries where the civil wars are occurring but also the adjoining countries and countries associated with it. This article explains the relationship between conflict and trade by analysing the effects of civil wars on bilateral trade. It also analyses the effects of joining the civil wars of other countries. Further, it tries to explain the vis-à-vis effects of trade and war on the accompanying countries by giving evidences from the two major conflicts of the international importance, the Boko Haram Conflict (2009) in Nigeria and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2000-04) in the West Bank, specifying the pre-Intifada and the post-Intifada conditions in both Israel and Palestine.



Relationship between Civil Conflict and Bilateral Trade :

How Conflict Affects Trade?

The previous findings on the economic impact of civil wars provides us with a number of findings that indicate that economic capabilities decline during periods of civil war. It was found that the buying power of people residing in countries experiencing civil wars decreases over time and that a civil war lasting 15 years would result in the per capita GDP falling by about 30%. States continue to contribute large proportions of GDP to military spending, financial and social capital leaves the country, human rights suffer, and weary political systems are unable to accelerate recovery. In addition, Stewart, Huang & Wang (2001) find that in 15 of the 16 countries that they sampled, GDP per capita fell during the conflict years. This has a negative effect on bilateral trade, as the gravity trade model predicts that the economic size of a partner is one of the key elements that affect the size of trade between states. Studies have shown that economic growth is lowered during civil wars and other periods of political instability and their presence results in human suffering and under-development. Thus, the economic means of production, consumption and transportation for one side can be reduced due to the civil war.

Further evidence of the destabilizing effects of civil wars on trade is provided by Stewart, Huang & Wang (2001), who find that in two-thirds of the countries that they sampled, the US dollar value of total exports decreased. Also, in over three-quarters of the cases, import performances were also worse in the same years. While they do not control for the role of other factors in influencing trade, their findings do indicate the damage that civil wars can have on trade. Thus civil wars have been found to negatively affect both imports and exports. All this suggests that "civil wars lead to decrease in total bilateral trade".

It is interesting to note that civil wars are also one of the factors to increase trade in the conflicted region. Primarily, the emergence of armed conflict in any region encourages the trade of arms and ammunition at a massive scale. Secondly, the allies of the countries indulged in the civil wars support the country by encouraging trade and continuing business. They sometimes even openly support the export of weapons and food supplies to the government. Two reasons could be observed from this action of the allies; first, the countries help their ally because they see profit and try to capture their resources hence they help the government of the conflicted region to alleviate the war. Second, as the ally country helps the country ravaged by war to stabilize or normalize the conditions, they stand tall against their ally and are considered superior to them, hence can interfere in their policy making and have their own benefit.

While bilateral trade with many countries drops in the presence of a civil war, the total trade of a state could theoretically appear to be unaffected, as the allies' firms support, or are encouraged to support, the alliance. This leads us to believe that the following hypothesis is in order: Given that a civil war is occurring in at least one trade partner, the presence of an alliance will increase levels of bilateral trade.

How Trade Policy Affects Conflict?

Trade and trade policy can greatly affect the risk of conflict. Trade encourages the reallocation of resources to more efficient activities, and thus opens up opportunities and creates jobs. However, changes in relative prices as a result of trade can also destroy opportunities and jobs in declining sectors, and the people affected by these losses may, under certain conditions, turn to violence as a source of income. Changes in real incomes generated by trade are particularly important in fragile states, where trade

flows tend to be larger and more volatile than other external flows, such as aid, remittances and foreign investment. This volatility is partly due to these countries' low diversification and their high dependence on primary export commodities, which may exacerbate the effects of abrupt changes in exports on conflict. For example, a sharp fall in international coffee prices in Colombia during the 1990s lowered wages and increased violence more in coffee-producing municipalities than in other municipalities. The rapacity (sometimes called "state prize") effect refers to the idea that valuable economic resources can provide an incentive to fight over their control. The resource effect recognises that both government and rebels may fund their activities by taxing the production of commodities, so that changes in their value affect the ability to sustain conflict. For example, the government may be able to capture substantial revenues from oil rents, or rebels may be able to extract a portion of increased agricultural prices from farmers in areas they control.

Evidences from Nigerian and Israeli-Palestinian Wars

Case Study: The Boko Haram Conflict (2009)

The most devastating Nigerian conflict in recent years has been associated with Boko Haram. According to the International Crisis Group (2014) Boko Haram (Western education is forbidden) emerged in the early 2000s as an Islamic movement in northern Nigeria led by the charismatic cleric Mohammed Yusuf. Its aim is to establish an Islamic state in the north with strict adherence to Sharia law as it "believes that corrupt, false Muslims control northern Nigeria".

The clashes between the groups which wanted to change the political and religious order of the region and the police started in 2009 and quickly escalated into an armed insurrection. Hundreds of Boko Haram's members were killed and the group's principal mosque was destroyed. Yusuf was captured by the army, handed over to the police, and shortly thereafter extra-judicially executed in public. This spurred the retaliation of Boko Haram, which went underground and a year later launched attacks on police stations and military barracks, explicitly in revenge for the killings of Yusuf and his comrades. As a response the Nigerian Government assembled a joint task force of military and police units to battle Boko Haram and declared a "State of Emergency" in the north-eastern states in May 2013.

While the conflict has a clear religious dimension, analysts suggest that grievances, including those motivated by poverty and unemployment, are fundamental drivers of the increased militant activities of Boko Haram. This type of economic grievances may have facilitated the recruitment of Boko Haram, which incentivized poor youth to join their ranks by offering food, shelter, and other forms of assistance not provided by the government.

On average a 10 percent reduction in the value of the production index in a year leads to 2.38 additional conflict events involving Boko Haram in the following year, while the same reduction in consumption prices leads to 0.95 fewer events. The effect of consumption prices on fatalities is substantial: a 10 percent increase in the price of the consumption basket in a state generates an additional 19 fatalities in that state. These results confirm the view that the Boko Haram conflict has an important economic dimension, which affects the intensity of the militants' activities.

Case Study: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2000-04)

A case study of the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides vital evidences in the understanding of how changes in trade affect conflict. Understanding the impact of changes in trade flows on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires understanding the degree to which Palestinian tradable production is dependent on Israel. Almost 90 percent of Palestinian merchandise exports is destined for Israel. Further, Palestinian external trade is de facto regulated by Israel. Following the Oslo accords in 1993, the West Bank and Gaza and Israel have become part of a de facto custom union with a common external tariff decided by Israel, which during the 1990s controlled all the borders of the custom union, with no tariffs imposed between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. A research done by Berrebi (2007) shows that an individual with a higher education and standard of living is more likely to become a suicide bomber.

In a related study by Miaari, Zussman, and Zussman (2014), it was found that localities which were relatively more dependent on employment in Israel experienced relatively more fatalities after Israel's abrupt imposition of severe restrictions on the employment of Palestinians within its borders at the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Changes in Palestinian exports also affect the probability of conflict. The results of various surveys suggest that changes in Palestinian exports to Israel during the period before the Second Intifada (Palestinian Uprising against Israel) reduce the intensity and the probability of conflict during the Second intifada. But, the statistics changed after the breakout of the Second Intifada in September 2000.



According to a research, an increase of \$10 million in Palestinian exports of a sector employing 10 percent of a locality's private employment reduces conflict-related fatalities in that locality by between 2.1 percent and 2.8 percent. This increase also reduces the probability of the eruption of conflict in the locality by between 5.3 percent and 5.5 percent.

It was suggested by many scholars and economists that facilitating Palestinian trade can be an important strategy to reduce the risk of conflict. This entails better control by Palestinians of their own border. Hence, according to the above data and analysis, it is prudent to state that economic opportunities affect the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



OUR RATIONALE

This article, tries to analyse the effects of civil wars and political conflicts on the bilateral trade and to what extent does a conflict affect the economic aspects of the country as well as the countries associated with it. From the above discussion, it seems reasonable to assume that a civil war will have a lasting effect on future bilateral trade.



Conclusion

The key takeaways from this article are: first, conflict and trade have vis-à-vis effects; eruption of conflict in any region discourages the traders and other countries to continue doing business with the conflict-affected country. On the other hand, decrease in the trade destroys job opportunities and the people affected by these losses turn to violence as a source of income which leads to breakout of conflicts.

Second important thing to note from this article is that the eruption of conflict in a particular region has both negative as well as positive effects on its trade and economy. The negative effect is obvious that most traders are unlikely to trade with the ravaged nation until they perceive that the risks of operating in this country are reasonably minimized, resulting in the decline of bilateral trade. But the positive effect to be noted is that, the emergence of war calls for a massive amount of weaponry, food and shelter, which encourages the trade of arms and ammunitions, food and asylum with its ally countries.

Israel's boundaries today



MOMENTS WHEN AMERICAN POLITICS CHANGED IT'S DIRECTION : COVERING BARACK OBAMA ERA

BY: SAGORIKA KONWAR



On January 20, 2009, Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States, making him the first African-American to hold the position.

As the first black president of the United States, Obama hoped to be a unifying figure who might help mend America's racial, cultural, ideological, and partisan differences in some way. The changes around diversity, culture and inclusion that happened under Obama were monumental: a black president; a black and very popular first lady; a major political party's first female nominee; the first Latino Supreme Court justice; the first two black attorneys general; same-sex marriage across the country; legislation protecting transgender

Americans' rights in many liberal communities; a civil rights movement reminiscent of the 1960s in terms of protests and action; repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, clarifying that openly gay people can serve in the United States military.

During Barack Obama's eight years in the White House, public opinion in the United States evolved substantially, particularly on issues like the economy, race relations, and the public's trust in various government components or individuals. Many of these shifts were influenced by social and cultural dynamics that would have occurred regardless of who was in power at the time. Others are more directly tied to Obama's presidency. A look at how attitudes have changed during Obama's presidency, whatever their origins, can be illuminating.

During Obama's presidency, the number of Americans who consider themselves "liberal" or "extremely liberal" on social issues has increased significantly. The legalisation of gay marriage as a legal option is perhaps the best example of this shift toward more liberal cultural positions. Furthermore, when it came to divorce, sex between an unmarried man and woman, having a child outside of marriage, and gay or lesbian partnerships, American views of a variety of once-controversial actions as "morally acceptable" increased. As a result, during Obama's presidency, there was a rise in social liberalism on a variety of moral and value-related issues, whether or not they were directly related to his presidency.

OUR RATIONALE



The Obama administration, which began office during one of the worst economic downturns in American history, concentrated primarily on policies aimed at either averting further economic deterioration or supporting the recovery once it had begun. Over Obama's eight years in power, most Americans' assessments of the economy have significantly improved. The Gallup Economic Optimism Index, which measures Americans' economic confidence, rose considerably, albeit unevenly, during Obama's presidency. The US Job Creation Index was (-3) in January 2009, but it had grown to (+33) by December 2016.

During Obama's presidency, more Americans began to believe that the United States is viewed favorably by the rest of the world: 45 percent in 2009, compared to 54 percent in 2016. Americans, on the

other hand, were no happier with America's global status under Obama than they were during Bush's final years in office. Americans' perceptions of the US military stance deteriorated during the Obama presidency. People gradually lost faith in the federal government's ability to cope with international challenges throughout Obama's presidency. One of the most divisive aspects of Obama's foreign policy was his decision to establish diplomatic relations with two countries with which the United States had been formally at odds: Cuba and Iran. His administration negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in which Iran agreed to curtail its nuclear programme.

Obama inherited the Iraq War, Afghanistan War, and many aspects of the "War on Terror", all of which started during Bush's presidency. He oversaw the gradual withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, ending in a near-total withdrawal in December 2011. After increasing the US military presence in Afghanistan during his first term, Obama withdrew all but 8,400 troops during his second term. Obama directed a mission in 2011 that culminated in the assassination of Osama Bin Laden, the 9/11 mastermind. The number of detainees at Guantanamo Bay dropped dramatically under Obama's presidency.



OUR RATIONALE

Former President Barack Obama will be remembered as the country's first African-American president. While Obama's election may appear to indicate that America has progressed from its history of racial discrimination and tension, American sentiments toward race relations deteriorated substantially throughout his presidency. Over time, more Americans have come to believe that Obama's election and presidency aggravated rather than repaired race relations in the United States, with 46% believing the former and 29% believing the latter in 2016. This was a major change from 2009, when 41% of Americans thought Obama's election and presidency improved race relations, while 22% said they worsened. Many believed that Obama's victory would launch America into a new "post-racial" era. As Obama conceded in his farewell address, this has not been the case. His presidency, if anything, appears to have brought to light hitherto overlooked racial divides in the United States.



Conclusion

It's easy to imagine that the rate of change in the United States has never been faster, or that the 2016 election or 2020 election will have a greater impact than previous ones. However, as important as the current period of transition is, only time will show the trends that will actually matter in the long run.



IMPACT OF MILITARY RULE ON ECONOMIES OF PAKISTAN AND MYANMAR

BY: AAYUSH TEVATIA

Any economy is an interrelated system of human labor, exchange and consumption where individuals trade with each other to improve their standards of living. These standards of living depend proportionally on the production of labor which is controlled by the government. It is of no contention that the economy is largely regulated by the political atmosphere of a country. This article seeks to provide detailed insight on the interlinkage between economy and military rule and how latter impacts the former, putting forth the examples of Pakistan and Myanmar.

Pakistan and Military Coups: A Never-Ending Story

Till date, our immediate neighbor Pakistan has faced 3 successful military coups. The first one took place in 1958 when the first President of Pakistan General Iskander Mirza dismissed the government of Feroz Khan Noon and appointed Ayub Khan, the then Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan army as Martial Law Administrator, however, after a few days Ayub Khan took complete control in his hands. The second coup was the brainchild of Army Chief General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 who overthrew the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and suspended the Constitution of Pakistan. The third coup came under the Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf after he was about to be dismissed from his role as Army General by the Nawaz Sharif govt. for his unconstitutional plans.

How has the Economy of Pakistan grown under Military Rule?

According to data, Average Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) during democracy was 0.661% (as percentage of GDP) while 0.852% during dictatorship. Average Gross domestic product growth during democracy was 3.77%, whereas 5.62% during military coup. Moreover, the average inflation rate during democracy was 9.67%, whereas 5.34% during a military coup. High Real GDP growth under military regimes was generated due to large scale manufacturing, industrialization and phenomenal growth in agriculture during the period of 1960s. Rapid growth with stable prices and foreign remittance helped to increase economic growth during the second martial law. President Musharraf was also successful in gaining investor confidence, stabilization of exchange rates, record increase in foreign remittances, stable exchange rates and a huge investment in telecommunication sectors, all these factors led towards an increased GDP. Inflation during the military rule was kept under control through good economic management while inflation most of the time under democracy remained in double digit. Pakistan under the then democracy was dependent on multilateral donors for its balance of payment support. Nationalization in 1971 and loans from IMF and World Bank with difficult conditions led towards increased inflation during democracy.



Economic growth during military regimes averaged 6.1% compared to 4% during civilian regimes. Just to comprehend the quantum of this seemingly small difference, the flood of 2010 that affected two-thirds of the country's districts, is estimated to have affected GDP growth by two percentage points. Although all three sectors of the economy – agriculture, industry and services – performed better during military regimes, the industrial sector has been the biggest beneficiary of the military muscle and has recorded twice as much growth compared to that achieved under civilian rule. Similarly, the current account balance has historically been significantly healthier during military regimes.



The Curious Case of Myanmar

After attaining independence from Britain in 1948, Myanmar witnessed Quasi-Democracy till 1962. However, the First coup led by General Ne Win took place in 1962 which continued for 26 years till 1988. Ne Win introduced the “Burmese way to Socialism” which had a grave impact on Myanmar's economy. Year 1988 witnessed a wave of protests against the military rule and a demand to hold general elections to choose a democratically elected government. Aung San Suu Kyi formed her own party NLD in the same year and her party won by a landslide. The election results weren't recognized, and the power came back to the military's hands again. In 2009, the military proposed a new constitution with a quarter of seats being allocated to the military itself. First democratic elections were held in 2010 in Myanmar and the military backed USDP won the majority as NLD boycotted them. Suu Kyi rejoined politics as NLD registered for 2015 elections and came to power with a majority. Year 2020 was crucial for the NLD to keep power in its hands and the NLD won 255 out of the 330 contested seats. Military led USDP fell short by a huge margin and won only 30 seats. Military claimed that the 2020 elections were nothing but a fraud and dismissed the elected government and took charge of the country by dismissing Suu Kyi's government by detaining its leaders.



Myanmar's Economy under Tatmadaw- From Bad to Worse

Before the pandemic, Myanmar's economy, which depends heavily on agriculture, oil and natural gas, garment industry and tourism, was expected to grow by over 6% for fiscal 2019-2020. After the recent coup the World Bank estimates it only grew by 0.5%. U.S. businesses have invested some \$326.5 million in Myanmar since 2016, with major U.S. brands such as Coca-Cola, Mastercard, Ford Motor Co. and General Electric forming partnerships to do business there. In 2020, trade between the two countries reached nearly \$1.3 billion – roughly 3.5% of all of Myanmar's total trade that year, according to ministry of commerce. However, after US sanctions the business will surely witness a downfall in the Burmese country.

Sanctions discourage International companies from doing any business in the region. Most of Myanmar's trade has its ties with Asia but the sanctions from the west could still have a dominating impact. Myanmar's Credit Rating Agency, Fitch has predicted Myanmar's growth forecast to meagre 2% from the 5.6 % reported earlier for 2021. However, Myanmar's foreign investment comes from two major Asian countries- 1) Singapore-36% and 2) Hong Kong-26% and the Burmese can still take a sigh of relief from the same. Also China has been in support of Myanmar's military Tatmadaw. For the economy to thrive and prosper they need a stable political environment. The civil disobedience in Myanmar against the military takeover has put production to a halt as most workers are on the streets protesting against Tatmadaw. Military rule hasn't only hindered the free movement of the goods but even the value of Myanmar's currency; Kyat has plummeted down as the cash flow in the banks has dried up.

In 2015, after Aung San Suu Kyi's government came to power through democratic norms, the foreign direct investment (FDI) increased with a large magnitude and accounted for 6% of the GDP, however after the coup, it's expected to cut by more than half.



Conclusion

Economy and military rule are closely related with each other wherein the military control over a nation can both affect the economy of the region either positively or negatively. In the case of Pakistan, it was seen how a healthy rule resulted in the rise of its economy, comparing it with the case of Myanmar where an unhealthy political environment caused its downfall. Evidently, it is accurate to conclude that both; a good economy and a bad economy is nothing but a direct result of efforts towards maintaining political stability.

THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT: OUR ONLY SHOT TO AN EQUAL WORLD

BY: RAGHAV KALRA

The only bifurcation in society that goes across the lines of class, ethnicity and region is that of the gender ascribed by birth. Since ages women of all societies have been burdened with societal norms, alienation, exploitation and various other forms of oppression. It is of no question, if we need feminism when we have a highly patriarchal society altering daily lives of women. Especially when it's forcing them into boxes to remain confined in maintaining the familial structure which in fact is the backbone of patriarchal societies at large. Hence, the very relevance and need of feminism as a movement is derived from the fact that it actively challenges these patriarchal institutions of a society and is not just limited to that. Feminism also offers a multi-dimensional and inter-sectional alternative to the existing conservative institutions.

In a very simplistic way, it can be said that feminism is what it does. It empowers the large sections of marginalized communities by making them realize the real reasons behind their oppressions. It forces individuals to self-introspect and alter various conditionings which have created a bubble of societal ethos that are oppressive and arbitrary. It also forms a chain of relatability between sections through liberating them of identical forms of oppressions they have faced. A Dalit women's oppression is very different from a woman who sits on a board of directors desk with only men. What feminism does is that it bridges the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in the same structure by reminding them of the similarities in their oppression.

It makes different sections of society bind together towards the common goal of liberating women and other oppressed communities from the oppression of a patriarchal and a misogynistic society. Hence, in many ways the extended feature of feminism of being intersectional is its biggest strength and asset.

Feminism works as a constant wall like force against the patriarchal structures that are deeply embedded in our social web and that is why it is of the paramount need in today's time. We are living in an age where patriarchy and misogynistic forces are evolving themselves by getting involved into newly established structures like social media. Women are called with names; their legitimacy is questioned and just because social media does not involve confrontation it becomes easy for people to shed responsibility. Feminism provides a counter to such forces by using 'call out culture' and 'gathering solidarity'. Along with that the movement works for an intersectional cause. It protects and amplifies the voices of all sections oppressed by toxic masculinity. It does so by calling for unity among all individuals who are a part of the movement. This not only increases the strength of the feminist movement by enlarging its ingroup but also adds to the movement at large remaining faceless.



OUR RATIONALE

The feminist movement today has turned itself to be reformist in nature. This character is protected by its facelessness as the faults of the movement are not attributed to any single individual faults and only a collective effort to amplify voices is granted legitimacy. This breaks the opposing mechanism of patriarchal institutions which have always attributed the faults of an individual to the movement in the pursuit for delegitimising it completely. This makes the movement open for opposing views but also shields it from propaganda against it.

Feminists all over the world talk majorly about lived experiences in the light of structures that cause them. They mechanise trauma against the forces that cause it. This in itself is very unique in times where individual to individual connection has become seamless.

Relatability and the pursuit for reform is what drives the academic forces of feminism too. As people connect easily to the oppressed community by empathising with their traumatic experiences they become more susceptible to read academic researches and dig deeper in examining aspects like the institutional protection of patriarchy, the organised forces working to keep the familial structure intact and various other oppressive mechanisms that are built to maintain a male dominated society. All of this is done by feminism in the pursuit of intergenerational and intersectional justice.



This pursuit of justice holds a central position the feminist movement. It cannot be provided with mere lip service and has a very different nature of demand. It does not demand for a constructed version of givers and takers where the oppressed have to wait till the oppressors are ready to give some space and legitimacy. Rather it works in the direction of taking its own space with no givers at all. It does not keep toxic men on a pedestal where they hold authority rather only informs them of how their self-created pedestals are illegitimate and the oppressed have announced their liberation from it.

This complex nature of justice ensures no further creation of pedestalisation. It ensures that what is due is taken from no one as it was 'no one's property', rather was illegitimately taken at the first place. To gain this justice and reform lives of all the people oppressed by patriarchal institutions, feminism and its highly dynamic range of ideas are needed.



OUR RATIONALE

Feminism is rising in the ranks of getting political and social capital. The amount of attention it gets because of stance like being pro-abortion, respecting body autonomy, incorporating and respecting the struggle of the LGBTQIA+ community, standing for equal pay etc. is transforming the world we live in. It is changing the society and the contract we have with it by continuously challenging conservative forces and constructing new institutions simultaneously. This approach of feminism to achieve a new order is what makes it one of the defining movements of our age, but it can also not be denied that there exists a lot of reforms to be implemented, a lot of ideas to be brought in the mainstream and a lot of lives to be touched by this movement and until that is achieved to its utmost level, feminism is relevant and so will it be as our only shot to achieve equality.



THE SUCCESS OF SAARC IN CHANGING SCENARIO

BY: ASEEM KHAN SHERWANI

Background of SAARC

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985. It was initiated with the dream of realizing the objective of regional cooperation in South Asia, given the peculiar regional realities about the region. SAARC is a regional group comprising of eight states- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Nine countries- Australia, China, European Union, Iran, Japan, Myanmar, Mauritius, South Korea, and the United States of America hold observer status in the association. For observers of other regional groupings like EU and ASEAN, it is a stagnant body; but many consider SAARC to be the most appropriate forum for a region beset with high degrees of national animosity and rivalry.

The logic of neighbourhood existence and civilization links among the developing countries of South Asia provides constructive background conditions for co-operation in the region. The efforts at the institutional nation of regional cooperation in South Asia began with the proposal of Bangladeshi President Zia-Ur-Rehman, elaborated in the Bangladesh Working Paper in 1980. After a series of meetings at the level of Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers through 1981-84, Heads of States/Governments met in Dhaka in December 1985. Since then, SAARC Heads of States have met at several summits.

Objectives of SAARC

The primary objective of SAARC was to promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life. The member states sought to achieve this objective through active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical, and scientific fields. Co-operation within the framework Of SAARC is based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and mutual benefit. An attempt was made to design the cooperative venture in South Asia in such a way that challenges of political disagreements would not adversely impinge on the process during the fragile formative period. Hence, it was explicitly stated in the SAARC Charter that bilateral contentious issues would not be discussed in the regional forum.

In tracing the evolution of SAARC, the Group of Eminent Persons Report involved two phases. The first was the preparatory phase based on gradual and step-by-step approach to initiating regional cooperation in non-controversial and peripheral areas. In the second half of its evolution, SAARC moved into its expansionary phase when regional cooperation was expanded in social and core economic sectors, including the operation alizarin of South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). Such thinking was reflected in the Indian Prime Minister's Speech at the 12th SAARC Summit, where he stated that "We need to move from the realm of ideas to plans of action. Our statements of good intentions have to be translated into programmes for implementation."

Challenges faced

With so many Summits, a host of co-operation programmes, regional conventions on a variety of issues ranging from terrorism to narcotics, initiation of a free trade area, agreement on a social charter and opening of permanent membership for Afghanistan and observer status for other countries, SAARC has recently witnessed eventual adolescence. But, the process of regional consolidation has not been evident without facing certain challenges. Several deferred summits, limited intra-regional trade, continued Indo-Pakistan tensions, incomplete national integration process, reversal of democratic process in many countries, the perceived role of extra-regional actors and the continued threat of terrorism and intra-regional security threats demonstrate the multiple challenges yet awaiting regional agreement and response.



Agreements and Conventions

Fortunately, these difficulties hardly constitute an insurmountable barrier and the general impasse in the South Asian scenario is mercifully not an immutable phenomenon. After four rounds of trade negotiations, the SAARC members concluded a preferential trading agreement in

2002, referred to as SAPTA (South Asian Preferent Trading Agreement). Framework Agreement for free trade SAFTA which was signed in 2004, is yet to be fully implemented. SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in 1987, and came into force in 1988, following its ratification by all member states. A Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk was established in 1995 in Colombo to support the implementation of the convention by collecting, assessing, and disseminating information on terrorist offences, tactics, strategies, and methods. An Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in 2002 but which came into force on 12th January 2006. Finally, a Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was signed in August 2008, but the same is yet to come into force due to pending ratification by all member states.

Areas of concern

Conventions have also been signed in other areas including Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Trafficking of Women and Children, etc. A Natural Disaster Rapid Response Mechanism has been created to adopt a coordinated and planned approach to deal with natural disasters under the aegis of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre. An inter-ministerial agreement was signed for the establishment of the South Asian University during the 14th SAARC Summit, in New Delhi on the 4th of April 2007. The South Asian University (SAU) is envisioned as an institution that will advance a sense of South Asian Community within the region by bringing together the future generation of students in the pursuit of academic excellence as they prepare for the challenges of the new millennium.

OUR RATIONALE

The SAARC Social Charter was signed at the 12th Summit in 2004. Issues covered under the Charter, such as poverty alleviation, population stabilization, empowerment of women, youth mobilization, human resource development, promotion of health and nutrition and protection of children are central to the welfare and well-being of all South Asians.

The two-day 17th SAARC Summit was concluded on 11th November, 2011 with the adoption of the “Addu Declaration”. The declaration, jointly adopted by the eight SAARC member states, reaffirms their commitment to peace, confidence building, liberty, human dignity, democracy, mutual respect, good governance, and Human Rights. The declaration reviews their commitment to alleviate poverty and reduce income inequalities within the societies and reiterated their resolve to improve the quality of life and well-being of their people through people-centred sustainable development.



In the declaration, SAARC member states expressed their concerns about the continuing threat of terrorism in all its forms, its manifestation and transnational organized crimes, especially illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, trafficking in persons and small arms and the increased incidents of maritime piracy in the region. The declaration says that the countries are aware about the environmental degradation and particular vulnerabilities of the region to the threat

of climate change and recognises the need to further strengthen the institutional mechanisms of SAARC to bolster and enhance regional cooperation.



Way forward

- In a region increasingly targeted by Chinese investment and loans, SAARC could be a common platform to demand more sustainable alternatives for development, or to oppose trade tariffs together, or to demand better terms for South Asian labour around the world.
- SAARC, as an organisation, reflects the South Asian identity of the countries, historically and contemporarily. This is a naturally made geographical identity. Equally, there is a cultural, linguistic, religious, and culinary affinity that defines South Asia.
- SAARC should be allowed to progress naturally and the people of South Asia, who make up a quarter of the world's population, should be offered more people-to-people contact.
- The potential of such an organisation to maintain peace and stability in the region should be explored to it' by all the member countries.

Conclusion

In 35 years of working, SAARC has evolved several institutional arrangements and agreements to deal with regional issues. Genuine activation and implementation of these agreements require political will on the part of national leaders. SAARC as an institution cannot be termed as a failure, as it provides the South Asian States with the opportunity to discuss common problems and coordinate their resolution process. National anxieties and rivalries have disallowed SAARC from promoting deeper regional cooperation. Member states have failed SAARC rather than vice-versa.



solve their problems for which every member must work with honesty and sincerity. It requires a staunch will of the political leaders, keeping in front of the mono aim of the welfare of the people of the region, by accelerating economic cooperation, social progress, and cultural development in the region. Nothing but peace, prosperity, and all-round progress in the region can make the region flourish with fast economic growth, fast development of every nation. Let us hope that SAARC nations shall build a well-focused economic, social, and cultural agenda for 2020, keeping aside the political differences, which have hitherto hampered the path of cooperation and prosperity of the region.

Despite, every member nation suffering from the problems of illiteracy, poverty, disease, population explosion, corruption, terrorism, etc, they should be united to benefit mutually, keeping aside the political problems hitherto, is the main task. These nations are bound together geographically, culturally, and historically. SAARC countries can assist one another, by launching a joint strategy to

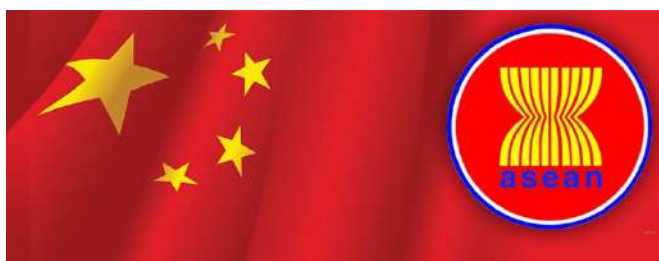


IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ASSOCIATION OF CHINA AND ASEAN

BY: VISHAL KUMAR

Abstract

China and ASEAN states are neighbouring countries. In this article, we will analyse the conditions when covid outbreak and people belonging to ASEAN countries made an anti-China perspective. In the pandemic time, ASEAN's different nations made pro-China acts and controlled social media to secure the Chinese reputation. Both allies helped each other to fight against the covid pandemic.



Introduction

China and ASEAN are geographically close to each other. Their correlation builds up over the past 20 years in a healthy manner because of their economic alliance with the regular people to people bartered. In the Asian region because of historical and geographic proximity ASEAN states have had much reason to be concerned about China. If we are concerned about economic competitiveness, trade and regional security make it relevant. In the context of the South China Sea.

In the post-Covid period changed the needs and demands of these two allies.

Negative impression on China-ASEAN relation in post-COVID era

In the covid-19 period, the bilateral economic and trade cooperation degraded that spotlight the anti-Chinese indication in ASEAN states. It comprises 11 years of successive trade relations. In the year 2019 ASEAN was the second biggest ally of China but because of the eruption of covid-19, the blockage of logistics has been faced. It creates the degradation of economic and trade cooperation between these allies.

China has economic, political, and military dominance in the south Asia region. The pandemic fabricates the panic in ASEAN. In consonance with KRISTI GOVELLA, Professor, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA "The widespread political, economic expansion and concern associated with china have exacerbated some of the xenophobic. This emotion is intertwined with recent concern about the COVID-19 pandemic."

Contrasting feelings towards Chinese people on ASEAN was increasing day by day. Many anti-Chinese videos spread on social media related to unsanitary habits and wild animal eating habits of Chinese, people assume Chinese as a culprit of covid-19, "stop eating bats" trended on Twitter in Thailand. Abdul Halim, an Islamic teacher of Singapore stated " Chinese do not wash hands after execution and their living habit is not hygienic as Muslims, that is why the virus spread.

OUR RATIONALE

In Indonesia, netizens were spreading fake rumors about Chinese smartphone brand caste aside because this spreads the virus. A serious objection in front of NOVOTEL HOTEL, BUKITTINGGI against Chinese tourists. 170 tourists were there in the hotel, netizens were encouraging people on social media to keep away from the Chinese.

The work resurgence was delayed, production of goods stopped which created a reduction in foreign trade of China.

The blockage of borders for temporary and amelioration of quarantine measures started in ASEAN countries for the sake to stop the import of covid-19 viruses from China. The two-way trade between CHINA-ASEAN dropped by 3.6 PERCENT every year and the total magnitude of trade between them was 594.113 billion Yuan.

The government of Singapore proposed POFMA [Protection from online falsehood and manipulation act] to administer the fake rumour or which has spread on social media. Media communications commission of Malaysia analysed and administered the misinformation of covid on social media. 12 citizens were arrested by the law enforcement authority.

Indonesian Ministry of communication assessed the misconduct related to covid in the context of Chinese people on social media. They gave imprisonment to 24 persons for their disobedient behaviour. Cambodian government-sanctioned punishment for the creating and broadening of fake news on Facebook and other social media handles. They stated that these types of things just degraded the reliability and reputation of the country.

Control of pandemic changes the circumstances of China-ASEAN relation

Nevertheless, the two-way trade enhanced in the month of June by 6.1%,

July by 5.7%, August by 4.2% and September by 5.6% in the year 2020.

China controlled the spreading of the virus and the production of goods restarted and stepped up growth all parts of production started and recovered.

In April 2020, the border trade ports got custom clearance and then border trade returned to normal. after the trade restriction cleared by ASEAN on CHINA.

KRUNGTHAI BANK COMPASS RESEARCH CENTER has predicted that if Chinese economic growth declines 1.0 PERCENT then the FDI of CHINA in ASEAN will drop 2.8 PERCENT.

This FDI decrease can make losses of about US \$ 2.4 - 3.4 billion. In the ASEAN context, it will account for 0.007- 0.11% of the GDP of ASEAN states.

China-ASEAN joint fight against Covid-19

China and ASEAN were tried to fight against pandemics together for the mutual betterment of their condition. The Prime minister of Cambodia visited China for a discussion on that pandemic situation and how they could fight together to end covid.

Huge anti-epidemic resources and daily uses are provided by ASEAN to China. 1500 virus protective suites and 300,000 medical masks were provided by the Cambodian Ministry of Defense, 8 tons of masks, gloves and other medical equipment were donated by Malaysia. Vietnam government provided lots of medical materials worth 500,00 US Dollar.

OUR RATIONALE

Similar to ASEAN, China makes efforts to come with materials and technical support to ASEAN countries. China provided detention equipment to help Cambodia, raw textile shortage in the cloth industries of Cambodia fulfilled by China.

China helped the Philippines with medical requirements like medical equipment, test kits, protective suits, etc. This shows the healthy relation between China and other ASEAN countries.



Conclusion

China and ASEAN have geographically and historically mutual connections that bound them to a mutual social and political relation, but we know in the present international order no one is friend or foe. It is always switchable from one to another form. In the present scenario, both authorities are the major international political power. When Covid-19 broke out from Wuhan, China, people made anti-Chinese perspective and claimed Chinese as a covid spreader in the globe. They spread rumours on social media about unhygienic habits and wild animal eaters for the Chinese.

These things were just temporary social contrast but at a political level, their relation was friendly. Governments were helping each other by providing medical equipment and daily usable goods. If we see "South China Sea" disputes they have their claim but apart from this China and ASEAN have friendly and healthy relations.



THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION (JCPOA)- ITS IMPLICATIONS ON MIDDLE EAST AND THE WORLD TRADE

BY: NILESH KUMAR

In 2002 , the world got to know that there is a secret Iranian uranium-enrichment site buried deep underground. Here enrichment means the process of spinning Uranium in centrifuges as it's isotope U-235 when it is done in low quantity, it is used in power plants but enrichment in high quantity is used basically for nuclear bomb making. While Iran continued to say that it's interest is the former but the world was sure it's for the latter. It has only brought new regional tension and western powers to sanction Iran to force it to back down. Rumours spread that Israel may take preventive measures by attacking Iranian sites as it has done in Syria and Iraq earlier.

Prior to JCPOA , Iran had developed large Uranium enrichment facilities to extract highly enriched uranium which was enough to build nuclear weapons in a matter of weeks . Meanwhile Iran was also developing heavy water reactors which would help to develop nuclear bombs.

JCPOA

Joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA) is the agreement reached on Iran nuclear deal between Iran and P-5 +1 Nations (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on July 14, 2015 and was endorsed by UN in resolution 2231 on 20th July, 2015 . This was also verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Under this deal, agreement was made on Iran not building any more heavy water facilities, would eliminate its stockpile of medium-enriched uranium, cut its stockpile of low-enriched uranium, and reduce the number of its gas centrifuges. Other nuclear facilities in Iran will be converted into non-nuclear facilities.

On January 16, IAEA submitted its report of Iran complying with all the agreements which trigger US, EU and UN sanctions relief. It was decided then that after the completion of 8 years in October 2023, on the report of IAEA, the UN would provide missile sanctions relief and the US would also allow some legislative relief to Iran. On ten years later in October 2025, the UN would terminate the deal.

United States and JCPOA

It happened basically between Iran and the then US president Barack Obama and brokered by Oman. However in their sennett if faced lots of resistance was unable to get it rectified but on his executive orders kept the waiver on the sanctions going.



OUR RATIONALE

But when Donald Trump became president, he was always against it as he said this, “horrible, one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made”. So he withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal.

This decision was criticized by all the stakeholders including European Union as Iran was in compliance with all the required agreements and was verified by IAEA. With this rising tension the US pushed ahead with its unilateral sanctions, widening its scope to cover nearly all Iranian banks connected to the global financial system, industries related to metallurgy, energy, and shipping, individuals related to the defense, intelligence, and nuclear establishments. For the first year this escalation was muted by the support of E-3 (France, Germany and UK) and EU to promise to mitigate the talk. The E-3's also promised a relief Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), but it was limited as Iran said it only consisted of the term which is already in waiver to the sanctions. So in reply to this maximum pressure of the US, Tehran followed the strategy for maximum resistance.

Since may 2019, Iran could no longer be in the agreement and intensified its nuclear enrichment by exceeding the ceilings of 300kg on low-enriched uranium and 130 MT on heavy-water; raising enrichment levels from 3.67% to 4.5%; stepping up research and development on advanced centrifuges; resuming enrichment at Fordow, and violating limits on the number of centrifuges in use. And after the drone strike on Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Gen. Qasem Soleiman in January 2019, Iran announced that it would no longer observe the JCPOA's restraints. But the power shift in the USA, with the coming of president Joe Biden there is again a silver lining for the restoration of the deal. Current US govt has agreed to the talks being brokered by the EU.

Implications on the Middle East

For Iran :

It would strengthen Iran's economy by inviting FDI, increase in its oil exports. It would generate employment in Iran and would bring stability. When sanctions are removed, Iran would be able to export its oil (9 percent approx) and natural gas (18 percent approx) to the world's export to its partners. It would not only relieve Iran but also other countries in covid pandemic as prices of oil would go down. It would be a huge boost in the recent inflation rise due to covid situations in various countries.

For Saudi Arabia :

It becomes the traditional hindrance to the deal as these two countries are traditionally cold war rivals in all the war prone countries of the Middle East. Major reason for this tension is the Shia sunny conflict. Being Saudi Arabia a very important player for US for its middle East policy, it becomes very hard for US to maintain peace between the two.

For Israel :

Israel has been cautious about any developments in Iran as it becomes a matter of its security. Both the countries are involved in proxy wars against each other in many countries in the Middle East. Time to time Israel has been attacking the nuclear site of Iran to slow it's progress. Recent attack to natanz site had done great damage to Iran which Iran termed this a nuclear terrorism.



Implications on World Trade

Unilateral sanctions on Iran have been criticized worldwide. It has not only been problematic for Iran but also for almost all the countries trading with Iran mainly in the energy sector . Analysts in the US now see ,the alienation of Iran has been one of the worst decisions for the US and its allies too.

As India had to cut down its cheap oil import to Iran to zero. Japan too has faced the same problem. Now naturally China being the emerging rival of the US is taking full advantage of the current status quo by extending its hand and developing trade with them. This has also pushed Iran towards North Korea which has already created instability in its region and beyond.



Way forward

With the US joining Vienna talks last week which were abandoned by former president Trump and comments from Iranian government that it would return to the status quo if other parties agree, the terms have been a positive sign for the Middle East and world trade. But what is required is more trust between the countries in this realistic world and strong international organizations and communities to accommodate such differences. To prevent any such wound of pulling out all of a sudden, there is a need to have some hard regulations when the deal gets restored again.

THE RISING HEGEMONY OF CHINA

BY: HIMANSHU TEOTIA

Since the end of the cold war in 1991 the world has witnessed the emergence of a unipolar world. This whole world has been dominated by the sole power i.e. the United States of America who has dominated the world culturally, militarily and economically. After the end of the cold war, many scholars from Europe and America expected the advent of multilateralism. But the U.S. began the decade as the only superpower, and a unipolar power in the world. Between 1990 and 1998, the U.S. increased its Gross National Product (GNP) with 27% whereas Europe increased its GNP with 16%. Through trade and alliance partnership, it has played a critical role in shaping the economic and geopolitical contours of the region. It fought wars in North-East and Southeast Asia, established security ties with Japan, South Korea and other countries. It had championed trans-regional open trade. The American-led order in East Asia provided the foundation for the cascade of political and economic transitions that have marked the region. But the rise of China as a leading economic and military power is an epic phenomena in the 21st century.

The rise of Alternative Power

During the last four decades, China has moved from being an isolated country separated from the international community, having become one of the world's major power and being on its way to becoming the biggest economy in the world. Since the Chinese leadership made a strategic choice to reform its economic system and to open up to the world economy in the late 1970s, China has sustained an average annual economic growth of about 10 percent for thirty years, the fastest in the world and unprecedented in world history of economic development. In 2005, China surpassed Japan as the largest holder of foreign exchange reserves. In 2007, China overtook Germany to become 3rd largest economy and 2nd largest trading nation in the world. It is widely projected that China will replace the U.S. as the largest economy by 2025-2040. Along with China's take-off as a rising power came the perception of the "china threat" which has been prevalent in the west since the 1990s. There is a perception that as an unsatisfied rising power, China is bound to challenge the dominant position of the U.S.A. and to disrupt the status quo, which is happening right now. History has witnessed numerous wars for hegemony between a dominant power and a rising power. Countries in the region that previously have had the United States as their leading trade partner now find China in that position. Old American allies such as Japan, South Korea and Australia are now economically tied to China, even as they remain in a security partnership with the United States.



OUR RATIONALE

Its massive growth in economic capacity and wealth is providing a platform for a rapid building and modernization of its military power. The U.S., in the meantime, has struggled through a period of economic downturn and weakness that has put pressure on its global hegemonic capacities.

China's foreign relation with other countries

1. U.S. - China Relation:

(a) Trade War: The US-China relationship has changed in fundamental ways. The trade war between two economies has shocked many across the world. Earlier, China was the United States' largest good trading partner in 2020, even as US imports from China fell by \$100 billion between 2018 and 2020. FDI flows have slowed since 2017, while other ties not captured in trade and FDI data have expanded, including financial investments and China's use of U.S. open source technology platforms. In 2018, the Trump Administration, acting under section 301 of the trade act of 1974, concluded that China engages in forced technology transfer, cyber enabled theft of U.S. intellectual property and trade secrets, discriminatory and non market licensing practices. In response it increased tariffs on approximately \$250 billion of imports from china. The People's Republic of China (PRC) countered with tariffs on \$110 billion worth of U.S. products.

(b) Technology: To address China's industrial policies that seek civilian and military technology leadership, the Trump administration sought to curtail U.S. technology transfer to China. It increased scrutiny of academic ties, strengthened investment review authorities, tightened export controls, and banned U.S. investment in firms tied to China's military. It banned PRC firms Huawei, China mobile and China Telecom from the U.S. market.

(c) Overseas Infrastructure: Responding to China's "One Belt, One Road" program, which seeks to expand China's global commercial ties and influence, mostly through infrastructure projects, Congress passed the Better Utilisation of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act of 2018 and reauthorised the U.S.-Export Import Bank. The Trump Administration developed the Infrastructure Technology Assistance Network, the Transaction Advisory Fund to promote competitive projects.



2. India-China Relation:

The India-China engagement is the defining relationship in building the much awaited Asian Century. These two countries are Asian giants in every sense of the term; physically huge, demographically massive, economically resurgent and strategically most powerful, compared to any of their other Asian neighbours. The tone of relationship has varied over time; the two nations have sought economic cooperation with each other, while frequent border disputes and economic nationalism in both countries are a major point of contention. The modern relationship began in 1950 when India was among the first countries to end formal ties with Republic of China (Taiwan) and recognize the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government of Mainland China. Relations between contemporary China and India have been characterized by border disputes, resulting in three military conflicts- the Sino-Indian war (1962), the Doklam dispute (2017), and the recent one in Ladakh (2020). The two nations are also competing to build infrastructure along the border which is also known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

3. China-Japan Relation:

China and Japan have been deepening economic interdependence over the last two decades, while China has recently shown territorial ambitions and initiated disputes with Japan. Tokyo has political frictions with Beijing over the sovereignty of the Senkaku islands that China calls Diaoyu islands. Japan today is concerned at China's military build-up and assertive behaviour in the East and South China Seas. In order to checkmate any possible Chinese designs on this front, Tokyo is said to be considering even developing strike weapons such as cruise missiles that could reach ground and targets in China. Tokyo has also formed the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with Washington, New Delhi and Canberra to address its mounting concern about Chinese behaviour in the region. However, Japan has never allowed such irritants to adversely affect its economic relations with China. Authentic Studies says Japan-China relations have been "cold" in politics but "hot" in economics. Today Japan is China's third largest source of foreign investment. Trade has increased from \$1 billion to some \$317 billion over the past 45 years.

4. China-Pakistan Relation:

Pakistan and China as "all-weather strategic partners" have had a history of 'glorious journey'. Both countries have been able to develop a multidimensional relationship and a good example of peaceful coexistence despite different social, political and economic systems. Historically, both nations shared a common Indian threat to their security that caused to create a strong bond of entente. Pakistan and China came closer after experiencing fifty years of vicissitudes; internally and externally before entering in the 21st century. China's strategic interest forced it to form relations with South Asian neighbours. Pakistan has remained a staunch ally of China even at a time of Chinese isolation period that ranges from 1960 to 1970.

Most experts in Pakistan believe that the strengthening ties between Pakistan and China are due to India-China war, Sino-Russian rift in relations and Chinese conflict with Japan.

(a) China-Pakistan Economic Relations:

China has steadily appeared as Pakistan's largest trading partner equally in terms of exports and imports. Mutual trade and commercial links between the two countries were established in January 1963 when both nations engaged in the first bilateral long term trade agreement. Two countries have frequently exchanged high-level visits ensuing in a variety of agreements and investments in both nations at governmental level as well as private bodies.

(b) China's Investment in Pakistan:

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - The CPEC is a well-crafted economic partnership between China and Pakistan which is expected to bring economic development and prosperity not only for the two neighbouring countries but also for the whole South Asia. It is considered central to China-Pakistan relations and the CPEC will link Kashgar to Gwadar port through the extension of the Silk Road initiative which is widely known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). With the investment of 46 billion dollars, its completion is expected by 2030. It is furtherance of China's desire to a shorter and cost-effective route to Middle East Asia, Central Asia, Africa and the rest of the world. This will ultimately promote peoples' quality of life and will foster pragmatic economic and trade cooperation.

Conclusion

The growing influence of China posed a threat to different nations not only in Asia but in different continents also. The nations are making alliances with each other to counter the threat in the same way China is also making alliances with different nations. It seems like the battle has started between the US and China to counter the threat of each other and dominate the world like the cold war in the 90s.

SOUTH KOREAN ECONOMY- PHOENIX THAT ROSE FROM THE ASHES

BY: SMRITI UPADHYAYA

With the start of the Pacific War in 1941, the Korean economy declined when the Japanese mainland exploited Korea economically. By the end of the Pacific War, Korea was one of the poorest regions in the world. The three-year long Korean War (June 25, 1950 - July 27, 1953) devastated the South Korean economy. It was a severe and hard-fought one between UN forces (including South Korea and 16 other nations) and North Korea and its allies (China and USSR). Nearly four million people were presumed dead, and much worse were the property and industrial facility damages. Its impact on the Korean economy was so immense that consequential economic systems and policies re-framed the course of economic development in the following years. General Chung-hee Park led a military coup in 1961 and then served as president from 1963 to 1979. During this time, the first national Five-Year Plan (1962-1966) was implemented, becoming an important factor in the Miracle on the Han River (the period of rapid economic growth in South Korea following the Korean War). It aimed to develop the nation's economy through expansion of agriculture and energy industries such as coal and electric power; development of basic industries such as chemical fertilizer, cement, oil refinery, iron, and steel; expansion of social overhead capital including roads, railways, and ports; full utilisation of idle resources including increased employment; conservation and utilisation of land; export promotion to improve the balance of payments; and promotion of science and technology.

While this first Five-Year Plan did not bring about an immediately self-reliant economy, it brought a period of growth and modernization in preparation for long-term economic success and policy reform. As part of Park's export-driven development strategy, his authoritarian government prioritized preferential loans to export businesses and insulated domestic industries from external competition. A group of massive, mostly family-run business conglomerates, called chaebol, were supported by the South Korean government since the early 1960s. The word "chaebol" is a combination of the Korean words chae (wealth) and bol (clan or clique). They dominated the country's economy. Over time, the chaebol expanded into new industrial sectors and tapped into foreign markets. By the 1980s, conglomerates such as Samsung, Hyundai and LG became so big that they turned trade deficits into trade surpluses.



OUR RATIONALE

In 1954, the average income of a South Korean was just 64 dollars while the average income of an American was 2412 dollars. Today, an average American makes only twice as much as an average Korean. Chaebols played a central role in the rise of South Korea's economy like a phoenix from the ashes. The rapid reconstruction and development of the South Korean economy during the latter half of the 20th century was accompanied by events such as the country's successful hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics and its co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Following the Miracle on the Han River, South Korea has been held as an economic model for other developing countries and acceded to the G20 in November 2010, capping a successful sixty-some years of rebuilding and modernization.

After 1993, cultural commercialization became government policy as leaders saw the necessity of integrating culture and economy. In July 1997, the Asian financial crisis led to heavy losses in the manufacturing sector, prompting a handful of businesses to turn to the entertainment sector. According to The New York Times, South Korea began to lift restrictions on cultural imports from its former colonial ruler Japan in 1998. Around this time, several Korean television dramas were broad-

cast in China. Hallyu, a term we may not be familiar with by name but certainly by output, is a Chinese word literally translated as "Korean Wave". It refers to the transcendence and increasing popularity of South Korean cultural exports, firstly picked up by countries such as China and Japan.



In February 2000, S.M. Entertainment's boy-band H.O.T. became the first modern K-pop artist to give an overseas performance, with a sold-out concert in Beijing. My Sassy Girl (2001) was a major international breakthrough for Korean films. In the Indian state of Manipur, where Bollywood movies were banned by separatists, consumers gradually turned their attention to Korean entertainment. Popularity in Korean products subsequently spread to other parts of North-east India.



OUR RATIONALE

In 2008, the budget for the cultural industries sector increased, and the government introduced the "creative content industry", emphasizing K-pop and video games as important foreign exports. The "big three" record labels (SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment) partnered with YouTube in 2009. Korean culture products have seen increasing popularity globally, particularly after Psy's video for "Gangnam Style" went viral in 2012-13 and was the first YouTube video to reach over a billion views. K-pop sensation BTS is producing—along with hit songs—a whopping \$4.65 billion of gross domestic product. HRI reports that 796,000 foreigners visit South Korea annually because of BTS, promoting the local tourism industry. That goes, too, for the massive global success of girl-group phenomena like Blackpink, Girls' Generation, Red Velvet, Twice and others.



The soft power boost to Korea's global brand can't be exaggerated. According to Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the foreign consumption of Korean content was steadily rising throughout 2020. The COVID-19 lockdown proved to be an inflection point in 2020 when Korean drama moved from a niche segment to mainstream due to over-the-top media services such as Netflix, Rakuten Viki and YouTube. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism will spend 4 billion won from 2021 to improve the quality of translation both for dubbing and subtitles to make the viewing experience of foreigners better. To revive the culture and tourism industries of South Korea after COVID-19 pandemic and expand Korean wave around the globe, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is giving out accommodation coupons worth 51.6 billion won to help push Korean content and language abroad by increasing the use of digital technologies.



K-beauty has also become a massive part of the global market thanks to the rise of beauty influencers on social media. This sector has driven profits in other industries including tourism.

The Korean wave has developed into the foreign diplomacy of South Korea, used as a means to promote Korean culture to foreign countries.



MAJOR EVENTS THAT ALTERED OUR COURSE OF HISTORY

BY: SAGORIKA KONWAR

History is full of interesting and significant incidents, but some have had a greater impact on the planet than others. There have been several watershed events in history that have shifted the world's trajectory. These flashes changed the trajectory of society, whether it was a fraction of a second, a rising movement, or a single individual who stood up to take a stand. They were watershed moments that would forever alter our world and lives, for better or for worse.

The obvious major events, such as World War I and World War II, occurred. Would the world have seen war if Franz Ferdinand had not been assassinated in 1914 or Hitler had not invaded Poland in 1939? Then there were others like Hedy Lamarr and Martin Luther King Jr. who took matters into their own hands. Will we still have Wi-Fi if Lamarr hadn't invented GPS during the war effort? And where would civil rights be today if MLK hadn't given his famous speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial?

From discoveries and technology to wars and political movements, the most important moments in history are ahead. Others were brief blips of time with major consequences, while others spanned several years. Any of them occurred prior to our birth. However, many of them are newer. Even now, there are revolutions and developments taking place and we can only speculate about how they will affect the planet. However, following are some of the compilation of a list of important historical events that have shaped the way we think, live and view the world. Continue reading to learn about the significant historical events that occurred during this time period.

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, and World War I broke out

Europe was a hotbed of conflict and military competition in 1914. Many events may have sparked a war, but the assassination of an Austrian Archduke – Franz Ferdinand by a Serb sparked widespread declarations of war and the implementation of treaties, resulting in the horrific conflict of the First World War. The war was expected to last four years and claim the lives of millions of men and women from all over the globe. The First World War ushered in a period of significant social change. Following the First World War, there was a greater appreciation for women's contributions to society, with many countries granting women the right to vote.



OUR RATIONALE

There was also a greater focus on the position of the working class, which had fought and died in the war and wished for a more peaceful future. A global flu pandemic struck in 1918/19, killing nearly 50 million people (many of them young adults), but due to the carnage of the First World War, it had only a small impact on transforming the world, as many policymakers downplayed its significance.



Russian Revolution 1917

25 October 1917 – Start of October Uprising by Bolsheviks.

There had been intermittent Communist revolutions in European countries since the publication of Marx's Communist Manifesto, but none had really succeeded. The Bolshevik revolution, led by Lenin, brought about a radical new form of government with global repercussions in October 1917. Lenin was a devout Marxist who lost no time in enacting his version of a "proletariat dictatorship." The world was divided by communist Russia. Some saw this as an antidote to Capitalism's inequities, while others saw it as a symbol of totalitarianism and lack of equality. The Soviet Union changed the lives of Russians, bringing economic prosperity as well as increased political power.

Treaty of Versailles 1919

Following World War I, American President Woodrow Wilson advocated for an idealistic 14-point plan and the creation of a new "League of Nations" to aid in the prevention of war. The American Senate, on the other hand, voted against joining the League of Nations, and France and the United Kingdom demanded "reparations" from Germany and the vanquished forces. Until the mid-1920s, Germany was invaded by French forces and the German army was seriously weakened. Many German army officers found these prohibitions to be "humiliating" and Hitler would exploit this feeling of "betrayal" in the coming years. General Ferdinand Foch of France said, "This is not a peaceful situation. For the next twenty years, there will be an armistice." The Treaty of Versailles and other similar treaties re-drew the map of the world unilaterally, creating new countries out of ethnically mixed populations, such as Czechoslovakia, Finland, Poland, Latvia, and Yugoslavia, which would prove troublesome several years later. In an attempt to reclaim lost pride, Hitler would plunge the continent into war for the second time just 20 years later.



Stock Market Crash 1929

After the long economic and stock market boom of the 1920s, Wall Street stock prices plummeted in October 1929. This resulted in a long-term drop in share prices, which triggered the global Great Depression. Unemployment in the United States has risen to 25%, but global output and commerce have decreased. Poverty and a sense of alienation have fueled the rise of political extremes around the world. Both Japan and Germany turned to far-right nationalist groups, which resulted in military expansionism and World War II. The Great Depression in America resulted in FDR's election and a massive expansion of the federal government, as people demanded that the government intervene in their lives.



German Invasion of Poland - 1939

Hitler's Nazi Germany invaded Poland on 1st September 1939, reportedly for "lebensraum" and to correct the Treaty of Versailles' inequalities. The invasion of a sovereign nation persuaded the allies - the United Kingdom and France - of Hitler's larger plans for the takeover of Europe. After appeasing Hitler over Austria and Czechoslovakia, Poland proved to be the final straw, and Great Britain declared war on Nazi Germany on September 3rd, 1939. The Second World War would endure until May 1945, with an estimated 50 million people killed. Less widely known is that the Soviet Union occupied sections of Poland concurrently with Germany's invasion, thanks to a secret Nazi-Soviet deal.



Battle of Britain - June-September 1940

After conquering all of Western Europe in 1941, Hitler's German army seemed invincible. In May 1940, a pivotal moment in world history occurred when the British government debated whether to pursue a peace treaty with Hitler or to fight on. Winston Churchill was adamant that the United Kingdom could never surrender and declined to sign a treaty. As a prelude to invasion, the German air force began attacking British air bases in June 1940. Despite the limited number of combatants, the German air force suffered enough casualties to deter the invasion attempt, and Hitler withdrew from the impending invasion.

Operation Barbarossa - 1941

Nazi Germany launched a devastating attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Stalin was shocked as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany had signed a non-aggression pact in 1939. At first, the invasion was successful, approaching within a few miles of Moscow at the end of 1941. The invasion brought the Soviet Union into the global conflict and was a turning point in the fortunes of Germany as they struggled to fight on two fronts. During the bloodiest fighting of the Second World War, millions of soldiers and civilians died. The invasion transformed the Soviet Union, transforming it into a major power and providing a rationale for Stalin to decide to install Communist regimes across Eastern Europe at the end of the war.

Pearl Harbour 1941

December 7, 1941

“A day that will live in infamy” – President Franklin D. Roosevelt

In 1941, the axis powers ruled Europe and a large part of Asia. Great Britain was undefeated, but lacked the courage to beat an overwhelming foe. The bombing of Pearl Harbor shifted the focus of the world war to the Pacific, putting America at odds with both Japan and Germany. Three years later, the bulk of the manpower in the liberation of occupied Europe came from American troops.



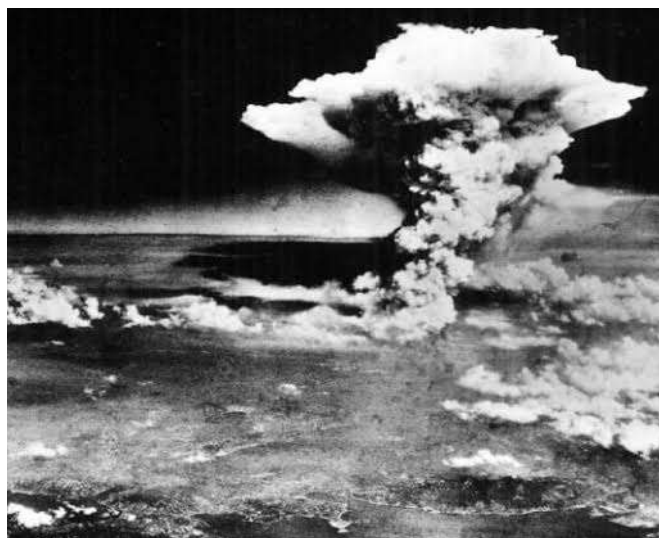
Atomic Bomb Hiroshima

August 6, 1945

Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by the atomic bombs dropped by the United States in 1945. The Japanese surrendered as a result of the destruction, putting an end to a long and costly Pacific war. Japan's surrender was once considered unimaginable. The atomic bomb, on the other hand, hastened Japan's surrender. The atomic bomb had far-reaching consequences that went beyond the end of WWII. It demonstrated to the rest of the world the destruction that a third world war could bring. Even today, Hiroshima's shadow and the possibility of nuclear war loom large over the world.

Foundation of United Nations - 1945

The United Nations was founded on October 24, 1945. Its aim was to prevent war and coordinate humanitarian efforts to reduce poverty, uphold international law and protect the environment. Despite its inability to stop aggression on several occasions, the United Nations remains an essential international platform, with the United Nations Charter guaranteeing basic human rights and freedoms without distinction or discrimination. It also established the Hague as the site of the first international court of justice. Global humanitarian activities and UN entities such as the Global Smallpox Eradication Programme have benefited from UN involvement.





Indian Independence 1947

The date was August 15, 1947.

India had long been regarded as the British Empire's crown jewel. It was the world's second-most populous nation. After refusing Indian demands for independence for several years, Britain eventually agreed to full independence in 1947. With India's independence came a traumatic split and the birth of a new nation: Pakistan. The division resulted in painful sectarian violence and killings, as well as the exodus of millions of people who found themselves on the wrong side of the frontier. India's independence resulted in a newly independent nation that claimed no allegiance to either the United States or the Soviet Union - instead opting for a third path, as Nehru suggested.

The Establishment of Maoist China

1st of October, 1949

China was embroiled in a bitter civil war following WWII, with the Communists led by Mao Tse Tung and the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek. The People's Republic of China was founded on October 1st, 1949, by the victorious Communist Party. This resulted in the creation of yet another strong Communist state in the world's most populous nation. The Chinese people's lives were deeply affected by the Communist Party's grip on power during the Great Famine of the 1960s and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Even though its economic policies have changed, the Chinese Communist Party still wields significant political influence.

Assassination of John F Kennedy

November 22, 1963

One of the most surprising and unforeseen events in the history of the planet. Since his election in 1960, John F Kennedy had served as President. He was a young, liberal, Catholic man who had inspired many people with his optimistic outlook on life.

"My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."
(From JFK's Inauguration Address in January 1961)

Following his assassination, Lyndon B. Johnson was elected President, and American involvement in Vietnam increased, resulting in a bitter conflict that divided the country. While Lee Harvey Oswald was apprehended for the assassination, evidence suggests that there was a larger plot at work and that more than one lone gunman was involved.



Fall of the Berlin Wall

November 9, 1989

The Berlin Wall had served as a symbol of the so-called "Iron Curtain" that divided West and East Europe for decades. On the one hand, there are totalitarian communist states, and on the other, liberal democracies. The wall was designed to prevent East Germans from fleeing to West Germany, and many were shot while attempting to flee. Its existence, rather than anything else, was symbolic. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked a watershed moment in the Soviet Union's control of Eastern Europe. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union sent tanks to Hungary and then Czechoslovakia to put down independence movements. However, Mikhail Gorbachev, the proponent of Perestroika and Glasnost, granted the request this time.



9/11 Terrorist attacks

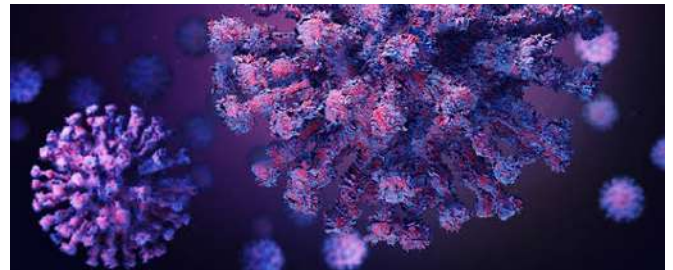
11th September 2001

The United States has been subjected to occasional terrorist attacks before. However, the sheer audacity and scope of these terrorist acts astounded the United States and the rest of the world. The death toll was believed to be just under 3,000 people. The case had a major impact on American foreign policy. It was a driving force behind the contentious invasion of Iraq, which resulted in a so-called "war on terror" symbolised by Guantanamo Bay and a debate about the legality of torture.

Covid-19 Pandemic 2020

Covid-19, a new virus, was discovered in China in late 2019/early 2020. While the virus had a low fatality rate of 1-4 percent, it spread at an alarming rate. In March 2020, Italy became the first country in the Western world to impose a lockdown in an attempt to halt the virus's rapid spread. People were confined to their homes and businesses were shut down as a result of widespread global 'lockdowns'.

Despite travel bans, the virus has spread to every country on the planet. The global economy was severely harmed by the lockdown, which resulted in a sharp increase in unemployment and a drop in manufacturing. It also called into question a long-held belief in Western developed countries' invulnerability. The pandemic's long-term effect is unknown, but it will trigger systemic changes in the economy and the global balance of power. China is both a source of the virus and a key player in the effort to produce equipment to cope with the epidemic, as the world's dominant producer.



Other major events which changed the world:

- The British army's escape from Dunkirk (1940).
- Palestine's Partition Plan and the Establishment of the State of Israel (1947).
- Iranian Revolution (1979) saw the removal of the US-backed Shah and the installation of Ayatollah Khomeini, an authoritarian Islamist who advocated an anti-Western theocracy.
- Apartheid in South Africa came to an end. Nelson Mandela was released from prison in South Africa. (Year 1990).

DISSECTING INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS AMID CHANGING GEOPOLITICS

BY: SHIVANSH NAGPAL

In the modern world, international order has been governed by geopolitical interests. The relations between USA-UK, Austria-Germany, and France-Switzerland have been considered among the most prominent between sovereign nations. Not surprisingly, India and Russia (formerly the USSR) have been able to forge a unique relationship which has stood the test of time.

Background: India & USSR

In 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru visited the USSR to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution. The Soviet Union was the first major country to recognise India as a sovereign nation in 1947.

During the peak of the Cold war (1960s), the USSR offered India new avenues of trade & economic aid as the West was wary of investing in India. Construction of plants for steel & iron, heavy industry & equipment, power & natural resources were major areas that propelled the USSR to the second largest national contributor to India's development.

In the Indo-China war of 1962, the Soviets maintained neutrality in the conflict despite close relations with Communist China. Then in the 1965 India- Pakistan war, the USSR facilitated the Tashkent Agreement in January 1966. By then, India was abundantly receiving Soviet arms because of Soviet concessions for India to deal with its shortage of foreign exchange.

The peak of the relations came in 1971 during the India-Pakistan war. With the US & China backing Pakistan, India was able to sign- the "Treaty of Peace," "Friendship and Cooperation" with the USSR in August 1971, which cemented India's stance on Bangladesh, deterred Chinese military intervention and allowed India to receive major arms support.

Between 1971 and 1991, both saw liberalising trends- with the USSR seeking domestic political & economic reforms, improving relations with China & the US, whereas India sought to decrease governmental bureaucracy & aimed for scientific & technological modernization of the country.



India & Russia- A New Horizon

The sudden demise of the USSR created a severe economic crisis for India and prompted it to improve relations with the West. Yet, India worked with Russia to redefine its relations as early as 1993 to sign an agreement on economic & defence cooperation. The Indian Space Research Organisation and the Russian Glavkosmos that worked together on space programmes, the

OUR RATIONALE

development of the BrahMos missile & the Sukhoi-30MKI aircraft are well-known examples of this process.

A crucial point came when President Putin and PM Vajpayee signed the “Declaration on Strategic Partnership” between India & Russia in October 2000. It pledged cooperation in the spheres of politics, trade and economy, defence, science and technology, and the environment. For example, despite India becoming a nuclear power a few years ago, the sales of Russian arms to India went up, including advanced T-90 tanks, an aircraft carrier, and licensed production of SU-30 combat aircrafts.

Interestingly, Russia could not strengthen its trade relations with India despite its rising oil revenues during the 2000s. Some of the factors are- the scrapping of the Rupee-Ruble arrangement, competition from China, Southeast Asian countries as well as the West. However, this has not had any lasting impact on other areas of cooperation like research and development, renewable energy, joint production of weapons systems, and nuclear technology.

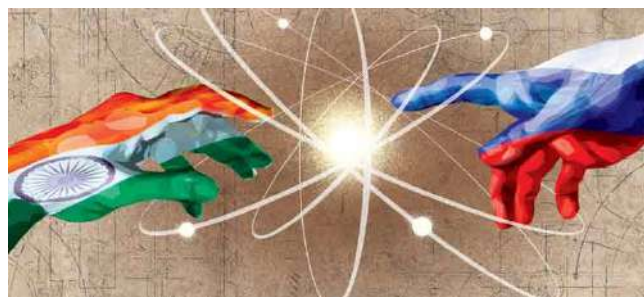


In 2010, this relationship was elevated to the status of a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership during the visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. So far, eighteen Annual India-Russia Summits have been held since 2000, with bilateral relations covering the aspects of domestic as well as foreign issues like Afghanistan, Iran’s nuclear programme, intervention in Syria, etc.

End of a Special Relationship?

Both countries have tried to overcome the romanticism of the Indo-Soviet ties & engage at a more pragmatic level. As early as 2007, the former Ambassador to Moscow eulogized Russia as an “anchor of certainty in a sea of strategic flux”. He admonished both countries not to try too hard to look for other markets. This was apparent as a dynamic India was rapidly rising in the global markets, whereas Russia was engaged in rivalry with the West and domestic issues like corruption & economic stagnation.

Since 2014 with the Modi government coming to power, India has been moving closer to the West than ever. In the same year, Russia was subject to international criticism over its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis and its annexation of Crimea. As a result, the thaw in relations has not continued for long. Western sanctions on Russia have increased its dependency on China, which is itself a target of Western criticism, especially on issues of human rights, democratic dissent, trade war, and the COVID-19 crisis.



OUR RATIONALE

With China's global rise, India & Pakistan made entries into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2017. However, since 2017 Russia has been selling arms to Pakistan despite India's concerns. In 2018, a Balochistan rebel leader blamed India for the trouble in the region. Russia then affirmed to help Pakistan with its "anti-terror capabilities;" a modest way of indicating increased arms sales. It must be noted that ties with Pakistan could help Russia and China in gaining control over the resource-rich Afghanistan by collaborating with the Taliban once US & NATO forces leave the nation.

India's active membership of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or Quad) as a 'diplomatic and military arrangement' to counter China has also upset the Russians. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has criticised such attempts of creating an "Asian NATO" to counter China and stated that such are Western moves aimed to implement devious policy against New Delhi.

India's opposition to China's BRI and its security challenges arising from China has complicated its ties with Russia, which finds itself on China's side against pressure from the US.



Yet, the RIC grouping continues to help mediate India-China conflicts such as the Doklam standoff. India and Russia still support each other's foreign policy stance on various issues.

Furthermore, India has been looking for arms purchase from the US and Israel which could alienate Russia. This however has been offset by the Indian decision to purchase Russia's S-400 Air Defence System despite US Sanctions under CAATSA. Interestingly, during India's deadly Himalayan stand-off with China in 2020, Russia halted its delivery of S-400 defence missiles to Beijing – likely because of Indian pressure.

Way Forward ?

Despite all the complexities, India & Russia have been able to cooperate successfully.

Apart from annual summits, the ministers of the two countries meet regularly at the Inter-Governmental Commissions, to ensure regular contacts & consistent collaboration. Their leaders also meet at the meetings of various multilateral organisations like BRICS, the SCO and G20. The 'Partnership for Global Peace and Stability' in 2016 was signed by the two. In early 2019, Russia bestowed the Order of St Andrew the Apostle on PM Modi for his contribution towards developing friendly ties between Russia and India.

To compensate for the declining trade with Russia, India has signed an MoU regarding exploration & production of hydrocarbons in Russia in 2016. Important agreements for the construction of nuclear power plants were finalised during 2014-2015.

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For India, Russia is the largest oil and gas investment destination, with a total of \$15 billion in cumulative investments. In 2016, Indian companies spent \$5.4 billion, acquiring oil and gas assets in Russia.

India and Japan have expressed their desire to invest in the Russian Far-East to boost their partnership in the Indo-Pacific region. The three have identified energy, labour, transport and logistics, maritime connectivity, pharma, high technology, scientific research, and tourism as potential areas of cooperation to counter Chinese presence in the region. On the same lines, India has proposed to establish a shipping corridor from Chennai to Vladivostok, to ensure greater access to the Russian Far East as a part of India's bigger Indo-Pacific policy.



Simultaneously, it has been very eager to secure Moscow's participation in the Quad or the bigger Indo-Pacific policy to prevent it from getting closer to China, a situation that might be disastrous for India's regional security. From India's point of view, maintaining good relations with Russia is the key to countering Chinese threats in South Asia & along its own borders.



Conclusion :

As before, India has demonstrated its emphasis on a multipolar, open & equitable world order. Despite numerous geopolitical shifts, New Delhi has been keen on retaining its partnership with Russia as well developing a new one with the West. The first informal summit between India-Russia at Sochi in May 2018 was a key step towards recognizing each other's roles as "major powers with common responsibilities for maintaining global peace & stability".

India must keep in mind that security & national interests shall be the core of the foreign policy. Indeed, India has ramped up its engagement with other major powers like Japan, Israel, Germany & France, who have their own visions of a free Indo-Pacific. At the same time, India shall take steps to shore up its relations with Russia to prevent it from becoming more dependent than it already is on China. It is no secret that India would benefit from closer cooperation with Russia in the Indo-Pacific.

India and Russia's relationship cannot flourish on defence and historical linkages alone. New dimensions of cooperation need to be found to build a strong economic and strategic partnership. Both nations will have to act according to not just bilateral relations but also regional & global challenges.

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