

Q10: Nations do not die from Invasion; they die from Internal Rottenness

1 Introduction

Thesis Statement

'Nations of the Modern age die largely as a result of internal social, economic, developmental, and institutional failings'

2 What leads to State failure in the Modern international System?

- a) Wars of Conquest are long gone : Example Iraq - Kuwait 1990
- b) Intra State Wars are growing
Example : Burma Civil War
- c) Internal factors drive Civil War

3) Societal Failings of States

- a) Intolerance in all its forms
e.g., Iraq
- b) Lack of Moral Values

example : Hadith on the Sinking Ship

c) Populism and Polarized electorates

Example : Socrates

4) Economic Malaise and Discontent

a) Elite Capture : Example 'Why Nations Fail'

b) Inequality : Marxist and Critical Theory

c) Corruption : The USSR

5) Institutional Collapse

a) Politicization of Bureaucracy

b) Nepotism and Kinship - Francis Fukuyama

c) Constitution and Law as Recommendations

6) Developmental Indifference

a) The Failure to Educate : 26 million out of School in Pakistan

b) Lack of Social Welfare

c) The Public Good Problem

7) The internal dynamics behind external invasion

a) Afghanistan Since the 1980s

b) The Collapse of Austro-Hungary

c) The Resilience of Germany

8) Conclusion

The Essay

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Japan was a nation that faced complete destruction after WW2. Her industry annihilated and two atomic bombs brought the nation back to the Stone age. She was also subject to humiliation having to accept U.S terms that shattered the nation's confidence.

Nevertheless, Japan did not die.

Japan rose to soon become the 2nd largest economy in the 1990s. It had eclipsed many of the Western nations that it had once fought.

Nations never die until its own people conspire against it. Japan is an example of how internal unity and resolve can rebuild any nation no matter how far it falls.

In today's international order wars of conquest have become obsolete. National success, and death, are largely a

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result of internal social, economic, developmental, and institutional evolution.

This essay shall explore the causes of state failure in the modern age to illustrate how internal shortcomings determine the death or success it may experience.

Before analysing the reasons for state failure it is pertinent to first determine the characteristics of the international system.

The wars of conquest that characterized state behaviour of the past are largely over.

The advent of the international system and collective security prevents wars that attempt to erase another nation. For example, Iraq was forced to withdraw from Kuwait in 1991 under UN approved military pressure.

Statistically speaking, interstate war has declined significantly. Recent conflicts such as the Russo-Ukrainian war is based not on national destruction, but on political goals. However, intrastate war has risen sharply with civil wars in Burma, the Congo, and the Sahel region of Africa. These wars are centered around ideological, religious, and political grievances within a state. These internal factors therefore, are the leading cause of state failure and death in the modern age.

Societal failings are one key component to state failure around the globe. Intolerance in all its forms is one potent factor in failure, creating disunity within a state. Sectarianism was an important factor in the

rise of dictatorship in Iraq and Civil Unrest within the Country, with ISIS in 2014 being a by product.

Another Societal reason behind State failure often has to do with the Moral Character of a Nation. The Prophet PBUH had forewarned that any people without Moral Character would not be able to thrive. The Prophet likened this to deviants who poked holes in the under carriage of a ship which results in every one sinking.

Socrates in ancient Greece also questioned the nature of the people and democracy. He predicted that people of poor character and those swayed by populism would lead to the election of autocrats, who would lead the nation

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into war, to cover their own shortcomings. For this criticism he was imprisoned and made to commit suicide. Nevertheless, his ~~perdict~~ predictions came true after his death, with Greece being ravaged by war. provoked by the city states among themselves.

Another internal failing that can lead to state death is that of economic malaise.

Many would agree that the state exists to improve the state of the people who reside within it. Yet, states are often plagued by ills such as elite capture. Elite capture can be described as a phenomenon where those who rule, or are in power, use the state and its machinery to benefit those who rule.

This often comes at the expense of the masses. Acemoglu, in his book 'Why Nations Fail', details how an extractive state ends in death. Elitist states are often plagued by internal unrest, low levels of innovation, and continuous coups to gain hold of the state's riches.

This leads to limited spending on actual needs and repeated bouts of political instability.

According to the UN, Pakistan's elite capture cost could be measured as upwards of 17 billion USD per annum in 2019. This scramble over resources have punctuated Pakistan's history with repeated regime change and instability.

Inequality can also be described as a potent economic factor that leads to distress. Growing gaps between

the rich and the poor have been ^{the} leading causes for internal collapse. This is the central argument of Marxist thought, which puts the capitalist class versus the proletariat.

Widening inequality motivated the Russian revolution of 1917 leading to lengthy civil wars. This culminated with the end of the USSR and loss of Russian territory.

However the USSR's collapse was also motivated by the corrupt nature of the ruling class. A centralized economy with millions of state run factories led to an abuse of the system. Millions of Communist party and members and bureaucrats lived off of corruptions and illicit deals while the nation lived in poverty. Once the people became aware

of the massive scale of inefficiency and corruption, not even the Russian republic under Boris Yeltsin supported a united USSR. This was a major contributor to the end of the USSR in December 1991.

A lack of moral values and elite capture can also impact the process of institutionalization within a nation. Where certain groups seek to game the system for their own vested interest, having weak institutions is an imperative. In Pakistan organizational rot has expanded throughout the system. The politicization of the bureaucracy has played a key role, allowing for perks on the basis of corrupting the system rather than serving it. Elements of

Our political system have weakened the institutional checks and balances within these institutions for their own personal gain. Others however had better intentions, with the aim of improving service delivery with the appointment of trusted officials. Yet, the effect has been the same, with the institution being unable to operate for the people in an impartial, independent manner.

This weakening of the institutional checks and balances have also led to the rise of nepotism, replacing merit in the system. This has had disastrous effects on service delivery. Incompetent officials are unable to fulfill the requirements of their jobs and often see their posts as opportunities for corruption.

Overstaffing of departments to dole out favours have also led to failure of departments and increasing burden on the State.

The Education System with 'Ghost' and incompetent employees is a prime example. However, beyond the short-term these institutional failures can have dire consequences.

A by-product of this politicization has also been the legal and Constitutional Systems of a Nation. Through the flagrant disregard for the law, its enforcement becomes a mere dream.

This institutional rot then extends, proliferating throughout the system from lower level crime to nation-wide corruption.

This is further inflamed by nepotism within, from the ground level policeman to the

the judges who decide cases.
Ultimately this has a cumulative effect of the law being nothing more than a means to an end for those with power.

The failure to develop coherent institutions and enforcement also leads to the rights of citizens being violated. The Pakistani Constitution of Pakistan details the right to receive an education. Yet, the nation has the 2nd highest out of school populace in the world. 26 million children between the ages of 5-16 are out of school according to UNICEF. Thus the failure to respect the rights as enshrined in the constitution leads to develop mental inequity and sows the seeds of future destruction. With a growing youth

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bulge and a Shortage of jobs for Unskilled labour, the failure of institutions to act is likely to result in Significant Social Unrest.

This failure to protect the rights of the people also leads to a failure in Serving the People. With a Poverty rate of 40% in 2023 Pakistan has failed to provide a Majority of its Citizens with dignity. The UN describes human rights and Social Welfare as providing people with the right to gainful employment, freedom from hunger and disease, right to dignity among other metrics. Pakistan with the 2nd lowest HDI in Asia has not met the needs of the people. Institutional rot has therefore turned into State rot where the people

Struggle to Meet their basic needs. A massive population of over 240 million in such a state is prone to erupt in anger, and is more easily swayed by division and populism.

Moreover, the failure of institutions and a indifference to development worsens the public good problem. Without a focus on human development and improving the lives of the people, little interest is shown in creating infrastructure to serve. Without these public goods, the disenfranchised stay poor, and social mobility remains a distant dream.

Without leadership that prioritizes social uplift of the people, a nation is more prone to divisive rhetoric and

Social tension. People grow distant from their identification with the Nation. Patriotism dies with a Nation that cannot serve the basic needs of its people.

Invasions still occur. War is still fought and destruction can be devastating. The world is not a Utopia of peace. The war in Afghanistan from the 1980s onwards is a potent example. The invasion by the USSR devastated the country and plunged it into civil war and anarchy. The state has still not healed from the ~~traum~~ trauma inflicted.

Empires of the past have also been eliminated through war. The Austro-Hungarian empire, once

the Strongest Nation in Europe,
Met its end in the
aftermath of WWI. Yet,
these failures were a result
of More so internal failings.

The Austro - Hungarian empire
and Afghanistan of the 1980s
to present Suffered from intolerance.

In both cases ethnic and
religious faultlines allowed the
Nation to be broken from
within. The people that
once lived within no longer
attached themselves to the
Nation they once called home.

Japan and Germany
faced similar destruction.

Germany was divided in
two, with the Great Powers
determined not to allow a
United Germany to exist. Yet,

the passion of its people
and the developmental success
of the West led to reunification

despite the fears of European nations. Today Germany and Japan are among the top 5 most economically developed nations of our time.

In conclusion, the death of a nation is a product of the internal failings and rot it exhibits. Nations have been devastated by war, even atomic bombings, but still have risen time and time again. Yet, those nations that fail to inspire their own people, fail to meet their needs, and fail to consider their own long term, collective interests are sowing the seeds of their own destruction.

The failure to focus on the development of the people, in forms of social and economic uplift are factors

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that no Nation Can Thrive or
Survive without.