

World Peace is a Choice of Superpowers.

Outline:

1- Introduction.

2- Relationship between the worldpeace and Superpowers.

3- Why is the worldpeace a choice of Superpowers?

(a) The global political and economic hegemony of superpowers can arbitrate between states.

(b) Diminishing role of the United Nations (UN) in strategic ^{issues} of war and peace, due to superpowers' domination.

(c) Superpowers can use their economic power to push for economic integration of states through trade.

(d) Military cooperation between states and superpowers through peace-keeping missions.

4- What are the limitations of superpowers in making world peace possible?

(a) A national pursuit of perceived national interests by superpowers at the cost

of world-peace.

(b) Proxy-wars and geopolitical conflicts between states and superpowers.

(c) Rapid shifts between Superpower alliances in order to maintain the balance of power.

(d) Emergence of new centres of power bend on disrupting the world order by challenging existing superpowers(s).

(e) Trade-wars between superpowers through international financial institutions.

(f) Increasing superpower's proclivity towards unilateral course of action against perceived enemies.

5- Suggestions:

(a) Strengthening global governance by reforming the United Nations (UN) and the Security Council (UNSC), especially the decision-making process.

(b) Promotion of free trade and economic dependence between states and superpowers.

(c) Strengthening multilateralism at the UN to keep a check on the superpowers and their resort to unilateralism.

(d) Promotion of diplomatic approaches for the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the

Day: _____

③

Date: _____

States and the superpowers.

6-Conclusion.

War is one of the constants of history, neither civilisation nor democracy could diminish it. The world is in a perpetual chaos, as it is marked by the intricate geopolitical dynamics, persistent regional and global conflicts. An environment like this makes the dream of world peace elusive. As nations grapple with the complexities of maintaining peace and stability, the role of superpowers emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping the dynamics of global politics, security, and world peace. In a world dominated by rational cold-blooded, and realist pursuit of national interests, the noble idea of world peace is considered utopian. However, world peace is intricately related or linked to the choices and aspirations of the superpowers. World peace is signified by global tranquility, harmony, and cooperation among states. In the view of this, the superpowers are the only entities, which have required resources and the potential to move the rest of the states towards

that noble dream of world-peace. For instance, only the superpowers have the political, economic, and military hegemony to affect the international political organizations like the United Nations (UN), but for all the wrong reasons, so far. As superpowers control the so-called New World Order through their influence over the global institutions like IMF, World Bank (WB) and the GATT. It has a flipside too, as such interference renders such institutions ineffective and a failure. The diminishing role of the United Nations (UN) and the Security Council (UNSC) is a practical manifestation of that. Similarly, the global geopolitical and economic rivalries between the states and superpowers further make the dream of world peace impossible to materialize. Furthermore, the emergence of new centres of power disrupt the status quo by demanding their due share and role in the global political system. Resultantly, the existing superpowers is put into a prisoner's dilemma and it tries to keep a check + control

or discourage the emerging power through various means i.e., sanctions, containment, or proxy-wars. However, the states are rational actors and superpowers are no different, thus, reason demands that world peace is essential for both the superpowers and the states. Thus, world peace will depend on the choices of superpowers, due to their bloated military, economic, technological, and political hegemony throughout the world.

Historically, the superpowers and world peace share an intricate relationship.

Absence of one would make the other irrelevant as there would be chaos in realm, because smaller states would engage themselves in protracted battles for hegemony. This certainly is the case with the small or medium states when they try to expand. The expansion of a relatively small Greek city-state Macedonia in 336 B.C. to 323 B.C. The decline of superpowers in Greece namely Athens and Sparta, provided smaller city-states like Macedonia under the Alexander of Macedonia to conquer

Day: _____

(7)

Date: _____

all city-states in Greece. Furthermore, the Persians under Darius I and Xerxes had established great empires, that witnessed decades of peace. However, after the defeat of Persians due to Greek alliance rendered Persian empire as ineffective. Thus, when Alexander the Great embarked on path towards world conquest and domination, the Greeks could defeat Persians without much of a fight. The Greek conquest of the Persia, modern day India and Afghanistan left behind the bitter legacies of fear of foreign invasion and the uprisings followed by it. Thus, it can be deduced that world peace requires the mediation and the choices of superpowers. Absence of superpowers would provide an opportunity to small-states with expansionist agendas to disturb the balance of power and the relative calm achieved under the preceding superpowers. Therefore, the status quo established by superpowers establishes peace, and superpowers in order to maintain their status quo as superpowers require world peace and tranquility.

Only superpowers can establish world peace through their rational choices. Because, only superpowers enjoy the global political, economic, and military hegemony, that is why their choices make an impression over the rest of states. Given the economic and military power of superpowers, they can neither be isolated nor taken for granted. This fear of superpowers keeps the smaller and medium states in check. For example, since 1978 the Middle East has been a virtual proxy-war ground. The Iranian Revolution is a larger Shia state in world kept the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia (KSA) on a back-foot, due the fear of spill-over implications of the revolution that could challenge the monarchical rule in the Middle Eastern states. Given the ^{expansionist} nature of a revolutionary government, the Iranian regime too was seeking to expand its own sphere of influence. However, that was unacceptable to the Arab sheikhdoms under the leadership of KSA. Soon thereafter both states have been trying wrestle the

each-other to take or assume the leadership of the Muslim world. For that in mind, the KSA cultivated a close relationship with an anti-Iran superpower; the USA. In a knee-jerk reaction, the Iranians jumped bandwagon to Chinese led Russian bloc. However, the Biden administration's falling-out with the KSA in recent times gave China an opportunity to expand its influence in the Gulf. In order to avoid the persistent proxy-war between the KSA and Iran, the Chinese diplomatic and mediation brokered a peace-deal in March, 2023. The Chinese could have followed the footsteps of the USA, however, the strategic compulsion forced China to neutralize the US influence in the ME by mediating between Iran and KSA. The Chinese leveraged their economic muscles in that regard.

Along with the global hegemony and economic muscles of superpowers, the diminishing role of the United Nations (UN) in the strategic issues of war and peace also provides the superpowers, an

opportunity to fill the vacuum. However, the diminishing role of the UN is due to the hegemony of the US led Western-states (UK, France, Germany), etc, ~~with~~ central the purse and decision-making capabilities. Thus, on matters of strategic importance these states leave ~~the~~ no option for the UN. Similarly, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is dominated by P5 (UK, USA, France, China, Russia) states, the matters of war and peace depend on the mood of these states. For example, if one state vetoes the resolution to end a conflict the other state may veto that. Thus, the ~~whole~~ exercise of veto-power renders UNSC ineffective. The Israel-Hamas war is a case in point. While Russia or China may table a resolution for cease-fire but any other member of the P5 states can veto that. Thus, it can be said that, when the UN becomes ineffective due to its dependence on Western states, ^{then} only the choices and aspirations of the superpowers or great powers can decide the matters of war and peace.

Furthermore, world peace depends on the choices of superpowers because only these entities are blessed with the required resources and economic power to compel other states or regulate their behavior for the sake of peace. For example the post-Cold War world order is dominated by the US and Western states. The international trade and finance system is used by them to punish the weaker or the belligerent states either through sanctions or trade-embargo. Similarly, the former General Agreement of Tariff and Trade (GATT), that is rechristened as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) makes the policies of international trade by keeping in view the interests of the Western-states. Thus, the superpowers can flex their economic muscles to either promote peace, and interdependence or economic integration between states through international free-trade or economic corridors.

In addition to that, the superpowers can move toward the world peace through either military cooperation or technological exchange between each other or states. The UN

Peace-keeping missions is a case in point. Even at the height of the Cold War both the USA and USSR could not live in isolation, they had to maintain the necessities of the interstate conduct of relations. The Americans developed major industries in the former USSR after the detente under the former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Kissinger believed that both states have had developed mutual dependence and both states were an undeniable reality, thus both cannot go on fighting, because it would prove to be a zero sum game. Thereafter, both states decided to share technology and cooperate militarily to end the arms race and to move towards gradual disarmament. It may be noted that states are rational actors, and very well-aware of the fact that conflict would only bring disaster and misery, and therefore, world peace is the only thing that can guarantee their existence; Superpowers are no different in this regard. Therefore, they cannot afford to have a perpetual

conflict or war due to heavy cost associated with the conflict. The Germans and Soviets (in WWII and Afghanistan) learned that badly, so did the Americans twice, in Vietnam and later in Afghanistan.

However, that is better said than done, because there are certain limitations and compulsions that force the hands of superpowers. First is that states first of all are rational actors, in pursuit of their perceived national interests. Sometimes, the superpowers in pursuit of their interests (national) sacrifice the world peace. As explained by an American professor of Post-Structural realism John Mearsheimer in his book 'The Tragedy of Great Power Politics' that state have a recurrent behavior that is to seek self-stability, and national interests, in that pursuit, sometimes states sacrifice the ideals of world peace, global harmony and cooperation. For example, the US led NATO expansion into east of Russia was destined to backfire, as it would disrupt the balance of power. Even then both the USA and NATO sacrificed the Ukraine, resultantly, the

Russian Federation acted likewise.

Besides the fanatical pursuit of national interests, the proxy wars and geopolitical conflicts among the superpowers themselves or between the states can prove detrimental to peace. As these smaller conflicts may metastasize into larger ones over the course of time. Such conflicts may force the hands of superpowers to either support one party or the other. It becomes quite worrisome when the superpowers themselves get engaged in proxy wars. For example, the Syrian civil war was an internal issue of Syria. However, the regional and global rivalries soon found inroads into the conflict. As the US started supporting the anti-Bashar-al-Assad rebels (Free Syrian Army), the Russians and Iranians too got involved in the conflict due to a common enemy in the form of the USA. Thus, the Syrian civil war became a much greater humanitarian and refugee crisis that it could not have had happened if the superpowers did not involve themselves in the conflict.

Likewise, the changing balance of power result in a shift ~~back~~ in alliances between states. Such alliances put states into a frenzy called the "Thucydides trap" which signifies a stage when one state feels threatened by the other, due to one's power. It can be either economic and military power or the cultivation of powerful allies. For example, in the post-9/11 world, the USA-Pakistan relations became the centre of international political gravity due to the latter's role in the global war against terrorism. However, due to close Chinese friendship with Pakistan and economic relations between the two moved the USA towards Pakistan's arch-enemy: India. Because, Pakistan-China friendship raised many eyebrows in the Washington as the latter was considered a geopolitical rival of the USA. However, this shift in alliances proved to be unfruitful as the USA started taking the Indian narrative on the Indian Occupied Kashmir. Thus, ^{prospect of} peace in South-Asia was the first casualty in this changing balance of power dynamics.

The emergence of new centers of power is another major reason of the failure of superpowers to bring peace. Because the superpowers consider an emerging power as a threat to its survival due to the fear of losing the status of ~~to~~ a superpower state or global hegemon. It is obvious that an emerging power will try to influence the global politics and world order to demand its own fair share. This phenomenon is explained by an American International Relations scholar Graham Allison in his book as "Thucydides' Trap," which means that both a declining and emerging powers become engaged in a struggle for domination, and resultantly war between both becomes inevitable. It is certainly the case of the US and China rivalry, the former is utilizing every possible mean ranging from military alliances to containment and arming of India as a possible counterweight against the latter. Therefore, the new emerging poles of power makes the existing superpowers to move an inch away from establishing peace.

The trade wars between the superpowers are another reason of their failure to bring peace to the world. The great power competition between states requires not only the conventional military capabilities but also the economic power. It was due to economic failure that many great empires and powers of the past imploded from within. The implosion of Soviet Union in 1992 due to stagnant economy and higher cost of war in Afghanistan serves as a strategic reminder for states that economic power and development are required for survival in the great power competition. Resultantly, all states want to acquire sufficient economic muscles by hook or crook. Likewise, the states resort to trade-tariff and barriers, such as China. Similarly, states like US and its Western allies use the clout over the World Trade Organization (WTO) to draft and implement policies in a way that their interests would be protected. This is the new form of mercantilism. The China-US trade war is a classic example of this. Thus,

The Pursuit of economic power and competition with other states push the superpowers towards trade wars, which prevent economic interdependence and move states towards escalation and war.

Last but not the least the increasing proclivity of superpowers like USA towards unilateralism renders the international-law and the Charter of United Nations as ineffective. This trend towards unilateralism became rampant in the post-cold war period, when the certainties of the cold war became actual realities. The global hegemony of USA through its military or war-machine emboldens such behavior. The US intervention in Iraq in 2003 is a case in point.

In order to appease the war-hawks and pressure groups at home, the US led by President Bush bypassed not only the international law but also the civilized conduct of inter-state relations under the guise of the theory of pre-emptive strike to eliminate the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in Iraq. However, the history

Vindicated Iraq as no WMDs were ever found. Such unilateralism emboldens the states to follow similar paths that is disastrous for the world peace.

However, the states high on jingoistic nationalism like Modi's India in South Asia ~~can~~ may copy this course of action from the playbook of the USA, to satisfy his rabid vote-bank. Such outcome would be catastrophic, to not only the world peace but to the humanity itself.

Though world peace depends on the choices of the superpowers, but the multilateral institutions like the UN currently ineffective can keep a check on the superpowers. The discriminatory nature of the UN Security Council and arbitrary decision-making powers of the permanent members is the biggest hurdle for world peace to materialize. Therefore, it is pertinent to reform the UN especially the Security Council to make it an inclusive and robust multilateral institution. Unfortunately, even that is not possible without the

sanction of all superpowers and permanent members of the UNSC.

One of the major theory of world peace is that it could only be achieved when nations would depend on each other through economic integration and free-trade. The German philosopher of Enlightenment Immanuel Kant reiterated that in his essay on world peace, called 'The Perpetual Peace? Kant called it 'Perpetual' because he thought that uniformity in form of government and economic interdependence of states through free-trade would eliminate all quarrels and conflicts. The modern statecraft and global politics too suggest that economic integration and free-trade are prerequisites for world peace. Therefore, it is imperative that states should trade-freely with each other. A classic example of this is the continuance of trade between China and USA despite serious geopolitical rivalry between them. It also implies that the superpowers should not use the global trade regime for their own benefit.

The global institutions (inter-governmental) like the UN, IMF and WTO must embrace the spirit of multilateralism to keep a check on the superpowers and their increasing tendency toward unilateralism because such course of action is detrimental to the prospects of world peace. Furthermore, such an approach if adopted by the IGOs or the IOs would make superpowers morally and politically bound by their ~~word~~ pledge to world peace. This would also ease the tensions between the global north and south, as the latter is disillusioned due to the hegemony of the superpowers.

The promotion of diplomatic approaches by the superpowers and states for conflict resolution is a far superior and effective way to move towards peace. For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis could have resulted in a nuclear Armageddon. However, the timely diplomacy proved to be fruitful and the danger of a nuclear war was averted. Similarly, the Chinese line of

of action to use diplomacy as a channel ^{or mean} for conflict resolution is a case in point. China had border disputes with its neighbors, however, the Chinese diplomacy proved to be more effective unlike the Western States and their jingoistic nationalism.

Diplomacy and its primacy over conflicts is important for a superpower to maintain its credibility. If the credibility of a superpower is questioned it loses the prestige of being a superpower. This is the reason why China is presenting itself as a replacement of the US and its allies for arbitration of disputes between states.

In conclusion it is safer to assume that the world peace depends on the choices of superpowers.

The world is marked by turbulence, protracted conflicts and intricate geopolitical rivalries. Such an environment makes the superpowers an only option to help bring the world peace. As superpowers have all the required resources at their disposal

Such as political hegemony, economic power and military domination as well as technological superiority. However, there is a flipside of this coin too, such as the limitations of the superpowers, that include geopolitical rivalries, proxy wars, shifting alliances and balance of power dynamics, trade wars, unilateralism, and emergence of new powers. All these factors force the hands of superpowers to give primacy ~~to~~ to the pursuit of national interests at the cost of world peace. However, it must be noted that the states are rational actors, so these limitations of the ~~the~~ superpowers may not affect the ^{relative} world peace in the long-run, as the pursuit of world peace is too a rational choice. In the absence of that superpowers too would not exist, as every state will be at a perpetual war with everyone else.