

Mock-8 International Relations Paper - I

Q #02 Contemporary challenges and the pressure on Nation-state system

• Introduction

The Thirty Years War gave way to the Treaty of Westphalia, which in turn brought to existence today's nation-state system. This matrix of relations internationally relies primarily on the notion of sovereignty and non-intervention. That was, however, centuries ago. Issues like human smuggling, drug-trafficking, pandemics, climate change and terrorism did not play out with the intensity as they do today. Therefore, the system is under ever-mounting pressure. Will it crumble or survive depends largely on the mechanism adopted to deal with the issues.

⇒ The case against the future of Nation-states

1. Profusion of international fora

The fact that contemporary issues of politics are so trans-national in nature has resulted in a multiplying number of international organizations emerging. Although issues are the vantage point and initial scope of these platforms, states joining them tend to

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give up some level of sovereignty and control. States in the organizations, gradually assume newer roles and identities as compared to their individual past. The European Union is a good example. Starting off as an economic cooperation forum, it has spread out to agendas like the current refugee crisis and nation-states, under the pressure of strings being pulled by all involved parties, implode beyond their assumed places in the system.

2. Necessity of "unprecedented circumstances"

The 9/11 was a gateway to drastic measures undertaken by the United States to go after the terrorists. Decades later, the pandemic opened another venue for states to indulge in unwarranted behaviours. Surgical air strikes, operations beyond established international borders, manoeuvres over another state's air space or maritime boundaries, all are actions allowed by "unprecedented circumstances" all arising due to issues of the day. The refugee problem has made borders ever more porous, making it look almost like we live in a joint joint state society and not in a bordered system.

3. Crisis of disillusionment in states

States are made of populations. The sentiment present in these groups of people is reflected in state behaviour.

Record number of civil wars and resistance movements against the state show that the public at large has lost all faith in the Leviathan which was supposed to protect them from this very state of war of all against all. This creates a picture where states lack in legitimacy as global actors and are thus being sidelined in face of other actors like the UN.

⇒ Resilience of the Status quo

I. Vested interests of system runners

Despite of a clamour against the system due to issues like oppression and inequality, it is still consolidated by the collusion of elites.

Their vested interests of staying in power and control, perpetuate dynamics that ensure that the system remains intact despite of all shocks and explosions. Privilege dictates

the pen writing not only history but also the future and it bends to the side of the top brass. The runners of states

will make sure, with help of their counterparts that their system is immortal.

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2. Lack of effective alternatives

If the nation-state system were to be dissolved, say for instance as suggested by Marx's prediction of a world government of proletariat, would there be a feasible alternative to it?

The answer is yet murky and open to exploration. The inertia of statehood and interstate communications makes all alternatives sound unrealistic and could possibly be worse.

3. Writ of use of force

States have what most non-state contenders of power lack resulting in asymmetry & a legitimate sanction to deploy as much force as required.

Armies and weaponry raised off public taxes in millions and continued investment in military sophistication make state a power house that international organizations could never be.

• Conclusion - States must do better to outlive their decay

Many challenges are hovering over the future of the nation-state system that the states cherish. To live on, states must rise to the occasion and prove that they are equipped to take on the issues heads on. It will not only restore faith in states but also consolidate the system where sovereignty is prioritized over all else.

Q#04 Foreign Policy Making

• Introduction

States exercise their relations with other states by the virtue of a deliberate plan of action called foreign policy. It is ideally a coherent doctrine, prepared after detailed assessment of circumstances and character of the nation and the system it operates in. Although a complex process, it is uniform across its fundamentals.

⇒ Determinants

1. National Interest

It is the most vast and primary determinant of foreign policy. It stands for all the objectives and agendas that favour the national vision of a state. These include territorial integrity, economic and human security and promotion of friendly ties with neighbours and allies.

For example, if a state is at the brink of default, it becomes the principle determinant of its external relations to secure external funds and investments.

National interests vary over time, although are historically unilinear. The national interests not only operate in immediate proximity but also extend across the world. For instance, it is in US interest to have open lines of sea communications worldwide.

2. Geopolitical Realities

Foreign policies are neither formulated nor decided out in a vacuum. They are highly cognizant of the realities of the world and the nature of power dynamics. States never make policies that anger the hegemon and they never give concessions to weak states. Similarly, if a war is raging, states have to diminish attention from matters of low politics towards protecting their respective states in the war.

3. Composition of decision making bodies

This is another key internal determinant.

The Neocons sent Bush administration to war in Iraq. The nature and sentiment of the chief decision making bodies like the lobbies, the military, pressure and interest groups as well as council of ministers, all drive foreign policies.

4. Nature of leadership

Some leaders are simply more risk taking than the others. Some have the charisma to negotiate peace while others have the jingoism of a wolf. Modi's foreign policy, for instance would be different from that of Xi Jinping. Leaders make or break the fate of a state's external relations depending on their rationality.

=> Decision Making - Models and Methods

1. Bureaucratic Model

This model is a design of generating foreign policy decisions based on bottom-to-up input of government servants of the relevant department. Different organs of the government try to exert their influence throughout the process of logrolling and bureaucratic bargaining.

2. Organizational discussion model

This model opens the floor of decision making to all organizations like military, economic bodies and the civil society. They all work to reach consensus, thus this can be a slow and time consuming process.

3. Authoritarian vs. Democracy

Some states are by default receptive to the word of the public: thus the hypothesis that democracies do not go to war with each other as their people will oppose it. Other states, although are prone to repressing the expression of the will of the people and only imposing their own wishes, like in North Korea.

⇒ Diplomatic exercise of FP

1. Foreign offices

Once the policy has been formulated, the institutional organs of the state, in the form of embassies and high commissions take the state's policies to the world.

Mutual opportunities of prosperity and peaceful engagement are promoted and messages of all sorts are conveyed. Embassies have a lot of weight: US decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem sparked conflict.

2. Role of Media

State media is a powerful tool of not only carrying its foreign policy globally but also convincing domestic actors of the actions taken. It can bolster support for even the most irrational moves (like Israel did for a genocide) if utilized properly.

3. International Organizations

These are key platforms of carrying out multilateral negotiations and conduct of relations. Their number is quickly growing in today's world: some are meant to address strategic issues like NATO, others are benign and economic like ECO. United Nations is the biggest international organization which is a stage and battleground for foreign policies of all members.

Q #06 Hyper Nationalism Vs**Globalization****Stance : Disagreement****Core Argument :**

The new wave of xenophobia, mercantilism, populism and hyper nationalism, all push states inwards. But none of it can ever reverse the cover of globalization engulfing every nook and corner of this world. Matter of fact, all of these phenomena are a mere reaction to globalization, not a challenge to it.

1. Immortality of Globalization - Multipolarity

Before the voyage of Christopher Columbus, no one even knew about America. Afterwards, everybody knew America even if they did not know their neighbours. The hegemonic influence and culture superseded all sense of locality and indigenous identity. This was a point of no return. Ever since, the America's influence may have toned down to make space for more global powerful actors like regional powers, but the shade of globalization, interconnectivity and permeability is here to stay for good. In fact, the existence of multipolarity testifies to how global the world has become, that even moderate powers are able to exert their influence through the globalization channels.

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2. Hyper nationalism as the very by-product of globalization

People being insecure and protective of their national identities in face of their emerging global ones is a testament to their (welcome or unwelcome) acknowledgement of globalization. If there were no globalization, there would not have been any such wave. The existence of a wave of the sort, however, does not endanger globalization as its impact is more insidious and powerful than these hyper-nationalists realize. It is a force that will carry the willing and drag the unwilling instead of sparing anyone at all.

3. Case Study: Viktor Orban's Hungary

Millions of refugees knocking on the doors of Europe is a message well received by most of its leaders due to the general ethos of humanitarian aid. Hungary, however, under the cherished leadership of Orban is raising barbed wires and shut borders to keep the gifts of globalization out. Some would say this is a successful aversion of globalized politics but the matter of fact is that globalist forces have penetrated the very society of Hungary by siphoning in impact from Europe. The term of Orban is bound to come to an end sooner or later, and then the spirit of global involvement and proactive engagement will prevail all over again due to society's preference.

⇒ Concluding Remarks :

The viewpoint posted on the question undermines the power of globalization. It is not a mere bubble to be burst by these minor shockwaves. It is an empire of steel built on socio-cultural ways of existence and conceptualizing everything in the world. Even if hyper-nationalism were to prevail in a majority of this world for a prolonged enough duration, there would still be forces of globalization waiting at the end of the tunnel.

Q#07 Menaces of Neo-neo Colonialism through the lens of International Political Economy

⇒ Introduction

The imperial history of the world is filled with bloodshed and forceful domination. The decolonization post WW II is thought to have eliminated such a system and saved the newly freed countries from the shackles of their colonial masters. But the truth is that even today, a very active and calibrated system is at work to subjugate the colonial subject and it is more lethal than all the past tactics.

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1. Dependency Theory and The World System Theory

Dependency theorists and the world system theorists offer meaningful insights into the exploitative nature of the world economic system. The relations between the global North and South are such that they propagate the exploitation of the latter at the hand of the former. The raw materials and cheap labour of the underdeveloped world is swiftly drawn in to power the industry of the first world, but the cost of their environmental pollution and climate degradation is to be paid by the poor countries lacking resilience.

2. Global Supply Chains

The capitalistic means of production have spread out globally in the form of supply chains. Be it the automobile industry or the textile one, their cheap assembling plants are in countries where there is no sense of labour unions or rights, the hours are long and the payments cheap. The desperation of poverty is exploited; which was created in the first hand by the very exploitation of the past. This scheme of affairs restricts the actual take-off of local economies and traps them in cycles of needy outward-looking.

3. Neoliberal hegemony

Thatcher and Reagan's opening up of world economy to the tune of neoliberalism has created an ever increasing problem of systemic inequality. The economies of the

North are agglomeration of capital that they attract from the South and instead of letting it trickle down, they allow its accumulation in the hands of a few.

The same capital is then lent out to the poor nations on staggeringly high interest rates.

4. International Financial Institutions

These are the gatekeepers of the neo-colonial exploitation of the poor countries.

They impose the rules and systems of the hegemon without taking into account the needs of their own.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) gives out loans to the struggling economies of the South. But none of the bailout is ever approved without making states comply to their demands. Sometimes these demands are too dangerous for the economic dynamics and spur conflicts and civil despair.

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Case study: The Asian Tigers

The poster boys of the neoliberal miracle, the Asian Tigers are celebrated for their development by embracing the Western-supported economic model. Although their economies did take off, they also face a surging plethora of issues like inequality, accruing debts and over dependence on foreign capital. The winners and losers of international financial system are decided by wealthy nations and just when one thinks of oneself as a winner, the tables are turned.

⇒ Conclusion

Colonialism never died, it just got better at masking itself and the mask allowed the wolves to do more harm than good.