

POLITICAL REFLECTION

MAGAZINE

July • August • September • 2022

ISSN: 2042-888X

Vol. VIII • No. II

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Submissions:

To submit articles or opinion, please email:

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VOL. 8 - NO. 3

POLITICAL REFLECTION

JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER
2022

e-ISSN: 2042-888X

“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”

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Takeaways from the Russia/Ukraine Conflict

Dr. Mark Meirowitz

mmeirowitz@sunymaritime.edu

Introduction

The world has recently experienced a series of shocks: the COVID-19 pandemic (Kahl & Wright, 2021), the precipitous withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan, and, beginning on February 24, 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The invasion of Ukraine, however, appears to have upended, very likely for the long-term, the international order as we previously knew it.

We have gone from a semblance of equilibrium, or even a punctuated equilibrium (Gould & Gould, 2007), to a dystopian world in which a leading world power, the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, has engaged in continued aggression against Ukraine, a member State of the United Nations, despite sanctions and other actions by regional and international institutions.

I would like to suggest a few takeaways from the Russia/Ukraine conflict:

Decline of International institutions

International institutions have been ineffective in stopping the Russian carnage. The United Nations Security Council has been stymied by the Russian veto (indeed a Russian representative was, at the outset of the invasion, the President of the UN Security Council and cast a veto to prevent the UN Security Council from condemning the Russian invasion). The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a ruling that Russia must suspend all military operations in Ukraine (*16 March 2022 order allegations of genocide under the convention on the ...* (n.d.)), but the ICJ couldn't implement its ruling since enforcement goes through the UN Security Council where the Russian veto prevents the UN from taking action.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) did condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine (by an overwhelming vote of 141 Member States), adopting a resolution demanding that Russia "immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders." (United Nations. (n.d.)). However, the UNGA doesn't have enforcement power.

*Professor,
State
University of
New York
(SUNY)
Maritime
College,
Associate
Fellow at
CESRAN
International*

Russia, as well as China, have co-opted international institutions. As discussed above, Russia has used its permanent member status on the UN Security Council to prevent action against it concerning Ukraine. As for China, “four of the 15 UN specialized agencies are headed by Chinese nationals, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDP), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)” (Tung Cheng-Chia and Alan H. Yang for *The Diplomat*, 2021).

The question is why States like Russia and China which are challenging the international order even bother to devote energies to participation in international institutions. It would appear that such participation by China and Russia has been opportunistic in that “integration into international institutions ... has enhanced their ability to mobilize allies, secure leverage over their trading partners, and gain legitimacy for their normative visions. It is not simply that international institutions were unlikely to check China’s and Russia’s revisionism; their membership in fact assisted their efforts to transform world politics” (Goddard, 2022). It is clear, therefore, that reform of the United Nations system is an urgent and immediate imperative. This will be difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to accomplish because of structural obstacles within the United Nations system.

The Return of Conquest.

We have seen an action by a leading power to literally attempt to wipe another State off the map through invasion. The world has experienced such actions before during World War I and World War II, and the invasion of South Korea by North Korea, for example, but we have not seen such bold aggression since the advent of the Cold War. This may presage the “return of conquest” (Fazal, 2022). “The fact that Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, can veto a referral for the crime of aggression to the International Criminal Court exposes a troubling vulnerability of the norm against territorial conquest. It is hard to maintain norms when great powers are determined to break them”. (Fazal, 2022). Indeed, “Allowing the norm against territorial conquest to wither away would mean taking the lid off territorial disputes around the globe and making millions of civilians more vulnerable to indiscriminate targeting”. (Fazal, 2022). Russia has been able to launch a destructive all-out war against Ukraine, a sovereign State and Member State of the United Nations, using overwhelming force and attacking civilians, engendering a humanitarian tragedy of epic proportions.

Is NATO “Brain Dead”? It Remains to be Seen.

France’s President Macron has said that NATO is “brain dead” (*The Economist*, n.d.) and NATO experienced a tremendous disunity in the face of the Russian attack on Ukraine. Indeed, the response by NATO members to Russia’s aggression has not been uniform and in many cases quite limited. For example, it is somewhat surprising to note that “Latvia – with a

population of 1.8 million and a gross domestic product comparable to Vermont's – apparently has delivered more [in aid to Ukraine] than Germany, France and Italy" (Board, 2022)

Europe appears to be floundering. Russia has been putting relentless pressure on the European countries by limiting natural gas exports which the European countries desperately need. (Dow Jones & Company, 2022, June 16). However, at the Madrid Summit in June, 2022, NATO seems to have received a shot in the arm in terms of NATO's formally inviting Finland and Sweden to join NATO (Erlanger & Michael, 2022), and through a US commitment to significantly increase the US force posture in Europe (Biden announces changes in US force posture in Europe, US Department of Defense, n.d.) which will include "more naval destroyers stationed in Spain, two F-35 fighter jet squadrons positioned in the United Kingdom and a permanent headquarters in Poland for the U.S. 5th Army Corps" (Keith, 2022). NATO announced its updated Strategic Concept 2022 (NATO 2022 – Strategic Concept):

The 2022 Strategic Concept clearly lays out NATO's purpose and principles, its core tasks and values, as well as the Alliance's strategic objectives within a radically deteriorated security environment. It reaffirms that NATO's key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure the collective defence of Allies, against all threats, from all directions. To do this, the Alliance fulfils three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. The Strategic Concept underscores, in particular, the need to further strengthen deterrence and defence as the backbone of the Alliance's collective defence commitment. It also stresses that resilience is critical to NATO's core tasks, as are cross-cutting issues like technological innovation, climate change, human security and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The 2022 Strategic Concept gives a realistic assessment of NATO's deteriorated strategic environment.

"Strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment. The threats we face are global and interconnected."

The Russian Federation, which shattered peace in Europe by waging a war of aggression against Ukraine, is recognised as the most significant threat to Allied security. Other identified threats and challenges include: terrorism; conflict and instability in the Middle East and Africa; pervasive instability and its impact on civilians, cultural property and the environment; China's stated ambitions and coercive policies; cyberspace; emerging and disruptive technologies; the erosion of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architectures; and the security implications of climate change" (NATO. (2022, June 29). *Strategic concepts*)

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has certainly galvanized NATO into becoming more cohesive and focused on the Russian and even the Chinese threats, yet it remains to be seen whether these policies and plans can be successfully

implemented. The Strategic Concept significantly highlights “NATO’s deteriorated strategic environment”, which calls for immediate and urgent attention to the threats from Russia and China.

All Politics is Local

“All politics is Local” (Gelman, 2011) - Both in the United States and in Europe, efforts by political leaders to stop Russian aggression have been stymied and impacted by local political considerations.

President Biden has had very low poll numbers and midterm elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate will take place November 2022. There is even a possibility that the Democrats might lose their majorities in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Inflation is worrying (Dow Jones & Company. (2022, June 30)). For Biden, this becomes a choice between challenging the Russian invasion of Ukraine with strong measures or allowing gas prices to rise and risking high inflation. History might shed light on this conundrum for Biden for as much as he wants to counter Russian aggression, he must address his domestic challenges, and history might even repeat itself:

“Nonetheless, history and circumstance stand in Mr. Biden’s way. Historically Americans don’t rally around the president when geopolitical shocks send oil prices up; quite the opposite. In 1973, Arab countries embargoed oil exports to the U.S. as punishment for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War. The resulting energy crisis, combined with Watergate, hammered public confidence in President Richard Nixon. The surge in prices that followed the Iranian revolution in 1979 helped doom Jimmy Carter’s presidency” (Dow Jones & Company. (2022, June 30))

Boris Johnson overcame a no-confidence vote after revelations of a party at 10 Downing Street that violated COVID-19 lockdown rules and restrictions (Landler & Castle, 2022). Macron won his election as President of France, but then lost his absolute majority in the French Parliament (Breedon & Meheut, 2022), and Germany has a new Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, who is trying to maintain a precarious balance between the US and NATO, on the one hand, and Russia on the other hand.

Both the US and the European countries are facing an energy calamity if Russia cuts off or substantially reduces natural gas exports. All of these leaders are facing domestic pressures concerning gas prices and the spectre of gas and energy shortages in the winter. Germany, for example, will have to rely on coal powered power plants as well as nuclear power in order to survive the Russian cutbacks (and possible shutoff) of Russian exports of natural gas.

There is also the question of grain supplies and other shortages caused by the Russian blockade in the Black Sea. These grain shortages will have an even more drastic impact on poorer countries in Middle East, Africa and throughout the world, where massive starvation could result.

What Might Kissinger Do/Suggest? Territorial Concessions?

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has suggested that the Ukrainians make territorial concessions to Russia in order to end the conflict. Said Kissinger:

“Ideally, the dividing line should be a return to the status quo ante,” apparently referring to a restoration of Ukraine’s borders as they were before the war began in February. “Pursuing the war beyond that point would not be about the freedom of Ukraine, but a new war against Russia itself.” (Bilefsky, 2022)

It is patently clear that the American public will not countenance supporting an ‘endless war’ in Ukraine. Ramping up NATO defences and adding Finland and Sweden to NATO will help, but it is questionable whether these efforts will end the war due to the Putin’s unpredictability. If the US and European economies continue to falter and gas prices continue to rise, then there will doubtless be pressure on Ukraine from the US and the Europeans to make territorial concessions. This is despite the very strong messaging of unity in support of Ukraine that came out of the June 2022 NATO Madrid Summit.

Implications for China Resulting from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

In one commentator’s view, China is surely “closely monitoring events, looking for lessons that might be applied in the event of a conflict with Taiwan” (Sacks, 2022). “Russia’s struggles will in no way shake China’s determination to bring Taiwan under its control. From Beijing’s perspective, Russia’s war in Ukraine is merely a realistic preview of the costs China would likely bear if it resorted to war. Chinese leaders will examine Russia’s failures and adapt their operational plans to avoid making similar mistakes. (Sacks, 2022). One can suggest that the much-criticized policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ toward Taiwan (Haass & Sacks, 2022) would fall away quickly if China invaded Taiwan. The likelihood is that the strong US and NATO response to the Russian invasion is the “writing on the wall” for China. However, Russia was able to continue its aggression despite the strong regional and global response – and resolute support for Ukraine.

We might be able to gain some guidance from the fact that a key element of the opening to China engineered by Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon was the countering of the USSR. Perhaps a ‘reopening’ to China might be considered as a way to counter Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. This will call for thinking ‘outside of the box’ to engage with China in order to force Russia to rethink its aggressive posture. With the invasion of Ukraine and the rise of China, the US and NATO may not be able to balance against, and counter, both Russia and China at the same time. Perhaps there is some way for “Washington ... to build a pragmatic partnership with Beijing” (Bremmer, 2022). This does not mean that the US and NATO should ignore China’s human rights violations, its actions in the South

China Sea, or its development of military power that can potentially be projected regionally and globally. However, the way to engage China may be to work with the reality of China's rise. As for human rights violations, "[a] strategic partnership with China doesn't require the world to ignore these" violations. "In fact, it can provide the only leverage outsiders have to nudge China toward change" (Bremmer, 2022). The first priority is putting out the fire in Ukraine and stopping Russia – the way to do that might be to work with China to deter Russia. A pragmatic approach may have efficacy:

"Rather than also push China "outside the family of nations, there to nurture its fantasies, cherish its hates and threaten its neighbours"—as Richard Nixon wrote years before his famous trip to Beijing five decades ago—America and its allies should show that they see the rising superpower differently. The aim should be to persuade Mr Xi that the West and China can thrive by agreeing where possible and agreeing to differ where not. That requires working out where engagement helps and where it threatens national security." (The Economist Newspaper, n.d.)

It was precisely after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR that Nixon and Kissinger facilitated the opening to China. The Chinese Communist Party Newspaper People's Daily called the Czech invasion "armed aggression and military occupation" by the USSR (Kissinger, 1979). China has not been overjoyed with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. China abstained in the UN Security Council and General Assembly votes condemning Russia for the invasion of Ukraine. (Person, & Michelle Nichols, H. P. (2022, February 26)) (Bloomberg, n.d.). We can be hopeful that there might be a way to engage China going forward. However, this cannot be 'business as usual' continuing as in the past:

If Beijing charts a new course, it would not be the first time it has chosen to change. But if China does re-join a system of world order, it should be a new one. The old system has fractured and must be remade. Facing tragic realities, the citizens of the free world must rebuild a global order that is practical enough to address the most vital common problems, even if it cannot and does not promise progress on all the values and concerns people face. This system will be far more effective if the world's most populous country joins it, and China faces another time of choosing. Regardless of China's participation, responsible actors must begin the hard, substantive work of protecting the planet from war, climate, economic, and health risks. The time for rhetoric and posturing is over. Zelikow, P. (2022, June 30). *The hollow order*.

What about NATO? After expanding to Sweden and Finland, will NATO expand to the Asia-Pacific to counter China?

NATO is clearly in a state of flux. This started with NATO 2030 in which NATO directed its focus not only on Russia, but also on China. NATO has been launching its updated NATO 2022 Strategic Concept (NATO 2022 - Strategic Concept). Also, we are seeing the enhanced involvement in NATO of NATO partners Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Republic of Korea

(and these States were invited to the June 2022 NATO Madrid Summit) (*Despite Ukraine Focus, Asia-Pacific to play prominent role at NATO summit*. United States Institute of Peace. (2022, June 27)). These developments are clearly oriented towards countering China and the possibility of China's invading Taiwan. The question is whether after NATO expands to include Finland and Sweden, will NATO expand to the Asia-Pacific to counter China? This appears to be a possible outcome of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. We are clearly in a three-dimensional chess game in world affairs.

Turkey's Multi-tasking on Ukraine

Turkey has succeeded to multi-task in its foreign policy related to Ukraine and Russia. Turkey has not participated in the sanctions against Russia, yet it has supplied the TB2 Bayraktar drone to Ukraine which has been very effective in Ukraine's military strategy. Turkey has been working with the parties to the conflict to find a way to bring grain through the Russian blockade in the Black Sea and has facilitated negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. Despite its initial opposition to the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, at the Madrid Summit in June 2022, after signing a trilateral memorandum with Sweden and Finland, Turkey agreed to approve the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, which will prove to be a very significant element of the strategy to counter Russia (NATO, n.d.). Turkey did receive the commitment of President Biden that Turkey would receive F-16's and modernization kits for F-16's that Turkey had previously requested. Supplying the F-16's will require the approval of the US Congress, but it is unlikely that President Biden would have publicly announced his support for providing the F-16's to Turkey without the support of the leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

What does the future have in store?

The world has been shaken by Russia' aggression in Ukraine and, in particular, by the egregious human rights violations of the invading Russian military. The question is where do we go from here? The first priority is stopping the war. The next step has to be to give serious consideration to how the international system failed to function to deter this aggression. The United Nations desperately needs reform. Further, NATO needs to be further strengthened. The question remains that if China continues its 'partnership' with Russia, what steps need to be taken to contain China's rise? We are clearly at a crossroads and need to decide future directions. The Russia/Ukraine war has been a wake-up call to the entire world. We need to start thinking about what to do if another calamity occurs, such as the invasion of Taiwan. The world has been shaken, but there is still time to coalesce and emphasize the values of the rules-based international order that have guided the world to peace – but these values are under challenge and threat. America, its NATO allies and America's allies in the Asia-Pacific and throughout the world need to awake from the slumber of complacency and plan effectively for the future.

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What Should be Done to Ensure A Better Post-COVID-19 Future?

Yukio Sakurai
sakurai-yukio-xj@ynu.jp

Introduction

It is believed that viral infections, including tuberculosis, have been overcome in developed countries and are regarded as issues affecting developing countries. SARS and MERS had little impact and even the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on lives was as small as the usual annual damage of influenza in Japan. In fact, the excess mortality of Japan in 2020 was reported “minus 15,000,” including an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic impacts (Bando 2021). The trend in Japan eventually changed in August 2021 due to spread of delta strain (Kurita et al 2022) and the excess mortality of Japan in 2021 was reported “plus 12,293,” including an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic impacts (National Institute of Infectious Diseases 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented crisis to every country/area. The government of Japan has been addressing this issue for years and finds a solution after all. Yet, an uncertain situation remains in the surrounding countries, including China, which promotes the zero-COVID policy. In contrast, the U.K. lifted all the restrictions related to COVID-19. This makes an extraordinary gap of COVID-19 policies between countries. Currently, moves to mutate the COVID-19 into a highly infectious virus and to carry out the third and fourth vaccination are simultaneously progressing, and the battle between the two still continues in some countries while accidents caused from vaccination appear.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a global issue. Why did it so happen? It is supposed that the COVID-19 pandemic attacked the weakest areas of the contemporary world. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have extended to general policies, including politics, the economy, employment, education, and people’s lifestyle (Sakurai 2021). Given these challenges, what should be done to ensure a better future after COVID-19? This is the research question that this essay intends to answer. Some views responding to this question have appeared (i.e., Yuval 2020; CFR 2021; Ciravegna and Michailova 2022). This essay is based on interdisciplinary studies, particularly the literature survey on global governance and adult protection in English and Japanese. The scope of consideration is not limited to the national health policy but also general policies. The discussion is focused on Japan, but most of it would presumably find global application.

*A retired
businessman,
is a PhD
candidate at
Yokohama
National
University
(YNU) in
Japan*

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is examined to understand its most popular impacts. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have extended to general policies, including politics, the economy, employment, education, and people's lifestyle. They are summarized as below in the domestic and the global impacts.

Domestic impacts:

- (1) A lack of national leadership was revealed. The national leaders could not communicate effectively to the people by their own words in the event of a national crisis. The bureaucrats and academic experts turned out to be less reliable to cope with a crisis than thought.
- (2) Information from the mass media lacks a good balance. The mass media has reported the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic like the pandemic was a flood, thereby instilling fear in the public; the information lacked scientific data-based analysis and they could not project the medium to long-term impacts.
- (3) Tremendous peer pressure was seen in Japanese society. Peer pressure contributes towards ensuring discipline even in natural disasters. But everyone, including a child, an elderly, and a person with a disability, is forced to comply with the regulations or guidelines shared among people in daily life, such as washing hands, wearing nose masks, social distancing, leaving windows open for proper ventilation, and keeping silent in a closed public space.
- (4) The COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on all industries. Along with the rapid slump in demands, the working environment for clerical workers changed drastically, with a switch to the online work from home method. Whilst there are some industries obtained excessive incomes due to malfunction of certain manufacturing goods and its global logistic chains.

Global impacts:

- (5) Diplomatic relations between nations have deteriorated, increasing threat of potential conflicts. The conflicts may lead to divisions of the global community into two or more. The global community has not been possible to effectively respond to potential conflicts between nations.
- (6) It was suspected that international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), are under the influence of a certain country. Whilst international cooperation was needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, effective international cooperation could not be practiced at least during the initial stage.

- (7) The role of SNS expanded rapidly, and in some cases untrue information was spread over, intentionally or unintentionally. A ban or control of the public opinion by SNS providers clearly demonstrates that the position of the international SNS speech theater is not always neutral nor safe but is under threat for the freedom of speech.
- (8) The alienation of vulnerable people, particularly older adults in nursing-home and persons with disabilities, has become prevalent. Due to the suspension of economic activities, many have become unemployed worldwide, and the number of people who are in financial difficulty has increased.

Future Condition Settings

To consider the research question, it is necessary that certain conditions are set for the future. Four settings are addressed as below.

- (1) A society with a declining birthrate and an ageing population is expected. The ageing of the population is a global phenomenon, and it is predicted to continue in the future. In particular, the ageing of the population in Europe and East Asia is expected to have a profound effect on the medical, aged care and social security policies of each country.
- (2) A society in which the role of artificial intelligence (AI) is increasing with progress in information technology (IT) is expected. It is expected that developed countries will shift from post-industrial societies to AI societies in the 2030s. This society includes the risk for surveillance society and needs effective safeguards to avoid an excessive surveillance by the government to restrict human rights.
- (3) Possible increase in depersonalization is expected. Loss of employment opportunities particularly for young workers in part because of the society's dependence on AI, social ties will be gradually weakened, and suspicions will be widespread, making it difficult for people to establish trust and interdependence in communities.
- (4) The conflict of universal values (i.e., the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and peace) between countries is expected. Japan may suffer from contradictory double standards of values, namely, the relations with countries that share the universal values and relations with countries that do not. It is unpredictable how much conflict between multiple powers will hinder economic globalization, and this is a serious key point.

What to Do for a Better Post- COVID-19 Future

Based on the above-mentioned impacts and settings, what should be done for a better post-COVID-19 future are examined as follows.

- (1) Japan's participation in international co-research activities that envision a future society is vital. It seems essential to adopt the leadership of Japan that are clear enough to the Japanese people and the global community.
- (2) It is important for Japan to contribute a unique future concept to the global community. This is to ensure Japan's national identity in the international community and to encourage national security in a broad sense through the contribution. Issues common to all countries/areas in the world include a declining birthrate, ageing of population, and social security reform. Ageing of population is one of the most serious issues facing Japan at present, but it is conceivable that Japan, which constitutes the world's most aged society, will take advantage of this and produce countermeasures.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic experience, it has become clear that elderly people are most vulnerable, and ageing of population is a serious issue in national governance. Japan should take leadership in an international cooperation to cope with ageing of population, based on the policy experience between 1945 and 2021 regarding the welfare and social security system (JICA 2021), under the concept of "human security." Such soft and smart power contributions would be acknowledged by countries who may share or may not share the universal values.

The international cooperation project can be called the "Japan Program for the Wellbeing of the Ageing Populations (JPWAP)," which comprises four parts, namely, (a) Cooperation in Legislation and Policymaking, (b) Cooperation in Healthcare and Aged Care for the Elderly, (c) Cooperation in Community Business Activities for the Elderly, and (d) Cooperation in Elderly Education in Schools and Communities.

- (3) A review of neoliberalism and its policy is important, which seeks to rely more on the functioning of the market, trading, and globalization, to identify the roles of the public sector and domestic industries. To deal with risks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters that may inevitably occur in the future, it is necessary to incorporate some area of business into the government policy by changing the philosophy of neoliberalism as a general direction.
- (4) The reconstruction of a society that can respond to multiple societal risks, including the infectious disease outbreak and natural disaster

risks, is important. It is recommended to incorporate the response to risks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, into primary and secondary school education curricula as a learning program, and to scientifically research the risk of responses to infectious diseases in higher education and research institutions.

- (5) There is political leadership and freedom of speech to deal with the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic and other risks. Regardless of political beliefs, it may be necessary for talented people with political competence to create a policy system for people like them to become politicians.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned impacts and settings, what should be done for a better post-COVID-19 future are examined. The following five actions should be executed to ensure a better post-COVID-19 future: (1) Japan should participate in international research activities to envision a future society, (2) it is necessary for Japan to adopt a unique future concept to address declining birthrates, ageing populations, and social security reform and thus to contribute to, (3) a review of neoliberalism, which seeks to rely more on the functioning of the market, (4) construction of a society that can respond to societal risks, including the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic, and (5) political leadership and freedom of speech to deal with the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic and other risks should be championed.

Particularly for the action (2) above, an idea of the “Japan Program for the Wellbeing of the Ageing Populations” is proposed, which will establish steady international cooperation under the concept of “human security” that can overcome the potential conflicts regarding the universal values. The future is created by the people, especially the young people who will lead the next generation. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a major social challenge, it will hopefully present a unique opportunity for resetting the future and leading discussions to activate that future.

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An Examination of India-Myanmar Security Cooperation following Military Coup in Myanmar

Pema Tseten Lachungpa
Pematseten5@gmail.com

On the morning of 1st February 2021, when the world was still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Myanmar military declared a state of emergency, deposed the elected members of the country's ruling party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and transferred power to the Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. It declared the results of the general elections invalid and intended to hold a new election at the end of the state of emergency. In the event of such an announcement, it created a stalemate between the pro-democracy forces and the military junta, with increasing communities taking up arms to protect themselves from the relentless campaign of military violence. Similarly, resistance forces like the Peoples' Defence Forces (PDF) began to emerge to oppose the junta, with battles occurring in areas that were peaceful in the past.

Amid the ongoing domestic political situation in Myanmar, India finds itself caught between a rock and a hard place regarding the Tatmadaw's actions. Myanmar occupies a pivotal position in New Delhi's geostrategic calculation in building an array of linkages via its Act-East policy towards Southeast Asia and beyond. Similarly, the location of Myanmar at the cusp of South Asia and Southeast Asia gives New Delhi a strategic asset in keeping China and its increasing influence in Southeast Asia and beyond at bay. Because of the multi-facet significance of Myanmar in India's geostrategic calculation, India has used the platform to raise issues of mutual importance for the all-round development of the bilateral relationship. One such significant issue between the two nations is the (in)security situation along the India-Myanmar border that has somehow hampered the process of developing a cognitive relationship between the two nations to date. The strategic landscape bordering India and Myanmar constitutes an arc of troubled states characterised by indigenous uprisings with terrorism as their defining feature (Chellaney, 2010: 158). The region almost entirely runs along with militancy-affected areas, with cross-border links. It uses violence and terror threats, radicalisation, spillover phenomena, and arms smuggling as available advantages to supplementing its growth and terror intensification. Many of the armed militant groups in the region exploit inextricable factors like cross-border linkages and ethnic ties to their advantage in pushing the threat threshold to a new height. Although New Delhi has handled the security situation on a fair note by adopting a multi-

*Independent
Researcher,
Sikkim, India*

pronged strategy, however, with the evolving transformation of world politics in every sector, including politics and security, it has made hard for one state to counter the threats, particularly when the threats have widened in scope, content and direction (Lutz & Lutz, 2013: 3, Wilkinson, 2007: 61). India and Myanmar are no exception. In this regard, India has many times raised the common challenges of combating (in) security in the region with Myanmar to remain sensitive to each other's strategic interests and concerns and prevent instability in contagious areas for the all-around development of bilateral relations. Operation Golden Bird of 1995 and the Hot Pursuit operation of 2015 depict a case of successful security cooperation between the two nations in bringing stability and peace to the region. Similarly, the brief stint of the democratically led government of Aung Sang Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy further cemented the cooperation opportunities between the two nations in the realm of the overall development of the bilateral relationship. However, the recent military coup in Myanmar has brought a major fillip in cooperation opportunities between the two nations. The coup posed a challenge to the biggest democracy in the region, India, to devise a new policy toward Myanmar. This is for the simple reason that, unlike western countries, which have initiated various economic and travel sanctions on the military junta and its financial institutions, India cannot adopt such a policy. The reason is very simple. For starters, Myanmar serves as a gateway for India and its Act East programme to connect with Southeast Asia and beyond. Second, with Myanmar as its ally, India can offset Chinese dominance in the Indo-Pacific region. Thirdly, the economic investment that New Delhi has put into Myanmar, like the Kaladan Multimodal Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, and the development of Myanmar's Sittwe port, enables India to engage with the junta. And lastly, the security relationship with Myanmar forms a key part of India's counter-terror strategy against the militants in the border region of Northeast India. The various joint security actions between India and Myanmar in the last ten years saw a major decrease in militant activity along the border. Operations like Sunshine 1 and 2 have further increased the level of trust between the two nations in their fight against militants and to secure their national security interests (Bhalla, 2019). However, with the military coup in place and subsequent insecurity in the restive states bordering Northeast India, both the refugee influx and active militant groups may take their chances in deteriorating the region's security environment. The recent attack on 46 Asam Rifles, which caused seven deaths, including the Commandant, brings evidence to India's growing security apprehensions as the group behind the attack used Myanmar as its hideout sanctuary. As such, with the security interests at play, New Delhi cannot back the sanctions and tough rhetoric of the West.

Such reasons, therefore, give New Delhi no easy choice but to recognise the need for a trade-off vis-a-vis military rule in Myanmar and to continue with its policy of non-interference without taking any steps to condemn or undermine the military while continuing to push for a return to democracy through its actions. Indeed, New Delhi is following a twin track approach to

engage with Myanmar's military while at the same time pushing for the country's return to democracy. Such action helps to inculcate India's larger strategic ambitions in Southeast Asia, keeps Chinese influence at bay, asserts its 'Neighbourhood First' policy in the region, and further deepens its security cooperation with Myanmar. In this limelight, India defended Myanmar's participation in the virtual BIMSTEC summit, stating that the country's geographical location can determine the success of the regional grouping. Similarly, India's absention at the United Nations General Assembly vote condemning the military actions and the joint visit of the Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, and the Army Chief, General M.M. Naravane, to Myanmar amidst the domestic tensions also speaks volumes about its strategic calculus. Such actions, therefore, might deepen the cooperation policy between the two nations and help to pursue and promote their bilateral strategic ambitions in the region and beyond.

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To what extent was the *Jus ad Bellum* precept of *Just Cause* adhered to in the Russian invasion of Georgia?

Anonymous

Introuduction

The Russo-Georgian war started on the 8th of August 2008, when Russian forces crossed the border from the Russian-controlled North Ossetia into the Georgian *de jure* controlled South Ossetia to relieve the province from a Georgian assault (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 61). On the 7th of August, the Georgian army bombed Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, to fully bring them under Georgian control and terminate their semi-autonomy (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 60). The regions of South Ossetia, as well as Abkhazia, have been problematic since the fall of the Soviet Union, due to the presence of ethnic Russians within the regions, so much so, that a war had been previously fought in the early nineties. The war ended with joint peacekeeping operations of both Russians and Georgians as well as South Ossetians and Abkhazians (Hafkin, 2010, p. 222). Moreover, they were granted autonomy as provinces within the Georgian state (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 57). However, the geopolitical situation had changed significantly since the nineties, and tensions rose. Furthermore, Russian-Georgian relations reached a new low, due to the US and the possible expansion of NATO into the region (Light, 2010, p. 1581). The paper will start by explaining the *Jus ad Bellum* concept with a specific focus on the precept of *Just Cause*, followed by an analysis of the decision made by the Russian Federation. The analysis will focus on whether the *Just Cause* precept was adhered to and if so, to what extent. This paper will finish off with a conclusion in which the findings will be compiled and summarized.

Jus ad Bellum

Jus ad Bellum is the first part of *Just War Theory*, the other being *Jus in Bello*. The former focuses on the decision-making process of going to war, whereas the latter focuses on how the war is fought (Frowe, 2016, p. 1). Thus, *Jus ad Bellum* helps determine if someone has a just reason to go to war, mainly regarding legality and morality. There are seven precepts that are most often accepted as to when it is permissible to go to war, and all seven must be fulfilled in order to say that war is truly just (Frowe, 2016, p. 52). The first and arguably the most important, due to how it is defined, is that of *Just Cause* which as Frowe (2016) puts it: “*Just cause* should thus be understood as the foundation of a case for war - the trigger that begins the debate about whether war could be morally permissible” (p.53). However,

one should differentiate between having a just cause for war, which can begin the conversation should one go to war, and the general all-encompassing justness of war by meeting all seven precepts (Frowe, 2016, p. 53).

There are three generally accepted just causes to go to war. The first is the breach of sovereignty, which is also considered self-defense, making it morally permissible to engage in combat with the enemy. The second is that of collective defense, meaning one state may go into war to help another state. This pertains to alliances and military cooperation when fighting a common enemy, which is permitted by Article 51 of the UN Charter. The third reason is a humanitarian intervention which is also considered to be a part of collective defense or defense of others. The main concept is preventing humanitarian abuses in another state (Frowe, 2016, p. 54).

Russo-Georgian War and Just Cause

As previously stated, the relations between Russia and Georgia were reaching a new low with the US offering Georgia the possibility of joining NATO. The Russian leadership felt they were being cornered and suffocated by the encroaching western powers, in what was historically considered the Russian sphere of influence (Light, 2010, p. 1581). On the 4th of July 2008, the leader of the ethnic Georgians in South Ossetia was almost assassinated by ethnic Russians. Thereafter skirmishes ensued, and both sides suffered casualties (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 59). This lasted until Georgia attempted to regain control of the region and prevent further hostilities, in the form of bombarding the rebel capital Tskhinvali, due to failed diplomatic attempts of deescalating the situation (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 59). The Russians responded with large-scale air raids followed by the invasion of the 58th army into South Ossetia (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 61). Moscow invoked humanitarian intervention as justification for this decisive military reaction. President Medvedev of the Russian Federation gave an early statement at the beginning of the war, in which he stated that the population of South Ossetia felt that only Russian peacekeepers are able to look out for their interests and protect their lives (Hafkin, 2010, p. 226). Russia went on to point out that they are in fact a peacekeeping force and humanitarian, based on the fact that they supplied the people of Gori with food when they captured it from Georgia (Hafkin, 2010, p. 11). However, this city was outside of South Ossetia and demonstrated that Russia has gone further than the conflict zone and well into Georgia, breaching their sovereignty even more while garnering international condemnation (Hafkin, 2010, p. 12).

Arguably this was a calculated power move by the Russian Federation due to the spreading of NATO influence in the strategically important Caucasus (Friedman, 2008, p. 5). Following the NATO intervention in Kosovo based on humanitarian grounds, Russia wanted to retaliate in a similar manner and to demonstrate Russian military power (Friedman, 2008, p. 4). In his report Friedman (2008) argues that “The Russian invasion of Georgia has not changed the balance of power in Eurasia. It simply announced that the

balance of power had already shifted” (p.1). This can be demonstrated by the Russian preparedness and swiftness in carrying out the invasion, and the fact that Russian forces had a military exercise called “Kavkaz 2008”, which practiced explicitly the scenario of the Georgian attack on Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 82). Moreover, when Russia invoked Kosovo as a justification and an example of unsanctioned humanitarian intervention, the question that arose then was: why did Russia also invade the region of Abkhazia in which there was no conflict? (Hafkin, 2010, p. 9). Another key difference was that Russia, unlike NATO, did not attempt to gain clearance from the Security Council by putting it to a vote (Hafkin, 2010, p. 237). The issuance of Russian passports to the people of South Ossetia further indicates that Russia premeditated this invasion, and that the humanitarian justification was just a convenient excuse that enabled such action (Sakwa, 2012, p. 597). Furthermore, the president of Georgia may have been led to believe that Russia lacks the capability and will to react in such a manner (Sakwa, 2012, p. 18). While at the same time provoking Georgia into a drastic response by escalating the conflict through the deliberate raising of tensions (Sakwa, 2012, p. 12).

Conclusion

The Russo-Georgian war concluded with a ceasefire that was mediated by the EU, namely France, spearheaded by their president Nicolas Sarkozy (Mouritzen, 2012, p. 142). Russia had gained what its leadership wanted, the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia under Russian sponsorship (Larsen, 2012, p. 102). It is visible that Russia used the precept of just cause, specifically humanitarian intervention, to justify its military invasion of Georgia. Although Russia never officially stated it was only due to humanitarian intervention, they expressed themselves by using the language of humanitarian reasons for their military operations (Hafkin, 2010, p. 237). Moreover, according to Hafkin (2010), they also viewed their actions as self-defense, which is defined by ICJ is: “In the case of individual self-defense, the exercise of this right is subject to the State concerned having been the victim of an armed attack.” (p. 237). Since there were no Georgian troops attacking Russian territory and Russia took the war outside of the conflict zones by capturing Gori and threatening Tbilisi, self-defense can be ruled out as a justification because of these inconsistencies with international law (Hafkin, 2010, p. 237)

However, due to the nature of Russian foreign politics and how the events unfolded it can be concluded that this was merely a justification to the international community, rather than actions taken for purely “Good Samaritan” reasons. The fact that Russia achieved many of its goals, among which were the opportunity to demonstrate its military might and to effectively annex two regions of a sovereign country, thus expanding its influence, halting NATO expansion both into the region and other areas that Russia considers its zone of influence and satisfying its feeling of injustice for the unsanctioned intervention of Kosovo. The precept of Just Cause was adhered to only so much to serve the interest of the Russian

state, thus being merely a method of justifying their intervention in the eyes of the world and the law. This, in turn, demonstrates how the rules established by the International Community on whether to wage war can be manipulated and turned into a means to a political end.

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