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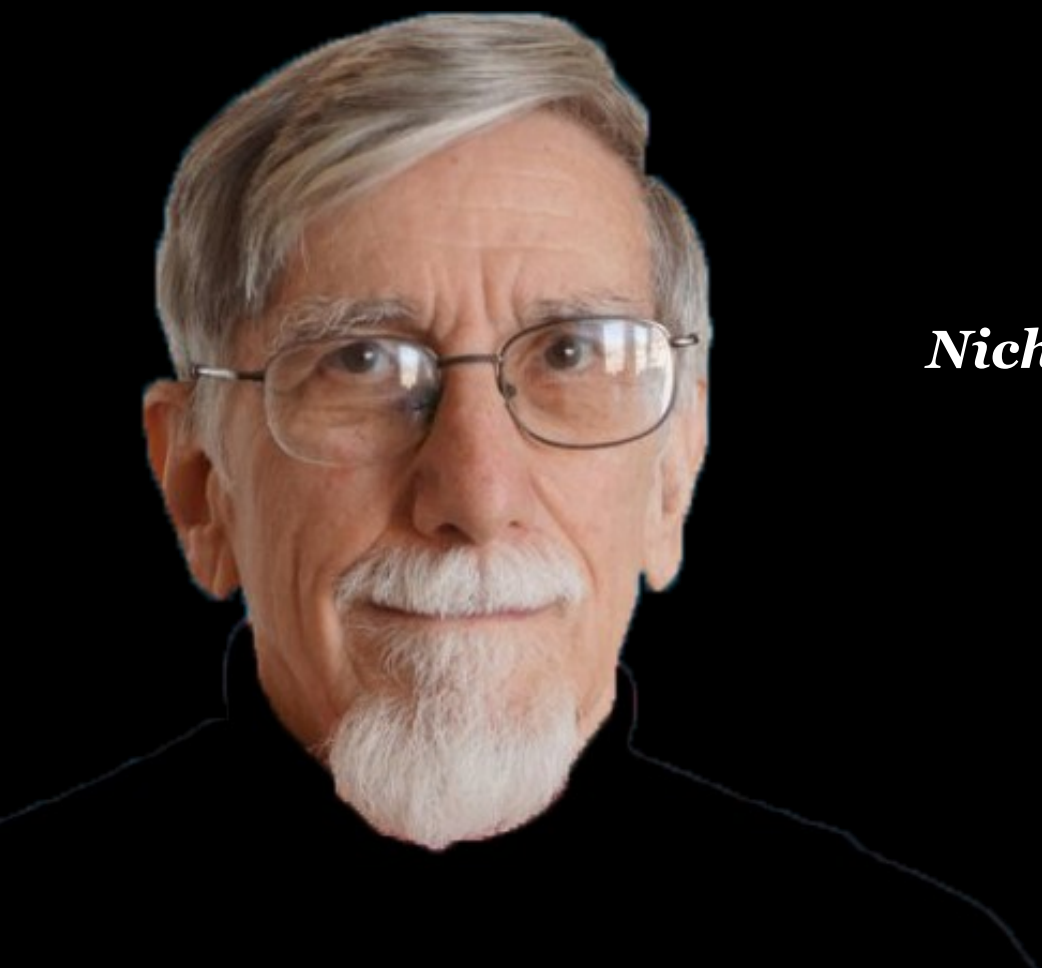
The Perceptions of Robert Jervis: An Appreciation



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and
Nicholas J. Wheeler

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"ADVANCING DIVERSITY"

Contents

The Perceptions of Robert Jervis: An Appreciation

Ken Booth and **Nicholas J. Wheeler**

As we write this appreciation of Robert Jervis, weeks after his death at the end of 2021, media outlets are full of stories of major powers readying themselves for the expansion of a war across the Russia-Ukraine border. TV news reports soldiers, tanks, warships, and aircraft carrying out their drills, while out of sight we know that cyber warfare specialists will be preparing for the worst. On the airwaves, we hear the obscene sounds of rockets firing, fighter planes taking to the air, and the rat-tat-tat of rifles and machine guns. History is reawakening, and major war in Europe is once again thinkable if - we hope - unlikely. Meanwhile, as this nightmare invades our senses, diplomats parade concern, ratchet up threats and counter-threats, play the mutual blame game, offer conciliatory moves, plead innocence, and flex what they hope are the right muscles.

In all this uncertainty, two things are for sure: first, misperception will be rife, as signals and counter-signals will not be interpreted accurately; and second, with the passing of Robert Jervis, we have lost one of the very best guides in understanding the relationships between signalling and misperceptions in relations between states. Since the 1970s Jervis taught his students, the profession, and sometimes his government, how to think more clearly about situations such as the one facing us in the far east of Europe: the dangers in the methods by which President Putin is manipulating fear; the problems with the ways Western decision-makers are seeking to dampen things down by what they hope is deterrence combined with reassurance; the spiralling of mutual mistrust and distrust; the undertaking of tactical and strategic moves that are open to misperception; the dynamics of 'the other mind's problem' (trying to get inside the heads of others); the ambiguous meaning of weapons systems and deployment patterns in relation to whether they convey offensive or defensive motives and intentions; the challenge of accurate signalling, by word and by action, when their meaning is ultimately determined by the possible target not by the sender; and the unpredictable outcomes of pursuing interests through military moves in an environment of interlocking and escalating fear.

Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler are the authors of *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

In the Introduction to his second major book, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976), Robert Jervis emphasised the causes and characteristics of misperception among decision-makers, and he demonstrated through numerous illustrations why this really matters. It was vital work, he argued, because specialists in the discipline of International Relations (IR) tended to assume that 'decision-makers usually perceive the world quite accurately and that those misperceptions that do

occur can only be treated as random accidents.' In Jervis's book, and indeed for the rest of his academic career, he sought to show that this perception was 'incorrect'.

Jervis's intellectual canvas was huge. It spanned the foundational concept of the 'security dilemma' (originated by John Herz, who introduced it into the literature in 1950), 'security regimes' (a concept Jervis himself invented), 'security communities' (developed by Karl Deutsch and his co-researchers in the late 1950s), and the 'nuclear revolution' (where Jervis continued the pioneering work of Bernard Brodie, Glenn Snyder, and Thomas Schelling). Jervis's first published volume (which he subsequently referred to as 'the signalling book') was *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (1970). It was based on his PhD, and its ambitious 'driving idea', in his own words, was 'why should we believe anything?'

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As a result of Jervis's stellar career at the heart of the study of IR in the United States, he knew that he was a successful academic. We are less sure whether he fully realised how important he and his work has been in the intellectual and indeed personal lives of so many other scholars, from students at the start of their careers to long-established professors. The outpouring of warm and deeply-felt tributes to 'Bob' on social media and elsewhere since his death, is testimony to his inspiration as an outstanding teacher and mentor.

Yet Jervis had much wider impact and renown than that treasured by his closest friends, colleagues, and students. In the very first conversation the authors of this appreciation had with each other following the news of his death, we recalled that we had been in an imaginary conversation with 'RJ' -through his writing - almost since the moment we first met in 1985. In our subsequent 30-plus years of conversations and collaborations, still ongoing, Robert Jervis sat on our shoulders. He will remain there. He was also there even before our first meeting as our independent academic interests had led each of us to have read *Perception and Misperception* with great care: for one of us (NJW) this was the result of student enthusiasm, while for the other (KB) it was in the course of writing a book on strategy and ethnocentrism.

At the core of our shared interest, so long ago, was the phenomenon of the security dilemma. From early in our teaching and research careers we recognised it as what we came to call the 'quintessential dilemma' in relations between decision-makers at the international level of world politics. In Jervis's work we had discovered a kindred spirit, and one who was already very far ahead in his journey.

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From the mid-1970s onwards, Jervis became the towering figure writing about the security dilemma in IR. In our view – as well as that of some

others - the concept itself had not then made the impact it should have done after its first theorisation by John Herz and Herbert Butterfield in the 1950s. In the decades since it got better, and theorists in the United States sometimes made a passing reference to Herz, and even Thucydides, but never to Butterfield. But with Jervis's intervention, the concept did become harder for the US discipline to ignore, though it still often was. An exception was one international conference held in the United States at the start of the millennium, where a panel was organised on the work of John Herz. Butterfield's contribution for once got a mention. We recall that in the subsequent discussion one US scholar frankly admitted that until that point, he had believed it was Jervis who had invented 'the security dilemma' - an anecdote that speaks both to Jervis's influence and to the insularity in the discipline in parts of the US academy.

Jervis's influence on thinking about the security dilemma has been colossal. He brought theoretical rigour to the pioneering ideas of Herz and Butterfield and did so by embracing an interdisciplinary approach. In particular, his research in IR was immersed in the latest thinking in political psychology. The result was that his explorations into the perceptual dynamics of political relations under anarchy were carried out with a sophistication that had not been seen before.

The crux of Jervis's building on the work of Herz and Butterfield was the formulation of what he called the 'spiral' and 'deterrence' models. Through them, he sought to explain how decision-makers in one state tried and often failed in navigating the uncertainties and risks about the current and future intentions of those states with the military capability to inflict harm against them. The 'spiral model' was largely a sophisticated elaboration of Butterfield's earlier notion of 'Hobbesian fear', resting on the assumption that escalating insecurity could result from decision-makers failing to understand the true nature of their situation. In particular, he pointed out that decision-makers were apt to interpret each other's behaviour as indicating aggressive intent, when the actions being taken may well have been initiated for defensive purposes. As Jervis told us in an interview in 2014, the spiral model and the security dilemma were synonymous in his own thinking.

The spiral model was driven by the mutual misperceptions between adversaries of each other's intentions, and at its root was the insecurity and fear arising from 'the anarchic setting' of international relations. Crucially, he wrote that 'neither party appreciates how their actions contribute to mutual fear'. In such circumstances, better signalling through words and action was the challenge for decision-makers seeking to wind down the potential escalation of mutual distrust: but first the parties involved had to appreciate that they were indeed potentially trapped in a 'spiral'.

If the spiral model developed Butterfield's argument about the ubiquity of the security dilemma, the 'deterrence' model built on Herz's conclusion that the security dilemma did not explain all conflicts. Using the example of Nazi Germany, Herz argued that ambition and not fear might be the driver of

aggressive behaviour; if this were the case, deterrence was the required response on the part of the threatened party or parties. This was because, according to the model's assumption, aggressor or revisionist powers cannot be converted into 'status quo' states through concessions or conciliatory signalling: deterrence alone has the potential to contain. Importantly in this view – and particularly prominent during some phases of the Cold War - was the lesson many took from the 1930s, namely that 'appeasement' of any kind, notably concessions to dictators, only fed their appetites.

The basic challenge for decision-makers, as posed by Jervis, was therefore to determine accurately whether they are in a spiral or deterrent situation with potential adversaries, and then to adopt the appropriate response. The two models structured his thinking, but like all models he acknowledged that they simplified reality.

The spiral model ('the security dilemma' in Jervis's view) was predicated on the assumption that conflict may be driven by mutual misperceptions, but that these are potentially correctable through a more subtle understanding of security dilemma dynamics. In particular, he argued that decision-makers need to appreciate how their own actions might contribute to spirals of insecurity as a result of unwittingly provoking fear in the minds of others. Having such an appreciation is what we call 'security dilemma sensibility'.

Despite being a major step forward in understanding security dilemma dynamics, the spiral and deterrence models have always been open to the criticism that they are too dichotomous; they risk falling into the temptation of seeing states (in Charles Glaser's terminology) as *either* 'security-seekers' *or* 'greedy'. Critics asked: what about the possibility that states believe they can only be secure if they expand at the expense of others? In other words, what if each state in a dyad believes its security requires the insecurity of others?

Jervis himself explored these complex questions in great depth over the decades. His position was that an adversary could be a 'security-seeker' or a 'greedy' state *or both*. The latter might be the case, for example, where a state had different intentions in different issue-areas, or different intentions at different points in time. The United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War were complex cases in this regard.

The 'adversary partners' in the Cold War might have been security-seekers in relation to certain issue-areas (notably nuclear weapons) where policy-makers on both sides shared and on occasion recognised a mutual interest in arms control: but at the same time they might have considered themselves to be in a global ideological confrontation in which there could be no predictable stability or path to mutual security. When the latter was the case both adversaries would seek to try and undermine the other, and in ways that would make long-term cooperation impossible. Such a relationship is what Jervis came to call the 'deep security dilemma' (2001).

Jervis characterised the Cold War as a 'deep security dilemma', with one of its defining features being the ideological fundamentalism generally shown (in words if not action) by the leaders of both superpowers. The corollary of decision-makers seeing their own behaviour as peaceful in intent, brimming with defensive self-images, has often been a failure to understand how others might see them as 'enemies' and 'aggressive'. Appreciating this dynamic is why security dilemma sensibility is so important on the part of leaders if cooperative moves are to make any progress.

A group of mostly US scholars built on Jervis's work and explored the practicalities of successfully signalling peaceful/defensive intentions in a context where conflict was believed to be driven solely by spiral model dynamics. Ideas included 'normal methods' of cooperation-building such as dividing up a large transaction into a series of small ones; bolstering the weight of non-provocative defence capacity; encouraging transparency; and so on. The result, it was hoped, would be to alter the mindset of the adversary, and encourage cooperation rather than conflict.

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Jervis was ready to admit that his upbringing and education during the Cold War had predisposed him towards the cautious end of the spectrum on the scope for harmony in international security. This was sometimes evident in his thinking about 'regime theory'.

First developed in the United States in the late 1970s in relation to political economy, Jervis led the application of regime theory to the field of international security. His chief contribution was in a reference-point article in 1982 entitled 'Security Regimes'. In it he defined a 'security regime' as 'those principles, rules, and norms that permit nations to be restrained in their behaviour in the belief that others will reciprocate'. In other words, it is 'a form of cooperation that is more than the following of short-run self-interest'. Jervis's words became the standard formulation, and over the next decade his ideas were built upon by a range of other international security theorists.

In discussing the preconditions for the growth of a security regime, Jervis foregrounded the scope for misperceptions when interpreting the offence/defence ambiguities of the weapons and strategies of a potential rival state. Even if regime formation is achievable, however, he pointed out that a variety of contingent and structural factors might conspire to set in motion a spiral of mutual distrust, resulting in the eventual collapse of the cooperative edifice. Based in part on his study of the decline of the Concert of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth-century, he warned that it is not enough to control the risks of war: by failing to become institutionalised and not developing supranational loyalties, he concluded that 'the Concert may have contained the seeds of its own destruction'. A century later he did not regard US-Soviet relations, even during periods of détente, to have met the criteria of being a security regime.

For those drawn to conservative understandings of international politics, awareness of the potential for regime breakdown is always likely. Today, such pessimism is difficult to escape even on the part of those with more open perspectives on international security. All must ask, looking at the present crisis in eastern Europe, whether the security order that developed at the end of the Cold War, and lasted 30 years, is now suffering from having failed to eradicate the seeds of its own potential destruction. This refers to the policy-makers of the leading states, especially in the 1990s, falling short in embedding trust. This was evident in the ostensible 'humiliation' of Russian leaders and their new state, and the apparent complacency if not hubris of the West. Are we therefore now witnessing a desire to make gains at each other's expense in an environment where the restraints of what was once trumpeted as a 'new post-Cold War' order are losing whatever traction they once had?

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In considering how the conflictual pressures of life under anarchy might be further dampened down, Jervis emphasised the need for a comprehensive understanding of the 'nuclear revolution' - the focus of a book he published in 1989. Like many of his generation, nuclear weapons had been a pressing interest and concern from his youth, and in a series of publications he discussed the complex issues relating to their stabilizing potential. Above all, he thought Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) ruled out major wars between major powers. More originally, he claimed that MAD threatened such catastrophic consequences that it escaped the ambiguity of offence-defence differentiation in security dilemma thinking at the strategic nuclear level. He concluded in a 1978 article that 'as long as states believe that all that is needed is a second- strike capability, then the differentiation between offensive and defensive forces that is provided by reliance on SLBM's [submarine-launched ballistic missiles] allows each side to increase its security without menacing the other'. These views were opposed by those identified with 'offensive realism' and 'nuclear war-fighting' positions, who continued to claim that there was advantage to be had by securing dominance at higher levels of nuclear escalation. If the logic of anarchy compelled the superpowers to compete in this way, they argued, nuclear weapons developed and deployed (and potentially used) with discrimination, could still have strategic leverage.

Below the balance at the strategic nuclear level there remained the apparently unresolvable uncertainty of the security dilemma at the level of conventional forces. Here, in the late 1970s, Jervis accepted the security dilemma still existed: 'On issues other than defense of the homeland, there would still be security dilemmas and security problems.' But, he added, with the stability he believed MAD ensured, 'the world would nevertheless be safer than it has usually been'. These views firmed up. He came to think that even military asymmetries at these lower levels were not too worrying because decision-makers could expect to be deterred from using them by

the fear of escalation at the nuclear level. This argument was first set out in his book *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (1984).

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Given the competitive pressures of anarchy – a factor that ran through Jervis's security regime thinking - it is not surprising that his ambitions for security cooperation were constrained during the Cold War. Following its collapse, interestingly, his interest grew in 'security communities' – a development showing that his thinking, like that of Herz and Butterfield before him, could not be branded by one label. Across his career his ideas embraced 'fatalist', 'mitigator', and 'transcender' logics of international security; such an open approach was related to his ambivalence as to how far the psychological can trump the competitive pressures associated with the anarchic structure of international politics.

In an article in 2002 he announced a significant rethink, focused on the trajectory of 'the Community' comprising the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Their trajectory, Jervis argued, represented a significant shift from a cardinal assumption in his earlier writings, namely the idea that there could be no escape from security competition under anarchy. He now wrote: 'For most scholars, the fundamental cause of war is international anarchy, compounded by the security dilemma. These forces press hardest on the leading powers because while they may be able to guarantee the security of others, no one can provide this escape from the state of nature for them…what is most important is that *the Community constitutes a proof by existence of the possibility of uncoerced peace without central authority*…the Community poses a fundamental challenge to our understanding of world politics and our expectations of future possibilities' [emphasis added].

Having powerfully argued in the 1980s that regimes always collapse under anarchy, he argued at the start of the new millennium that this wider Western/liberal security community 'does not have within it the seeds of its own destruction'. Not surprisingly, his view on the embeddedness of the process of bonding within the 'Community' was strongly opposed by proponents of 'structural' and especially 'offensive' realism. Even for those drawn to Jervis's argument, it left two lacunae: the different trajectories of Russia and China, and the nature of relations between the Community and the rest of the world, and notably these two excluded great powers.

Today, the puzzles thrown up by the concepts of anarchy, regimes, and community remain as central preoccupations in the discipline of IR; and the issues involved, as indicated in our introduction, are being played out militarily across the Russia-Ukraine border. How stabilizing is nuclear overkill? Does leverage in the end come down to the balance of boots on the ground? What is being misperceived by whom? Can cooperation grow out of the crisis? If so, how far can it go? And on and on. In the Cold War the cost of overestimating structural factors were the risks associated with fatalistic assumptions about what is achievable in international security,

and particularly excessive military hedging in ways that an adversary was likely to misread as aggressive intent. In the post-Cold War era the cost of underestimating structural factors has been the risk that decision-makers (and academics) might be drawn into believing that efforts at mitigating or transcending security competition might have better prospects than realistically exist.

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As the words above indicate, we need not search far for evidence of the enduring relevance of Robert Jervis's work: it focused on big questions, sophisticated theorising, and rich historical analyses of the enduring puzzles of international politics. We have several times mentioned his immediate relevance to the issues swirling around the Russia-Ukraine border. Shortly before this particular crisis became headline-catching, it had been the situation across the Taiwan Straits that was being touted as the site for the next major crisis and possible war involving great powers. At issue here are Beijing's ambitions to incorporate Taiwan into the Chinese state, and the crucial matter of 'power transition' between the rise of China and the supposed waning power of the United States. Such a state of affairs is widely characterised in the discipline as a manifestation of 'The Thucydides Trap', recalling the much-quoted sentence of the great historian from Ancient Greece, and his famous words: 'It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable'.

Robert Jervis knew brute power matters, including the psychological factors involved in the problematics of sending and receiving signals. He argued that the nuclear revolution had made power transition by all-out war to be highly irrational: but he knew that 'irrational' is certainly not the same as *impossible*. This may be the case even if decision-makers of adversarial states want to avoid calamity. He knew this because his research on the security dilemma had shown him the frequency, power, and negative consequences of misperception. In his closing remarks in *Perception and Misperception*, nearly a half century ago, he warned: 'I strongly suspect that decision-makers have not accurately assessed the costs of various kinds of misperceptions and would be wise to correct for the tendency to be excessively vigilant'.

Jervis's death is a sad yet needed reminder to all of us in academic life that what we do matters, not only because of what we might contribute to the body of influential ideas about IR, but also because of the potential impact of our attitudes and behaviour in our working lives as individual human beings. In writing this appreciation, pointing to Robert Jervis's many ideas and achievements, we hope in particular to encourage students and early career academics who may not be familiar with his body of work to engage with the rich legacy of a truly exceptional scholar.

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Robert Jervis was born in New York City on 30 April 1940, and died on 9 December 2021. His academic positions included the University of California and Harvard University, and after 1980 Columbia University. In 1978 he began consulting for the CIA. Among his academic honours, he received the Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order; he was elected to the American Philosophical Society and the National Academy of Sciences; and he served as the President of the American Political Science Association. A selective list of most influential books and articles include: *The Logic of Images* (1970); *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976); 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma' *(World Politics* 1978); 'Security Regimes' *(International Organization* 1982); *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (1984); 'From Balance to Concert: a Study of International Security Cooperation' *(World Politics* 1985); *'Realism, Game Theory and Cooperation' (World Politics* 1988);*The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (1989); *Realism, Neoliberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate (International Security* 1999); 'Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma' *(Journal of Cold War Studies* 2001); '*Why Intelligence fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (2010); and *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (2017).

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A Realist Analysis of the Russo-Ukraine Crisis

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The present paper attempts to analyse the political development of the Russia-Ukraine crisis from a realist perspective. It attempts to shed light on the politico-economic contours of Russia-Ukraine's foreign policy imperatives behind the present war and assesses the predicament before the international community and other stakeholders. However, the objective of this essay is not to predict the twist and turns of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and its aftermath! War has never been a solution; the international community has repeatedly delegitimised war and armed conflicts.

Political Realism (Wenger and Zimmermann, 2010: 48), as a theory of international relations, emphasises that the state is a unitary and rational actor and focuses on the actions and interactions of states. For the most part, realists study patterns of conflict and cooperation in the context of an anarchical international system. It has been observed that security issues dominate the realist agenda at the expense of other concerns. National interest and objectives, power and the balance of power are critical to the *Real Politik* paradigm, first identified in the Concert of Europe, 1815. Since World War I, modern states have attempted to counteract the reinstitution of an international system based on the precepts of domestic and foreign policies based on the ruthless pursuit of power and national self-interest. They sought the League of Nations (1920) and, finally United Nations (1945) as an effective formalised version of institutional accords. Hence, political realism envisioned that individual states provide collective security by rendering legal and necessary mutual action against any aggressor (Wenger and Zimmermann, 2010: 10). The post-Cold War period international system delved more into the lessons of history and has been continuously working on the construction of a durable international world order steeped in realist tenets.

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Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1988 – 1991), a new 'globalised' order has evolved along the line of liberal democracy and *laissez-faire* (Lowe, 2013: 257). Russia assumed USSR's rights and obligations and became recognised as the continued legal personality of the former in world affairs. Up until 2008, the Russian economy enjoyed ten years of spectacular growth, thanks mainly to high oil prices. GDP increased tenfold, and by 2008, revenues from oil and natural gas were worth one-third of total revenue, i.e., about $200 billion (Lowe, 2013: 663). However, the Financial Crisis of 2008 had a disastrous effect on Russia as the oil price fell rapidly, and so did the oil demand. Fortunately, by the middle of 2009, the

slump had bottomed out, and the economy began to grow again. From 2011 onwards, Russia has become the world's leading oil producer, surpassing Saudi Arabia (OECD, 2022) and becoming the world's largest producer in 2015 (EIA, 2015). It has also become the second-largest producer of natural gas and the third-largest exporter of steel and aluminium. Russia is also the world's second-largest producer of armaments, including military aircraft, after the United States and its IT industry has had years of record growth. Today, of the four BRIC nations, Russia is the strongest economically.

Ukraine is an erst-while USSR state – the most populous and industrialised one following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, Ukraine is a developing country, ranked 74 on the Human Development Index (HDI Data Centre, 2022), offering a lower-middle-income economy. It is considered to be one of the poorest countries in Europe (Ben, 25 September 2020).

Realists believe in the condition of equilibrium among neighbouring states (Wenger and Zimmermann, 2010: 50). Inter-state relations may get influenced by the key decision-makers of the state leadership and their conviction about the non-state players involved and persuasion of the global community.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formation in 1949 is a highly significant development. Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, United States, Canada, Portugal, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Norway discarded the 'no entangling alliances' policy and pledged themselves in advance to military action under joint NATO command if any one of them is under any security threat. The development of NATO was essentially a collective security measure against COMECON (1947) and later Warsaw Pact (1955) concerning the Eastern European States under Communist Regime.

After World War II, European leaders realised that only large-scale integration would be an antidote to extreme nationalism. For the next four decades, the world witnessed the development of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and European Economic Community (EEC), finally culminating in European Union (EU) with France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, as its founding members. Apart from creating a single currency EURO and common citizenship rights, the EU looks for political, immigration and judiciary cooperation among states, unified security and foreign policy initiatives.

It is to be noted that with the disintegration of the USSR and Warsaw Pact, NATO lacked an 'enemy' in Europe and turned towards Asia-Pacific. NATO successfully adapted to the changed circumstances and security challenges and started extending the invitation to the Eastern European States. On the other hand, the EU turned into collaboration-based improved interoperability, inclusive planning, decision-making and implementation of peace-support and civil society operations at the political level.

Hitherto, over the last thirty years after the disintegration of the USSR, peripheral states of Russia have increasingly applied for NATO membership and EU integration. The erstwhile Warsaw pact states like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Macedonia, Montenegro, etc., seek the realist objective to eliminate a Russian sphere of influence, gain NATO military support, and greater economic symbiosis within the EU. Ukraine tried to follow the bandwagon. However, the NATO-EU European security structure and the extension of NATO membership and EU integration of the Eastern European states weaken Russia. It could also serve the US unfinished agenda of the Cold War, keeping Russia in check. It should be remembered that Russia and NATO have shared an on and off relationship since 1991, within the North Atlantic Cooperation Council framework. In 1994 Russia joined the Partnership of Peace programme with NATO and consequently signed several vital agreements on security cooperation and economic accords. Hitherto Russia has not joined the EU but signed a declaration with the EU in 1993 aiming for geopolitical stability and strengthening politico-economic relations with the western European political sphere and market.

Secondly, realists observe that equilibrium among states occurs independently from the will of statesmen, political leadership and their reflection on international affairs and domestic politics. Political decision-makers may use balance-of-power considerations or justify national interest for their respective foreign policy initiatives (Wenger and Zimmermann, 2010: 50). Strong and more prominent states may adopt soft power to bully or control their diplomatic hinterland. Furthermore, powerful state players resort to soft coups to alter unfavourable regimes and establish a favourable regime.

Since the starting of the millennium Eastern Europe has witnessed a series of Colour Revolutions, resulting in an alteration of the existing regime. For example, Bulldozer Revolution in Yugoslavia (2000), Rose Revolution (2003 - 2004) in Georgia and Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004). Russian President Putin (Consortium News, 6 January 2015, and Parry, Popular Resistance, 14 May 2017) described those popular civil society resistance as 'soft-coups'. The change of regimes in the bordering states of Russia not only influences the diplomatic exchange of those states but also affects Russian national interest and foreign policy imperatives.

The Orange Revolution of 2004 targeted the rigged presidential election of Viktor Yanukovych for his pro-Russian stance. In the 2010 election, Yanukovych successfully makes it to the presidential office. Yanukovych was known for his initiatives to navigate a political path between Russia and the EU. However, he abandons Ukraine's plan to join the EU trade agreement. He was blamed for choosing the Russian side and was ousted from his office in 2014, as the Euromaidan protest broke in. Euromaidan resulted in Yanukovych fleeing the country and seeking asylum in Russia.

On the other hand, Russia has already used force in Georgia in 2008, calling it "Peace Enforcement Action", and recognised the breakaway states

of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2014, Russia once against using force and annexed Crimea as retaliation for Euromaidan. At present, in 2022, under Putin's political leadership, Russia resorts to an aggressive foreign policy of "Special Military Operation" for "Peacekeeping" to take control of the Donbas region, apparently signifying limited military objectives yet culminating in a war between Ukraine and Russia.

This international relations development of Russia follows John Mearsheimer's (2001: 3) Offensive Realism theory that states are disposed to competition and conflict, as they are self-interested, power-maximising, and fearful of the other states, as this is the best way to survive in the anarchy of the international system. Whereas Kenneth Waltz's (1979: 103) Defensive Realism theory states that the anarchical structure of the international system encourages states to maintain moderate and reserved policies to attain national security, which suits Ukraine's present situation. Ukraine President Zelenskyy has asked for EU membership immediately after the Russian attacks. Ukraine has repeatedly sought NATO intervention and international support against its aggressive neighbour. – Russo-Ukraine crisis is a protracted struggle between Russia's national interest in terms of geopolitical insecurities and Ukraine's national interest in terms of politico-economic anxieties. Lobell (2010) observed that states harbouring *"revisionist intentions with hegemony as their ultimate goal"* and states satisfied with the "*status quo to signal their benign intent to each other and to identify each other"* would ultimately look for some unique 'systemic activism' window opportunity to reshape the international system, reflecting their long-term security interests; and here the international players do have a counterbalancing part.

How does the Russo-Ukraine crisis affect the international world order? The EU and the US have posed an economic ban on Russia so far. UN Security Council Vote on Ukraine on 27 February 2022, adopted a Resolution Against Russia, where one forty-one of the one ninety-three member states voted in favour of condemning Russia's aggressive militarism. The Resolution (News UN, 27 February 2022) *"deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine" and "demands that Russia unconditionally withdraws all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine."* During the conflict, it also condemns *"all Violations of International Humanitarian Law and Violations and abuses of Human Rights"*. However, no military deployment has been made evident against Russia, and only an economic ban and diplomatic isolation have been imposed. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that apart from five countries, i.e., Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, Russia, voting against the resolution, twelve countries, i.e., Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, did not participate in the voting and further thirty-five countries, i.e., Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Congo, Cuba, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique,

Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan Tajikistan, Tanzania Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, have abstained from it. – It is to be noted that all these countries, as mentioned earlier, belong to developing economies, developed economies, and some are even states with emerging economies. While twists and turns of the Russo-Ukraine war are unpredictable, the realist objective of the Global South is clearly self-preservation and restraint. Their security dilemma, geostrategic positioning, national convictions about the big players, foreign policy beliefs and perceptions to explain the outbreak of war, and interdependence, clearly favour a multipolar world system.

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The Afghan Crisis: The Shimmering Facades of Turkey's Foreign Policy and A New Role for Europe

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Introduction

The crisis in Afghanistan allowed Turkey to put into practice some focal points of its foreign policy. This paper aims to clarify Turkish foreign policy in the light of the Afghan crisis and analyse its role and actions in the regional context politically and diplomatically, also considering its relations with the European Union.

The geographical limitation of Turkey, which excludes Afghan refugees from protection as they do not come from Europe and do not fall within the Geneva Convention definition of refugee, makes it difficult for Afghans to leave the country for Europe. So many Afghans have been stuck in Turkey for years, awaiting the release of bureaucratic procedures.

The Fall of Kabul

On August 15, the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, fell to the Taliban. The reasons are many, but certainly, a key argument is the deterioration of the Afghan state. For years Afghanistan has suffered from violence, corruption, economic breakdowns, poor infrastructure management, the health sector and education, especially for women.

The Doha agreement promoted by the USA and signed in February 2021 with the Taliban aimed to relieve the country from violence and poverty and lead it towards a peace process. However, sitting at that table was useless. It was only the Taliban who won back. The Doha Agreements resulted in the takeover by the Taliban, first of the villages, then of the provinces and finally of the capital.

The Spread of Global Jihadism: The Asymmetric Threat to the International Community

Today, Afghanistan is no longer a state but a territory commanded by an armed group desperately seeking international recognition despite the horrors committed in the past. This recognition, however, would also mean the success of the global jihadist movement, which would exploit the victory of the Taliban to legitimize and spread its propaganda. The spiral of violence in the country would then be endless, not only because the Taliban themselves would exercise it, but because the country's colossal galaxy of

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armed groups could re-emerge, such as ETIM (Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement), Terik-e Taleban Pakistan (which will continue to use Afghan soil to attack Pakistan) al-Qaeda, a history of the Taliban, and the Khorasan group, a branch of Daesh that would significantly contribute to worsening the scenario.

The problem is not so much that Afghanistan will become the new military base of these armed groups but that the strength of these armed groups lies in weak countries and weak counties is a threat to the international community. The majoritarian presence of jihadists in Yemen, Somalia, Mozambique and Syria suggests that Afghanistan will be the next. If a pocket of cooperative armed groups is installed, Afghanistan will become poorer and corrupted.

The US withdrawal and the refugee crisis

The critical situation in the country is the direct result of the rapid US withdrawal, which had left Afghans amid an economic, political, and social crisis alone in the hands of the Taliban. Moreover, the population now faces a highly repressive regime. Consequently, people are trying to flee the country, but not all possess the means to reach Europe. For this reason, not Europe but neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan and Turkey will face a massive surge of Afghan refugees. Indeed, Europe will also be called to its responsibilities. Still, the European alarmism on the mass of refugees arriving on the continent is more the result of a political strategy than of a real alert.

Turkey's Assertive Foreign and Security Policy

After the end of the Cold War, a new concept of Turkey emerged as a bridge country. Turkey's primary objective became the protection and preservation of its stability. Today, in the modern era marked by 9/11, Turkey's new position has become twofold, characterized by a conceptual and a geographical dimension both exploited by the country for its political interests.

In terms of geography, Turkey occupies a unique space. In the midst of Afro-Eurasia's landmass, with its cultural capital Istanbul as a span between the East and the West, the country has developed a strong Turkic identity, a strategic element that the Turkish state has always been able to exploit in order to make the most of its geography.

Being a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea country, Turkey's unique geographical dimension has always fuelled ambitious and idealized goals.

Today the consolidation of a Turkic identity spread beyond its national borders lays at the foundation of the Turkish foreign and security policy. The Turkish state sees itself as an umbrella under which diverse and multiple ethnic groups are labelled as Turkic. In political terms, this

facilitates Turkey's actions in remote areas, like Afghanistan, where groups like the Qizilbash, the Uzbeks, the Kyrgyz and the Turkmens are considered well-defined targets.

Today, Turkey's main goal is to consistently intervene in global issues using international platforms and more active diplomacy to transform herself from a central country to global power.

Principles of Turkey's new foreign policy

Since 2002 Turkey has begun to restructure its policies taking advantage of its geographical and historical assets. In sum, one can group Turkey's foreign policy into five principles. First, the balance between security and democracy, *conditio sine qua non* for establishing an area of influence in its environment. Second, a "zero problem policy towards its neighbours" where Turkey, offering herself as a successful example in the eyes of the international community, can cooperate with her neighbours against common threats. Third, the development of good relations with neighbouring regions and beyond, like Afghanistan. Fourth, the compliance with a multi-dimensional foreign policy established in 2003-2004.

According to this perspective, Turkey's relations with other global actors need to be complementary and not competitive, such as the relations with the EU. Despite the fact that the bilateral relations did not progress to the extent that we would like to see and the several stops and go, they have continued today.

Fifth, the pursuit of rhythmic diplomacy explains Turkey's increasing influence in international organizations and the number of international meetings it has hosted since 2003. This reflects the change in Turkey's strategy: the country needs international community recognition of a responsible state providing order and security to the entire region.

Principles of Turkey's new security priorities

As a NATO member state situated in geography that poses multiple threats to its security and even existence, Turkey seeks to maintain its own domestic and regional security while contributing to a global environment of peace and order. The country's foreign and security policies are interrelated and are also inseparable from her economy.

Despite the interventionist role of the military in Turkey's political affairs, today's threats fuel the idea of security as a concept connected with the survival of its population, the protection of territorial integrity and the preservation of the identity of the nation. Above all, after the Cold War, Turkey's security concerns turned into internal threats rather than external ones. For example, the rising number of asylum seekers in the country is a fundamental element of Turkish security and defence policy.

Turkey's main security concerns are the armed conflict with the PKK perceived as an internal security issue, the disputes over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea and the IS's terrorism campaign.

Turkey's migration policy

While Turkey provides shelter to millions of refugees, it retains a geographical limitation to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees' ratification, which means that Turkey applies the Convention only to refugees originating from European countries. The reason behind Turkey's partial ratification of the Convention was the fear of mass influxes of people from neighbouring countries to the East and southwest of the country coming from Asia and the Middle East.

Despite the fear and the actions consequently taken, Turkey, for its geographical position, has continuously experienced huge migratory waves, like the 2011 Syrian crisis that saw millions of refugees reaching the country. Today the current Afghan crisis caused by the Taliban's takeover is perceived as the same threat.

The country's asylum system excludes Afghan refugees from its protection as they do not come from Europe and do not fall within the Geneva Convention definition of a refugee.

Moreover, in Turkey, the entire asylum-seeking system is critically slow because it is UNCHR alone that is in charge of registering, determining and resettling refugees.

As a result, a new category of a refugee is emerging in Turkey: the stuck refugee, that is to say, someone who arrives in Turkey and, after several months, sees himself stuck in the country due to the inability to obtain the necessary documents to leave and to continue the journey through Europe. Generally, Afghan refugees arriving in Turkey consider Turkey the last country of arrival before reaching Europe, so they usually don't intend to remain there. But considering that they encounter long and complex bureaucratic processes, they often remain stuck there.

Today Turkey is also refusing another migration surge, and officials said that the country would not act as the EU's "warehouse" for Afghan refugees. Even if the EU agreed to send 3billions to Turkey as part of the 2016 EU-Turkey deal on migration in June, today, Turkey's conditions have changed. The country saw a growing anti-migrant backlash, which eventually resulted in the erection of a three-meter high wall bordering Iran to stop refugees fleeing the Taliban.

The Upsurge in Refugee Crisis and A New Role For EU

A few weeks ago, European Commission President Ursula von del Leyen pledged more humanitarian aid for Afghanistan while calling on the international community to help resettle refugees. The fall of Kabul has inevitably reopened divisions over immigration in European countries —

the Achille heel of Europe — and a week after Taliban militants captured the country, the EU realized that a new humanitarian crisis could break out.

But in reality, how many Afghans will have the economic chance to reach Europe?

Where do Afghan refugees go?

On average, refugees travel through six to eleven countries before reaching Europe. Often using multiple forms of transportation, including car, boat, plane and bus, the majority of Afghans do not have the economic capacity to face such a long journey that could last up to 3 months. For this reason, the United Nations urged, firstly, neighbouring countries to keep their borders open. Up to half a million Afghans could flee the country by the end of the year. The vast majority of them, being poor, illiterate, without money or permits of any kind, will pour out into neighbouring countries like Iran or Pakistan. The problem for Afghans is that today the Taliban control all the mainland crossing points with Afghanistan's neighbours, and reports suggest they are only allowing traders or those with valid travel documents to leave the country[1].

Moreover, neighbouring countries like Uzbekistan, which borders the north of Afghanistan, have said its main crossing point is closed to ensure security; Tajikistan said that they would accept only 100,000 refugees; Turkmenistan affirmed that despite offering its airspace for evacuation flights, they did not make any commitment to take refugees. Pakistan, which has the longest border with Afghanistan, has declared that it will not accept refugees because refugees are already overburdened. Countries like Pakistan and Iran have seen the highest numbers of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in recent years.

Today the US-led operations to evacuate people registered more than 123,000 civilians who left the country. Among them, 80,000 civilians were flown out of Kabul. Of those, 5,500 were Americans, and more than 73,500 were Afghans.

A new role for Europe

Of course, a flux of Afghan refugees will also arrive in Europe through Turkey or Greece, but numbers will not be so high as the EU government is alarming. The Afghan population in the EU remains small and unevenly distributed. According to the last report by the EU, around 7,000 Afghans were granted permanent or temporary legal status in the EU. At least 2,200 Afghans were located in Greece, 1,800 in France, 1,000 in Germany and 700 in Italy. The vast majority of Afghans do not settle in the West. Still, the adoption of hard-line policies and anti-refugee sentiments across Europe (in Poland and Hungary) means that very few Afghans will find a safe place

[1] *https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58283177*

on the continent. Austria and Switzerland have already refused to take in refugees.

The geographical limitation of Turkey, the unwillingness of neighbouring countries to accept Afghan refugees, the Taliban's control of the borders, and Afghans' economic conditions are all factors that force the poor people, the majority of Afghans, to remain stuck in the country. This leaves an enormous number of Afghans who are internally displaced.

The economic, political, security and social resistance to the Taliban will shape the next episode of Afghanistan, Turkey, and Europe's history. It will be precisely in the future history of Afghanistan that Europe will shape its foreign policy, particularly upon the threat posed by the increasing power of armed groups. Moreover, Afghanistan could soon fall prey to China, nullifying any military and political influence of Europe over the area. This means that the recent events that happened in Afghanistan are only the starting point of a new role for Europe in the world.

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The Doha Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

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Following nine rounds of discussion, the United States (US) and the Taliban in February 2020 signed a peace agreement in Doha designed to bring peace to Afghanistan. According to the Doha Agreement, the Taliban and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghan (IRA) would temporarily reduce violence and work towards a lasting *cease-fire* among US, Taliban and Afghan forces; the US would withdraw from Afghanistan one-third of its 12,000 troops within the next four and half months, and if the Taliban stuck to their promises, *withdrew* all forces within 14 months; meanwhile, *intra-Afghan negotiations* would start to ascertain what role the Taliban would play in a future government; and the Taliban pledged *counterterrorism assurances*, that is, the Taliban were to sever all ties with terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda, and would not allow those groups to use Afghan soil to launch attacks against the US and the allies.[1]

A range of players was directly or indirectly involved in the Doha talks. These players have several interests in Afghanistan. The leading players include the Afghans (the government, the Northern Alliance, the Taliban and ordinary Afghans); The US and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies; Afghanistan's 'four big neighbours', namely Pakistan, Iran, China and India; Russia and the Central Asian States; and Saudi Arabica.

As far as their *official* strategies were concerned, all the players involved had a convergence of interests. Indeed, on the day the Doha Agreement was signed, they all supported the 'success' of the talks in Doha because a political settlement was seen as a key to peace, security and stability in Afghanistan and, by extension, the region and beyond.

The IRA welcomed it because a negotiated settlement would allow the IRA's officials to live dignified lives (not 'disgracefully' flee to the United Arab Emirates or the West) in their country, where the Republic (not the Emirate) would continue to play an important part. The Taliban 'seemed' satisfied because US forces were to pull out. The group's rehabilitation as part of power-sharing arrangements would enable the Taliban to modify the Afghan constitution to make it 'compatible with Sharia Law' and more conservative traditional values. The two warring parties working together would enable ordinary Afghans to get what they had been craving for decades: peace and security.

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[1] This opinion piece is based on my research for a paper aimed to be published in journals and later turned into a book.

The US and the NATO allies were to gracefully exit from Afghanistan, knowing they had a regional partner that would not allow Afghan soil to be used by terrorist groups to launch an attack against them. Moreover, most of the hard-earned political, military, economic and social achievements of the past 20 years were to remain intact.

Pakistan was to live next door to a neutral government in Kabul that contained the threat of extreme terrorism, drug trafficking and refugee. The several million Afghan refugees would move back to Afghanistan, including the Taliban and their families. A friendly Afghanistan was to cooperate with Pakistan on trade and water supply. The Taliban's inclusion in the government would minimise India's influence in Afghanistan and the risk of 'encirclement' as well as India's ability to (allegedly) use Afghanistan as a base for 'supporting' anti-Pakistani Baluch and Pashtun groups within Pakistan. Pakistan would further be able to deal effectively with home-grown militant groups, such as the Pakistani Taliban, that posed an existential threat to the secular Pakistan state.

Likewise, the inclusion – and thus 'protection' – of minority groups in Afghanistan, including the Indian friendly groups of the Northern Alliance, was to keep India's influence (and presence) within Afghanistan (and the region). Afghanistan was unlikely to become a safe haven for anti-Indian militant groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, that would again run training camps in eastern Afghanistan. Stability in Afghanistan was likely to enable India to expand trade in Central Asia, Russia and Europe.

The inclusion – and thus 'protection' – of Shai groups and the Northern Alliance, Iran's traditional allies, would also ensure that 'Pakistan and Saudi Arabi's Taliban proxies' did not dominate the regime in Kabul. A neutral Afghan government was to cooperate in fighting extreme terrorist groups, including the People Islamic Movement of Iran. The friendly regime in Kabul would enable Iran to make more economic investments in Afghanistan, including greater reliance on the transit trade through Chabahar. The approximately 3 million Afghan economic migrants and refugees in Iran were likely to return to a stable Afghanistan.

The Taliban's presence alleviated Saudi Arabia's fears of the influence of their main ideological rival, Iran, in Afghanistan and contributed to stability in Pakistan, a crucial Saudi ally. US presence in Afghanistan weakened the US-Saudi security relationship as it fed the perception of a war against Islam. So, the Doha negotiated settlement allowed US forces to withdraw from Afghanistan. Furthermore, weakening democratic values would divert the media spotlight on Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

In the Quadrilateral Coordination Group meetings, China clearly supported an 'Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process and respected Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty. It partly did so because its Silk Road Economic Belt strategy would be strengthened by what China wanted: a negotiated settlement that would lead to a 'unified, stable, developing, and friendly' neighbour with which China shared about a 90-

kilometre border and where China had significant financial investments. Such an Afghanistan with an 'inclusive government' would support China's fight against the Uighur separatist group East Turkistan Islamic Movement and prevent the spillover effects to Afghanistan's neighbours, where China had made billions of investments. Importantly, China, Russia, and Iran (and Pakistan, for that matter) would relievedly see the US ending its 'destabilising' presence in Afghanistan and doing so 'responsibly', a presence assumingly aimed at 'encircling' China, Russia and Iran (and Pakistan).

The main challenges faced by Russia and the Central Asian States – the huge inflow of Afghan narcotics and possible spillover of instability and extremism from Afghanistan into Central Asia – would be addressed by a capable, all-inclusive government in Kabul; a government that would be the outcome of what Russia stressed: a negotiated solution accepted by *all* Afghan neighbours. Stability in Afghanistan was to further enable the Central Asian States to reach export markets in South Asia, West Asia and the Gulf.

In short, a political settlement – or a stable, reasonable neutral Afghan government with the Taliban as a junior partner – would have turned every player into a winner. The question then is why did the Doha Agreement collapse, and thus every party became a loser, especially the 38 million Afghan people, as reportedly only '10 per cent' of the population reportedly supported the Taliban? It is so because there was a divergence of interests, including Afghanistan's 'inherent complexities', the nature of an Afghan government (Emirate vs Republic or centralisation vs decentralisation), the issue of prisoners' release, international recognition, the protection of certain rights within the Afghan constitution, withdrawal of US forces, resources (especially water), regional (Indo-Pakistan, China-India, Saudi-Iran) and international (US-Russia, US-Iran, US-China) conflicts, lack of trust, and importantly, a struggle for the degree of influence (or 'strategic depth') within a government in Kabul. As a character says in my soon-to-be-published novel entitled *The Lone Leopard*:

'The Afghanistan conflict is very complicated. Would the Taliban cut ties with Al-Qaeda, stop violence against the Afghan state and accept a constitution that defends liberal values and women's rights? Would they give up their Emirate for a Republic? Would Pakistan, Russia and Iran stop assisting the Taliban?'

Indeed, there were plenty of woulds and hows. Therefore, before the US withdrew all its troops, the IRA, with supposedly 352-thousand security forces, fell to the Taliban in August 2021, effectively marking the death of the Doha Agreement. Today, Afghanistan is back where it was at the beginning of US intervention in late-2001, and the Afghan people are experiencing one of the hardest winters as the humanitarian situation continues to worsen. The international community refuses to recognise (or work with) the Taliban caretaker' government'. Another 'insurgency seems to be on the rise', this time against the Taliban, led by the British-educated

Ahmad Massoud, the son of the legendary Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud. Another protracted civil war has the potential to create a security dilemma for the regional powers that might force them to intervene against their will, especially the nuclear Pakistan and India, and thus could pose a serious threat to regional and global peace.

Indeed, as I write in my book, *America in Afghanistan: Foreign Policy and Decision Making From Bush to Obama to Trump*, a destabilised region would have severe consequences for Europe (and the world): a momentous rise in global terrorism, drug production, illegal immigration, and most frightenedly, nuclear proliferation – escalation in nuclear rivalry in South Asia is capable of triggering war in which Pakistan and India might not hesitate to launch nuclear weapons against each other. At the very least, a destabilised region could feed insecurity in the nuclear Pakistan that could result in a destabilised Pakistan (a country of nearly 230 million population), making it possible for al-Qaeda and other radical Islamic groups to topple the fragile Pakistani government and obtain access to its nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists will be a nightmare for international peace; perhaps a similar terrifying event, if not worse, than Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The possibility of the above frightening situations and ordinary Afghans' decades-long sufferings would have been reduced if the Doha Agreement had succeeded. The Taliban's takeover of the government in Kabul by force was a historical mistake, one that we ordinary Afghans will continue to pay for decades to come.

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The Role of Big Data in Democratic Backsliding

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Introduction

With the advancement of technology, big data has gained increasing popularity and attention worldwide. In terms of what big data offers, there has been a lot of discussion on its pros and cons. While some argue that big data is an essential tool for the efficiency and productivity of governments, others argue that big data also poses severe concerns for humanity, such as privacy issues and disinformation. Nowadays, big data has penetrated all spheres of life, including election manipulations through social media. Technology giants such as Facebook and Twitter have been hit by scandals concerning their role in influencing democratic processes. Therefore, this paper takes a critical approach to big data and lays out how big data presents challenges for democracies in maintaining democratic norms and values. In doing so, the paper discusses three aspects: surveillance, artificial intelligence, and social media. Lastly, the paper reflects on the future of democratic ideals.

Surveillance

Surveillance is the key tool to achieving personal information (Richards, 2013). Regardless of being the private or public sector, surveillance takes place through the same means and technologies. Once collected from the individual, it comes with the cost that the individual loses control over its usage. For instance, given the websites and their privacy policies, their terms usually state that they have a sharing platform with third parties. They are not responsible for how the third parties use the information individuals provide (Zwart et al., 2014: 715). It means individuals are subjected to a potential privacy breach.

Moreover, from the administrative perspective, the utilization of CCTV cameras (closed-circuit television) and GPS (global positioning system) contribute to the collection of personal data both voluntarily and involuntarily (Zwart et al., 2014: 715). Democratic governments tend to argue that the presence of these systems is solely for the sake of their citizens' security and wellbeing. However, in the meantime, they do not always ask for consent. The line between authoritarianism and democracy becomes therefore blurry, considering that in democracies, people have the right to privacy. Likewise, the absence of consent in the utilization of personal data creates ethical issues for the governments and violates basic universal human rights. To illustrate, a study in Australia reveals that 47% of Australians deliberately gave false information about their age, date of

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birth, and so on (ACMA, 2013: 6). This finding indicates that individuals are willing to lie when providing information to protect their identity.

From the perspective of (government) security agencies, surveillance becomes more problematic. In this case, the surveillance of an entire state comes into play, called mass surveillance. After Edward Snowden's exposure of the NSA's (National Security Agency) engagement in spying programs called PRISM and section 215 on both US and foreign citizens, the debate over mass surveillance and espionage practices increased substantially (Ackerman, 2014). For instance, the former consisted of collecting personal data from Google and Apple, whereas the latter assisted in gathering telecommunication data such as phone numbers and locations. This raises problems for individual liberties, but it also means that such information-gathering activities are performed under government precision. Moreover, the US was also blamed for bugging Angela Merkel's phone (Traynor, 2013). Following these incidents, the US government responded by publishing a Liberty and Security Report. In the report, there was no mention of the elimination of data collection and surveillance. Instead, the report stated that the US "must continue to collect signals intelligence globally in order to assure the safety of US citizens at home and abroad and to help protect the safety of our friends, our allies, and the many nations with whom we have cooperative relationships" (Clarke et al., 2013: 11). What the clause justifies is a democratic government's continuation of espionage activities on a massive scale by arguing that it is for the greater good. This certain strategy of framing the security dimension is visible among authoritarian regimes such as China, where individuals are under constant surveillance. Yet, the report, as mentioned above, belongs to the US government. As the leader of the free world and the defender of civil liberties, this situation is concerning for the survival of democratic ideals and puts US democracy under question.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Developing AI technology for illegitimate use gives rise to great challenges. For instance, using facial recognition systems outside its formal usage (such as to detect criminals) leads to 'potentially totalitarian control 'over civilian lives (Pijl, 2020: 32). Zuboff (2015: 81) calls for a concept called 'surveillance capitalism' and indicates that "impersonal systems of discipline and control produce certain knowledge of human behaviour independent of consent". Her argument supports the idea that the formation of AI has the capacity to manipulate and direct individual preferences. This is depicted by the remarks of Marcello Ienca, who is a Swiss neuro engineer. He warns that people have the right to psychological continuity against AI interventions— interventions that are being experimented on in the army (Ienca, 2017). In sum, AI is a beneficial tool for human life to the extent that it does not penetrate or invade the human mind. Furthermore, it is evident that today's global economy depends on the advancement of AI. The 2008 economic crisis has completely transformed the world into an IT-based neoliberal capitalist order where

almost everything can be digitally traceable, from payments to social media accounts (Pijl, 2020: 32). This new order entails shifting from collective to qualitative decision-making by hinting at an oligarchic structure centred around big corporations and banks (Carrol, 2013). Consequently, the more the economy becomes intertwined with global issues (for example, human health), the less democratic it becomes in the decision-making processes (Carrol, 2013). Hence, there is a need for a transparent, rule-based AI development system for democracies to maintain civil liberties and the participation of all individuals in democratic processes.

A distinct AI formation that is detrimental to democracies is the so-called 'deepfakes'. They are "highly realistic and difficult-to-detect digital manipulations of audio or video" that are, in reality, fake (Chesney and Citron, 2019: 147). Yet, when compared to the original video or audio, the differences between the two become inseparable. For instance, it was displayed in one of President Obama's speeches. In the middle of his actual sentence, the person who creates the deepfake version takes over. He changes the rest of the sentence into street jargon with a couple of curse words that sound exactly like President Obama's own words (The Atlantic, 2019). The abuse of AI systems as such may lead to serious danger in terms of public speeches or diplomatic relations. Even more extreme, these constructs can lead to conflicts and deception between rival superpowers. Hence, democracies are more vulnerable than ever with the emergence of AI, causing misinformation and fake news.

Social Media

The Internet leaves data traces every time after its usage, including on Facebook or Twitter (Boehme-Neßler, 2016: 222). Especially social media's role as an instrument for political purposes in recent years has come under the spotlight. The Cambridge Analytica (CA) scandal illustrates how Facebook was used for political campaigning both in the US and UK. In 2018, Cambridge Analytica, a political data analysis firm, was accused of using Facebook data of over 50 million users in the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit campaign. CA used personal data to create psychological profiles for voters through targeted advertisements. Via the 'thisisyourdigitallife 'third-party app, a Cambridge academic designed, CA was able to access not only the data of those who downloaded it but also the data of their friends and family (Wired, n.d.). In the aftermath of the scandal, Facebook received massive backlash from its users and the public. Many argue that social media is one of the most influential gadgets for political gain and office. According to Margetts (2017:1), "the acoustics of social media, orchestrated by firms like Facebook, are implicated in the waves of political populism and even extremism that have swept across the United States and many European countries". The CA affair confirmed that democratic decline is real. Carole Cadwalladr, who exposed the CA case, even argues that social media platforms generate a '9/11 of democracy (Margetts, 2019: 8). Another instance of election manipulation took place again in the Trump election. Russia's efforts to strengthen racial

discrimination in the US through disinformation tactics which looked like they were coming from the American people's and interest groups' social media accounts, caused rumours that the election was rigged (Gayard, 2018: 119-120). This means that cyberspace is a global playing field and is open to producing biased outcomes, especially with social media data. In this way, the social media platforms' owners hold enormous corporate and centralized power to dictate the future of democracy (or authoritarianism). This supports the former point (under the AI section) that there is an oligarchic structure in the current order. Big data enables the centralization of power in the hands of a few through fragmenting and marginalizing societies for political interests. Nowadays, the warfare over which country is a superpower depends largely on who has a bigger hand in using big data.

Conclusion

This paper examined three features of big data from a critical lens. It showed how big data's risks and illegal practices affect democracies and potentially lead them to become more oligarchic. The paper suggests that democratic backsliding is on the table, presented in the cases mentioned above. In order for democracies to survive, a transparent administration of big data is essential without interfering with fundamental individual rights. This is possible through necessary institutional oversight mechanisms that adhere to democratic ideals for providing a safer environment for citizens.

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The Present of the European Left: A Triple Dilemma

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It is the great irony of our time that while the return of inequality has become a pressing concern in Western democracy, the parties holding social democratic positions are in crisis." French economist Polacko (2021) puts it this way. The paradoxical tension between the worsening status quo of inequality, on the one hand, and the weakening of the political force of equality claims, on the other hand, highlights the failure of the European Left. The deviation of the European Left in the choice of the battlefield, the embodiment of an idea, and the positioning of the state has obstructed the progress of the social agenda it wanted to achieve, partly contributed to the current fracture of the Left's power.

The wrong shift on the battlefield: culture war

To a certain extent, when the European Left's demand for equality shifted the battlefield from class to cultural communities, it was doomed to fail.

After the Second World War, post-industrial society in Europe has been famous for a high degree of social mobility and the commercialization of knowledge, resulting in the deterioration of class identity and the deflation of identity-based on class identity. Left-wing parties are built on the supremacy of class and faith-based identity. The identity crisis eventually leads to a party identity crisis, weakening the voter base of left parties. The mainstream left-wing parties then opened the battlefield of equality from class to cultural communities, constituting the "new social movement." While the perspective of demands is shifted to cultural communities, the equality of artistic community identity is highlighted and promoted in this context, accompanied by "multiculturalism," aimed maintenance or support of the unique identity of each cultural group in society, as stated by American scholar Robbins (1999:29–38). However, in practical and theoretical terms, this path does not work.

In practical terms, the European Left's choice of the battleground for equality in the realm of cultural communities is partly tantamount to de-facto suicide. First, the line of cultural equality locks the audience of the left-wing movement to a cultural minority. It excludes the support resources of the mainstream culture from the outset, placing hopes in the "conscience" of some members of the mainstream culture. It is difficult to imagine that a social movement can be successful and understood society-wide if the audience for support and mobilization is predetermined to be a minority. Second, rally by cultural identity is less motivating and less integrated than mobilization by class identity.

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The criteria of cultural identity are difficult to quantify and even infinitely divisible, so they cannot meet the requirement of certainty of the mobilization. Therefore, they cannot be used as an integrative rally element. Besides, the manifestation of cultural identity is challenging to materialize, and it is far less motivating than purely economic criteria such as income distribution. It cannot be used as a motivating element of mobilization. Thirdly, the movement for cultural equality is not precise. It is difficult to reach a consensus on the criteria for its realization and implementation, which, to some extent, often leads to the problem of "reverse discrimination", that is currently in full swing. Finally, the initiation of cultural equality is intended to achieve a cultural revolution, and culture is the most profound element of belonging among the many identity orientations of human beings. It is impossible to achieve its purpose without years and years of preparation, and, inevitably, it will not be effective in the present. The "new social movement" needs to be broken urgently.

Philosophically speaking, the multiculturalism itself that underpins the cultural Left's line has a paradox. Multiculturalism seeks a clear presentation of the world. Still, it does so by dissolving the world's diverse cultural and ethnic boundaries and achieving a clear vision through the dissolution of divisions. However, this is a request's knot: ultra-high-definition brings the dissolution of boundaries and borders, but only with quiet care under the limits can perception become complete, and what ultra-high-definition brings is distortion instead, as described by German scholar Han (2019). The appearance of a particular form of negation in society is a sign of profound clarity.

Multiculturalism takes the form of negating its intended purpose, which brings about many paradoxes. The first paradox is between slavery and freedom: multiculturalism resorts to the process of "getting freedom" for cultural minorities from a sense of "slavery". However, "freedom" is not absolute and satisfying, and the consistent desire for freedom only leads to the deepening of the subject's "sense of slavery" and reinforces the imprint of their secondary status, leading to the continuous process of "freedom from slavery" and its purification. Second, the contradiction between absolute and relative action: Multiculturalism seeks the de facto equality of all cultural groups. What it wants to achieve must be a fundamental universal action to achieve the result of absolute universal equality. But its movement is tied to the efforts of minority groups, and what it calls for is only relative action that cannot carry the universal subject's demand for absolute realization. The third is the paradox of particularization and universalization: Multiculturalism pursues the value of particularistic for particular cultures, highlighting the particularistic orientation to the height of pseudo-religious matters beyond mundane values. The particularist pursuit must be placed under the universalist value. Otherwise, what results is the alienation of this particular orientation itself into universality. Exalted particularism and universalism constitute a profound contradiction.

The false embodiment of an ideal: cultural equality

To a certain extent, the failure of the European Left lies in its inability to effectively embody the idea of equality in the present, namely what roles equality and justice should play in society, as professor Baiasu (2019) put it. The choice of cultural groups as the point of contact between equality and the present society is proof of the misconception of the European Left's efforts to embody the idea today.

The idea of equality refers to a just relationship between human beings and other human beings, a proper attitude toward other human beings, and the understanding and action of human beings concerning the mutual tolerance and respect of others and society without distinction. In other words, it requires a just social relationship that encompasses many aspects of the economic, political, and cultural social spheres and seeks to realize its value in these various aspects. To discover and visualize the concept of equality in the social sphere. Political parties with the idea of equality need to deal with two issues: first, the conceptual clarification of the image, and second, the analogy between the concept and the elements of society. The former deals with the relationship between the idea and other values of society, and the latter deals with how the idea fits into social reality. Unfortunately, the European Left does not do either of these things well enough.

The first is that the ideal of equality should be adequately embodied in present society by the Left: what does equality mean? Society is a spatial existence in which many values can grow and develop and in which many heterogeneous values can find a reasonable space for progress. The Lefts must first clarify the embodiment of the notional value of equality in its concept. Then it can progress by dealing with its relationship with other conceptual values of society. The clarification of what equality means in today's society is synonymous with the extent to which equality can accommodate freedom. First, it must resort to some compromise that reconnects the idea of equality with the current liberal society; second, this compromise should also ensure the high status of equality.

Moreover, it must present a position that distinguishes the Left from liberalism and embraces equality in the present. In particular, how can socialism reactively adapt to listen to the real needs of the people, highlight the unifying position of the concept of equality, and not exclude the reasonable space of other heterogeneous ideas? Therefore, it has been noted by English reviewer Bickerton (2018): 415–416. Thus, if the embodiment of equality is conceptualized as cultural equality, it results in the overflow of liberty itself and the deflation of equality itself, which no longer has a substantive and unifying position, conceptually separated from liberalism but the same in substance.

The second is to identify the point where the concept of equality fits into the current society as the focus of the demand for equality: what equality is to do. What is the perspective on the demand and practice of the equality movement? To find its place in today's society, the idea of equality must cut

through to social reality. What equality has to do is to ask which areas of society face severe injustices in the distribution of resources and which sites are suitable for mobilizing social movements to redistribute resources. Cultural community equality is not a good fit, and its ambiguity and the alienation it may lead to after purification cannot serve as an effective mobilization target. Suppose the left-wing cannot find an appropriate entry point for the time being. Under such circumstances, it is advisable to temporarily put aside macro-level demands and sink them to specific issue areas, resorting to quantifiable demands and efforts within each particular issue area for a just distribution of resources, thus evoking the vitality of the Left.

The wrong national positioning: beyond the border

In a sense, the failure of the European Left also lies in its inability to confront the nation-state seriously and use it calmly and boldly as the most critical tool for realizing its ideas.

The nation-state was one of the top products of the modernization process in Europe. As an alternative to the deconstruction of religious authority in the Middle Ages, it became a new source of meaning, and even a spring of faith, to realize the significance of human belonging and social cohesion. In the medium and long term, the delayed globalization process has not succeeded in shaping a new form of identity to replace the nation-state identity, which is rooted in the irreplaceable supporting role of the state in the whole modernization process. The egalitarian demands put forward by the European Left are humanistic concerns that focus on humanity in general, making it natural to transcend the framework and domain of the nation-state in its perspective and pursue the universal realization of the value of equality. The European Left has failed to take the nation-state seriously, viewing it mainly as a mediating factor and a necessary part of a complete historical process. Thus, it has an innate sense of alienation from the state. In the face of the globalization wave, this alienation from the nation-state is reflected in an excessive sensitivity and enthusiasm for the globalization process, ignoring the long-term cyclical nature of its realization, which is entangled and contradicted by the current wave of nationalism formed by the anti-globalization process.

The European Left has failed to confront the nation-state seriously, as scholar Hoffmann (1966:962-915) has pointed out before. First, the European Left ignores the "social exclusivity" caused by the existence of the nation-state itself. It tends to transcend the nation-state identity of society on the issues of refugees and immigrants (Atar, 2021). Its eagerness to pursue the universalization of equality and to embrace the process of borderless globalization is reflected in the excessive tolerance and accommodation of various "new social members," thereby ignoring the demands for "social exclusivity" by the return of nationalism in domestic society. Second, the European Left ignores the fact that the nation-state itself can be used as a tool for realizing the concept of genuine equality. At

the level of domestic governance, it is often unable to take on the task of making major policy adjustments and social reforms, partly due to the historical shortcomings of "state welfare."

Instead, it uses the increasingly discredited "Third Way" as a platform, as the outline for the governance of the social agenda. The responsibility for this government failure is thus placed on the supposed clear left-wing ideas by the left-wing administration, which is undoubtedly a tragedy, as socialism is responsible for the loss of a plan it did not implement. Third, the European Left's confidence in the historical trend of globalization led to a rush to accept the "disappearance of national borders," which triggered a populist backlash within its borders. The "disappearance of borders" is, after all, only an ideal; the actual reality is the divergence of interests between European and domestic societies caused by national borders, which leads to tensions between other claims at the European level and the household level. Finally, parts of the European Left lacked the state's moral expectations and operational skills, opting for an "unconscious" negative adaptation, either dismantling its values and mission or adapting to the moment to make the status quo rationale led the party to reject innovation in the functioning of the state, which led to its decline. At present, the European Left can only embrace universal ideals if it first embraces the nation-state and treats it seriously.

The European Left can no longer indulge in the nostalgia and illusions of the "golden age" of social democracy; the times are very different. Choosing the right battlefield, realizing the suitable embodiment of equality, and embracing and taking the nation-state seriously in the medium and long term is the way out for the European Left.

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Perspectives on the Application of Terrorism as a Useful Term: Through the Lens of the West and Its Self-Appointed 'Terrorists'

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Terrorism is a term that instils confusion among domestic and international governments, agencies, and non-governmental organisations. What is it? Who are they? What is the modus operandi? These variables beg the question of whether terrorism itself is still a useful term to describe acts of non-sanctioned violence? Since the Russian conceptualisation of 'propaganda by the deed', terrorism has been plagued by a series of unknowns. This essay will analyse arguments for and against the continued use of the term- through the lens of the West and the terrorists themselves. As a result, multiple perspectives will be analysed and clarified to assess whether terrorism should remain in the popular terminology of the 21st century or whether it has surpassed its relevancy as a descriptive term.

Terrorism is an undefined and loose term applied to various groups and people who commit specific acts of violence against non-combatants (Schmid, 2004). Herein rises the principal issue of defining terrorism- what' acts of violence are considered legitimate reactions to aggression and what causes will be championed as reactions to authoritarianism. This leads to the essential cliche when discussing terrorism- "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Ganor, 2002). As a result, the word terrorism has been used to significant political effect, being wielded by different organisations and groups over time to shape the public perception of who may constitute a terrorist (Skorpen Wikan, 2018).

While there are a variety of conflicting arguments and confusion surrounding the definition of the word, Schmid's opinion on what terrorism is composed of will be noted as one of the foundations for assessing what terrorism is. Schmid and Jongman define terrorism as the following:

"Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby- in contrast to assassination- the direct targets of violence are not the main targets...threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organisation), (imperilled) victims and main targets are used to manipulate the main target...turning it into a target of terror, a target of

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demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought" (Schmid and Jongman, 1988).

Understanding what terrorism is through Schmids' definition highlights two key concepts- that terrorism as a physical force is generally exerted upon non-combatants and that they also seek to subversive and infiltrate the public psyche to extend their power. Witbeck proposes a less academic response to the term- however, one that perhaps has the broadest application across all domestic and international organisations, groups, and politics: "perhaps the only honest and globally workable definition of terrorism is an explicitly subjective one – 'violence I don't support'"(Witbeck, 2004).

When approached from a legal perspective, the definition of terrorism falls short of its aim. When analysing the Australian definition of terrorism, it was considered in Thomas V Mowbray that the language put forth by Part 5.3 of the Australian "Criminal Code Act 1955 (Cth) (Criminal Code) by Schedule 1 to the Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002 was "too vague for judicial interpretation and thus incompatible with the exercise of judicial power and contrary to the separation of powers inherent within the structure of the Australian Constitution" (Hardy and Williams, 2013). Therefore, a ramification of this is the inability to create a singular brief as to what constitutes an illegal terrorist action. It thus prevents prosecution- or aids it- in conflicting cases. Such definitions and amendments are also a result of a post 9/11 world and therefore are tailored to previous public rhetoric on what terrorism looks like.

The confusion and inability to pinpoint what terrorism make it privy to use by anyone- from ISIS calling the United States terrorists to anarchists exposing state-supported terrorist acts overseas. This begs the question- can a term that can be applied to anyone through significant overuse fail to retain its original value?

To assess whether terrorism has indeed outlived its use-by date, the term must be considered through the West's lens of those deemed 'terrorists'. This is summarised in 'The Challenges of Conceptualising Terrorism' that terrorism has various meanings in its circles (Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004). Terrorism focuses on the ability to create a sense of fear and prosecution against a primarily civilian population- inspiring connotations to the term without an actual physical act of violence occurring. For the terrorist, this is perhaps as useful as actually launching an attack, as it affects the public psyche in much the same way. Schmid and Jongman summarise this:

"Many extremists might often not be able to produce a prolonged terror effect by unexpected, dramatic acts of violence; however, the evocation of terror is their intent is sufficient to justify placing them in the same category as those who succeed. (Schmid and Jongman 1988)".

The term terrorism is a handy tool for those that wield it in such a manner. They are able to shape the word against their chosen enemy and affect public reaction and opinion through mere utterance. This has been noted in increasing media coverage and fanaticism of the term, only propagating the terrorist's aim further. Altheide argues that the media works upon a basis of fear to fulfil its own goals independently of terrorist purposes and is henceforth constructed to appear threatening to the everyday American (Altheide, 2017). This is not lost on terrorist organisations through their increased use of social media and networking via videos and statements readily available to mainstream institutions, such as the ISIS beheading videos or campaign messages. This helps construct a public opinion and create connotations with the word 'terrorist' to purport the feat further and create overaction by domestic and international security firms.

The context in which terrorism exists remains convoluted, as captured by the variance in opinions expressed between academics, politicians, and legal faculties. For terrorists, it seems as though the word itself sparks connotations that make it useful. This is evident in the increasing anxiety expressed in the Western world- particularly America- wherein "60% of Americans feel that it is very or somewhat likely that a terrorist attack will occur in the United States shortly; this percentage is up from 38% in 2011" (Haner et al., 2019). Furthermore, the spike in anxiety appears to be from emotionally laden media and political campaigns, which heavily imply the term terrorist to incite such a response. This was noted by various groups across the board- from right-wing domestic terrorists and their idea of an incoming 'race war' to that of ISIS and overseas groups. The Global Terrorism Index of 2020 supports this theory, as deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year- falling to 15.5% (Global Terrorism Index, 2020).

The term terrorism intrinsically inspires fear from the very etymological roots of the word, which "involves the creation of terror, fear and alarm" (Kapitan, 2004). The term may provoke a fear response as a byproduct (Kapitan, 2004). This plays directly into the hands of the terrorist and proves its usefulness and relevance in modern terminology from the perspective of such groups. There also remains the 'war of words' upon labelling one a terrorist- resulting in a turnaround use of the term against the original perpetrators. This correlates with another layer of usefulness for inspiring terrorist groups to play upon the confusion between terrorism and justified rebellion. Of course, by their definitions, this labelling of the West as terrorists is not entirely uncalled for as they are not exempt from such atrocities. From the U.S bombing of Tripoli in 1986 or the Iraqi/Iranian missile strikes in the mid-'80s, states may often fall into the same category as terrorists (Kapitan, 2004). For organisations that wish to frame the conversation, these actions and subsequent definitional failure of the word terrorism give them an excellent platform to create a counter.

Despite the usefulness of the word in terrorist circles, the term may be rendered all but useless when applied to the Western world. The concept of

terrorism has become increasingly oversaturated in everyday life- more often than not used as a justification for bias against a particular group or faucet of political movement considered distasteful by the government of the day. The continued use of the term with little consideration of what definition may be applied continues to muddy the water surrounding what counts as a terrorist act. The issue is becoming so profound in media and political circles that some scholars contend that we are better off moving away from using the term to avoid an illusion of meaning 'invariance' (Medina, 2019).

The usefulness of the word seems to fall short in the Western world due to the innate definitional problem- while in terrorist groups, the functionality relies on the attached rhetoric which comes from the word- opposed to legislative meaning. This is highlighted through states' own actions both domestically and internationally- with "the number of innocent victims killed or seriously harmed as a result of terrorism by nonstate agents pales in comparison with the millions of innocent victims that have been and are still being killed or seriously harmed by what one could describe as state-sponsored political violence" (Medina, 2019).

For example, one may consider the following scenario. An arrest may be synonymous with an act of hostage-taking- an action normally reserved for terrorist activity. In this instance, it is an action performed by the state and 'legitimate' arms of power, and therefore not considered as such- but under many definitions of terrorism, it still constitutes as such. Even when applying Schmid's definition, one can see the correlation between both actions- violence against non-combatants with the intent to create fear. Indeed, arrests and modern policing are tactics used to create discontent in the population and prevent others from offending. This creates confusion when assessing the meaning of the word and removes all meaningful sense as most states and organisations can therefore be accused of committing acts of terrorism. It would be hypocritical to consider one group a terrorist organisation and one not under such scrutiny, rendering the word useless.

Dr Akhtar also reinforces the hypocrisy surrounding the use of the word terrorism and how it remains problematic.

"For one thing, we do not talk about the politically motivated murder of Iraqis in terms of terrorism, just as we tend to focus on 'terrorism of the poor without acknowledging that the more privileged classes can be victims of the very same acts of 'terrorism'. Moreover, since all labels of this sort are loaded with political agendas, the label of terrorist, he conceded, is not a good psychoanalytic term "(Siassi and Akhtar, 2006).

This leads to a hefty inequality of the law to be able to scrutinise and understand circumstances around the formation of a 'terrorist'- instead labels them as such when they may indeed be a byproduct of the state's own actions against them.

The term 'terrorism' fails to be a useful descriptor of actual violence due to the definitional problem and is therefore redundant in the Western vocabulary. While it may prove helpful in terms of creating a media cacophony, its practical use becomes very limited as a result. This has been ascertained since the 1980s- and the problem has only been expounded upon since. Jenkins provides an insight into this theory, noting that:

"terrorism has recently become a fad word used promiscuously and often applied to a variety of acts of violence which are not strictly terrorism by definition...some governments are prone to label as terrorism all violent acts committed by their political opponents, while anti-government extremists frequently claim to be the victims of government terror" (Jenkins, 1980).

This results in a sort of semantic satiation, in which the actual meaning of the phrase is lost among the repetition of the statement- pushing it to irrelevancy.

It is by combining the Western perspective and the terrorist rhetoric that we arrive at a bizarre juxtaposition in the usefulness of the word terrorism in conventional nomenclature. From the perspective of those deemed 'terrorists' by the West, it provides a label that they can manipulate into every nook and cranny of everyday life to create a fear response. Its use in the West, however, is becoming limited due to overuse and its inability to be constrained effectively.

These factors cause further disruption in defining what may constitute a terrorist act or who a terrorist might be. When states apply further introspection to themselves, they may find that they simply are justified users of terrorist tactics simply because they have a legitimate claim to force through statehood. The term 'terrorist' is henceforth useless due to its broad spectrum of uses. The inability to discern what particular mode of violence is used- from guerilla fighting to covert operations- means that there is no set rule in which to persecute those accused of terrorism hypocrisy on the part of the state.

From the analysis of both perspectives presented in this essay, it is clear that there is limited use of the word terrorist, particularly considering the Western use of the word. Its usefulness depends entirely on the user, and surprisingly it retains more power and meaning in the hands of 'terrorists' than Western institutions. Terrorist organisations can capitalise on the rhetoric surrounding the word and thus create negative connotations and fear, which expands their soft power through various modes of media. The results of the over-saturation of terrorism are already being felt in mainstream media channels- something that may not be beneficial for the terrorists profiting off the negative connotations of the word. As of 2019, the BBC has ceased the use of the word 'terrorism' when reporting on violent activity, changing its lexicon to avoid 'value judgment' due to the vacuum of understanding when it comes to defining the phrase (The Times of Israel, 2021).

Suppose the West chooses to disband the usefulness and use of the word 'terrorism' as a descriptive actor of violence. In that case, they find it distasteful, so to fade the word's usefulness for the terrorists themselves. Without the importance placed on the word through the Western psyche, the less impact it has when wielded by organisations who wish to inspire fear. Additionally, this would require the West to disband its complex understanding of 'legitimate violence' and illegitimate violence and rework its principal knowledge of security threats. This act seems far from being considered by policymakers and politicians. They themselves may occasionally reap the benefits of the fear instilled by the word terrorism. In removing the essence of fear attached to the word, politicians risk losing a pivotal point of many campaigns- much like the predecessor to terrorism- communism. Even this limited use has a functional flaw, however, with the 'age of information' inspiring further critical thought of the use of the word in the West- particularly when used at the mercy of campaigners. The media circus surrounding the word has also resulted in negative connotations for mostly Muslim populations living in respective Western countries due to the nature of the term being mostly polarised in a post-September 11 world. There continues to be an alienation of certain parts of the community under the formulated idea of 'terrorist', which further proves its uselessness as a colloquial term without definition in Western society. This bias only creates displacement and imbalance- creating a foundational argument for 'terrorist' ideas to take hold domestically and overseas as a reaction.

So what is the result if the term 'terrorist' ceases to exist as a proper word in the 21st-century lexicon? There is no honest answer or research which can accurately predict such. While it is folly to assume that the word will entirely become irrelevant, it may see the same fate as the term 'communism'. After McCarthyism and the rise of the second 'Red Scare' of the Cold War, the peak of communist hysteria subsided, and the term fell wayward from the public eye. While still generally used to describe certain governments or schools of political thought- it was no longer the 'be all and end all' to overthrow the West. It is not folly to think this may be the same fate for 'terrorism'. While still an adept descriptor of violence, it may be regaled to conversational use instead of a benchmark for policymaking. Groups labelled as 'terrorists' may fall to another name- but perhaps one not so prominent to inflictions placed upon them by the labeller themselves.

The usefulness of 'terrorism' continues to be scrutinised- but its relevance depends on which faction you ask. For the West, it appears that without a stable definition, the term 'terrorist' is in its death throes- creating chaos and confusion while alienating certain sects of the community- and being helpful only to those who wish to capitalise on years of existing fear for personal gain. It still proves itself to be a handy tool for organisations who want to play into the terrorist rhetoric- meaning that its usefulness as a word and idea is not entirely irrelevant. This creates a conclusion that is neither here nor there, completely dependent on which lens you apply to

the word. Much like everything else to do with the study of terrorism, personal opinion, understanding, and overarching goals tend to mould the idea to the perspective of the person analysing it. As such, the West must decide whether it will stick by the term and continue to surge forward with a word that has all but reached its lifespan; and those determined terrorists will perhaps see a short-lived influence through the simple use of a word- due to its inability to be appropriately applied and connected to a definition.

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Kashmir Seeks the Hope

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5th February, Kashmir Solidarity Day, is essential to Pakistan. It has always been important for more than seventy years now. Pakistanis belonging to any of the regions in the world, their heart goes out to the people of Kashmir. After the abrogation of article 370 in 2019, it was the third time that Pakistan celebrated Solidarity Day when a massive siege and a lock-down going in the Indian-Occupied-Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

When, in 1949, India went to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the Security Council assured that the future of IOJK would be decided by the people of Kashmir equally satisfied with it. After that, in the 1950s, Nehru deviated from his promise to Kashmir and the international community. Over seven decades have passed, and still, Kashmir longs for self-determination. Out of fifteen clauses of this resolution, nine are about holding a plebiscite.

Occupied Kashmir is one of the world's most militarised zones, deploying around one million Indian forces. That means for every family, there is a soldier. It is like one of the worst open jails in the world where there is no right to the people, especially to the Muslims. The Modi government has made demographic changes in IOJK in a cruel way. Around 45 lac domiciles have been distributed so that demography could be changed, and if, at some stage, there were a plebiscite, the result would go in Indian favour. Extrajudicial killings and kidnappings are going on regularly. In the last week, 15 Kashmiris have been martyred by Indian forces over fake charges Kashmir issue has been sufficiently highlighted in international media and significant international countries since Modi abrogated article 370. At the same time, the extremist Modi government pursued the policy of hatred in portraying Kashmiri leadership as terrorists. Indian governments are aligning the freedom movement with terrorism.

Pakistan has highlighted the Kashmir issue in every forum, including OIC, UN and other international media. The Permanent Five (P5) countries need to be revisited as far as this implementation of the right to self-determination is concerned. These countries also understand the plight of the people, but certain hindrances do not allow them to implement these resolutions in letter and spirit.

One can say that the US has spent trillions of dollars in their war in Afghanistan, but it failed in the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Similarly, since 1947 India has spent close to a trillion dollars and was unable to win the hearts of Kashmiris. In fact, after the Indian act of 5th August 2019, all Kashmiris across the political divides are alleviated from India.

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Since the 1980s Kashmir scenario has changed as we are witnessing a genocide, and international community caution has gone missing over this issue. All were hoping to revive values after Biden came into power, but nothing happened. In the context of international movements, justice was delivered to East Timor, South Sudan and Kosovo, this all happened in the last decade, but only Kashmiris were deprived of justice. The situation will worsen if the international community does not respond and if selective morality is applied to the region because the Kashmiris happen to be Muslims.

Kashmiri people have been a victim of geography and a victim of clashing the great power interest in this region. India has benefited from the engagement of international players in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the international community looked the other way because of their claims in India against rising China and looking into rising Russia in the region. This scenario resulted in the Kashmiri people's continuing suffering. It is why the people of Kashmir have picked up arms, and they will continue this armed struggle.

Pakistan needs to continue informing all permanent five members of the UN Security Council of their obligation to honour the UN's charter. UN has passed different resolutions over the years on IOJK. Then there is a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which is also not being implemented in IOJK.

Although more is to be done, we can conclude with positive developments in Kashmir. Recently Kashmir issue was highlighted in the UN and other forums. Russell Tribunal on Kashmir took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia, to shed light on war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by India in Kashmir. The Kashmir issue was also highlighted in the European countries with an influential role of the Kashmiri diaspora in exposing India globally.

It is proof that freedom movements always succeed when they have indigenous support. Continuation of the freedom struggle in IOJK will not bring peace in India and peace between India and Pakistan. If global powers do not refrain from India or compel India to change its policies, then the region is rightly termed a nuclear flash-point over this chronic issue. Pakistan needs to be diplomatically, politically and morally proactive by taking India to the international community over its unjustified actions in IOJK.

There seems to be a concerted effort to break the will of the Kashmiris, who have continued to face the tragedies of occupation for over 70 years. In these times, India has suffocated the living of Kashmiris. The time has come when international communities should play their role and scrutinize India to respect the fundamental human rights of Kashmiris and arrange the implementation of UN resolutions so that the Kashmir dispute could be settled in accordance with the Kashmiris' aspirations.

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