



JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES 2021



**Department of International Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Kelaniya**

Journal of International Studies

Volume 8

Issue 1

December 2021



International Studies Students' Association
Department of International Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Kelaniya

Journal of International Studies

Published by
International Studies Students' Association
Department of International Studies
University of Kelaniya
Sri Lanka

Year of Publication - 2021
©University of Kelaniya

ISSN 2420-7314

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**Message from the Vice Chancellor of the
University of Kelaniya**

Professor Nilanthi de Silva

I am delighted to write this short message for the 8th volume of the Journal of International Studies, which is published by the Department of International Studies at the University of Kelaniya. This annual publication is meant to motivate students of International Studies to engage in research, and publish their findings. I truly appreciate the efforts made by the Department to establish a forum where undergraduate students can demonstrate their abilities to all.

The University of Kelaniya always aims to support its undergraduate students in developing skills and capabilities well beyond simple theoretical knowledge. The Department of International Studies has been a highly specialized department of the University from its inception, one that takes pride in presenting its students' talents to the rest of the world. It is heartening to note that not only magazine articles, but also many other study books, are donated to the society each year by this department. A special mention must be made of the Department's academic staff, who provided expert assistance to the undergraduate students to successfully publish this Journal.

I congratulate the Department of International Studies, as well as all students, on the successful publication of their scholarly journal articles.

Prof. Nilanthi de Silva
Vice Chancellor
University of Kelaniya



**Message from the Dean of the Faculty of
Social Sciences**

Professor M. M. Gunatilake

As the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Kelaniya, I am pleased to send my message in response to the 8th volume of the Journal of International Studies, published by the Department of International Studies. I am very impressed with the intellectual abilities and capabilities of the undergraduate students of the Department. The department aspires to publish a variety of academic publications in addition to research journals. Fortunately, the students are determined to bring honor to both the department and the university through all of these publications. The Faculty of Social Sciences seeks to raise the bar for such abilities and encourages students to refine their talents and strive for excellence. In addition to their academic pursuits, we strive to provide students with a unique and innovative experience. As a result, students will be able to develop not just their creative thinking skills, but also their future professional prospects. I wish the Department of International Studies luck in the publication of this journal, as well as the strength to continue performing such important academic work for students.

Professor M. M. Gunatilake
Dean
Faculty of Social Sciences



**Message from the Head of the Department
of International Studies**

Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe

As the Head of the Department of International Studies, I'm extremely pleased to express my thoughts on the eighth volume of the Journal of International Studies.

As a young department, the Department of International Studies has always been at the forefront of honing and enriching students' talents. I believe that as an academic discipline, international studies offers the greatest opportunity for the students to greater knowledge and awareness not only of what's happening in our country but also in the international arena. Living in a highly interconnected international society, it is imperative for every individual to be aware of the developments in the international arena. In this regard, this publication on one hand provides the undergraduates with the opportunity of doing a more in-depth study on what's happening in the international arena while on the other hand it also provides the readers with the opportunity to better understand these developments.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the panel of reviewers for their time and effort in reviewing the articles and the editorial panel and the International Studies Students' Association for their hard work.

Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe
Head
Department of International Studies



**Message from the Senior Editor & Senior
Treasurer of the International Studies
Students' Association**

Lecturer Hashan Wijesinghe

It brings me pleasure to extend my sincere felicitations to the publication of the eighth volume of the Journal of International Studies. I am excited to see the efforts of undergraduates in bringing together their research findings on a variety of themes in the discipline of international relations.

Looking at the present world, it is indeed at a crucial juncture. Covid 19 pandemic has made the world rethink its policies at both national and international levels. The very essence of global governance has been challenged while the future of the world economy has become highly unpredictable. As young researchers, it is the responsibility of the undergraduates to investigate these developments, understand the causes, and if possible, come up with sustainable solutions. It is my view that turbulent times require fresh solutions. I believe that university students are well equipped and possess the required skills to contribute in a constructive way to find solutions to the challenges faced by the international community. Thus, this journal provides the perfect platform for the students to showcase their skills.

This journal is the outcome of a collective effort led by Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe, Head of the Department of International Studies. Therefore, I extend my gratitude to Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe for his leadership. I would also like to thank the International Studies Students' Association for their effort in making this publication a success

**Lecturer Hashan Wijesinghe
Senior Treasurer
International Studies Students' Association**



**Message from the President of the
International Studies Students'
Association**

Mandakini Aththanayake

I am deeply honored to enclose these words for the launching of the eighth volume of the Journal of International Studies. The Department of International Studies elevates undergraduates by providing numerous platforms to improve both academic and soft skills. This volume is an outcome of exhibiting their academic skills to become future pioneers of the International Relations discipline.

My sincere gratitude is extended to the Head of the Department, Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe, and Senior Treasurer, Lecturer Hashan Wijesinghe, all the lecturers, and assistant lecturers of the Department for their ceaseless mentoring and support throughout the publication. Moreover, I seize this opportunity to express my recognition for the excellent work and tireless efforts of board members in the International Studies Students' Association. Finally, I appreciate the dedication of non-academic staff members and my fellow undergraduates who contributed immensely to making this publication a success.

On behalf of every individual who contributed to the journal, I would like to extend an appreciative welcome to readers of the Journal. I hope that you will find this new contribution to the International Studies discipline insightful and inspire you in academic research.

Mandakini Aththanayake
President
International Studies Students' Association



**Message from the Editor of the
International Studies Students'
Association**

Madara Jayalath

I am fortunate to be a proud partner in another successful chapter of the Department of International Studies at the University of Kelaniya. This book, which comes to you as a product of many months of hard work, is not the result of the commitment of a few individuals, but of the endless, magnificent contribution of all academics in the department, from the Head of the Department of International Studies to all lecturers and students. It is imperative that the subject of International Studies be disseminated to society in order to create a considerable discussion and publicity in the society in quest of new knowledge in this regard. I believe all of the authors who presented articles for this journal are conscious of this social responsibility and have combined their academic expertise into this publication from numerous perspectives.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Head of the Department of International Studies, Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe, Senior Treasurer of the International Student Students' Association, Lecturer Hashan Wijesinghe, and all the lecturers and assistant lecturers of the Department of International Studies who have constantly guided us in making this grave responsibility and task a success. I am also grateful to the panel of reviewers, International Studies Students' Association and the journal editorial panel for lending their invaluable support and contribution in making this journal what it is today. Finally, it is my wish that the Department of International Studies at the University of Kelaniya be an indelible brand that imparts this kind of academic knowledge in the future.

Madara Jayalath
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Approaches by the International Organization for Migration to Counter Human Trafficking In Sri Lanka: Case Study of Covid-19 Period

A.M.S.M.K.A. Mandakini Aththanayake¹

Abstract

Human trafficking is an organized crime where vulnerable men, women, and children are exploited for the financial gain of human traffickers. This expands to forced labour, sexual exploitations, removal of organs, and domestic servitude. Vulnerable individuals are being tricked, deceived, and exploited by unscrupulous people for money or to gain benefits. Wage cuts, loss of salary, and unemployment with the pandemic have been the reasons for the increasing human trafficking trend. The government of Sri Lanka and the United Nations International Organization for Migration contribute toward combating human trafficking in Sri Lanka. The main research question of the paper is to understand how International Organization for Migration takes steps to counter human trafficking in Sri Lanka during the pandemic. Based on the findings, a SWOT analysis elaborates the strengths to counter human trafficking for IOM as P4s; prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. Opportunities include social media campaigns, capacity building, and providing a global, rapid response to trafficked victims. Threats; irregular migration, semi-skilled and low-skilled migrants, loopholes in the prevailing legal system while poverty, lack of education, and the spread of Covid – 19 are the challenges. The objective of the study is to identify the approaches taken by IOM to counter human trafficking in Sri Lanka that increased with the pandemic. This paper fills the gap in the existing literature on the approaches of IOM to minimize human trafficking in Sri Lanka during the Covid-19 pandemic. In a nutshell, this study addresses human trafficking in Sri Lanka and the approaches of the IOM to minimize human trafficking in Sri Lanka while encouraging the community to speak up against human trafficking.

Keywords: *Counter-Trafficking, Covid -19, Human Trafficking, International Organization for Migration, Sri Lanka*

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Introduction

Human Trafficking is defined by the United Nations as;

“Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit”²

(Palermo Protocol, 2000)

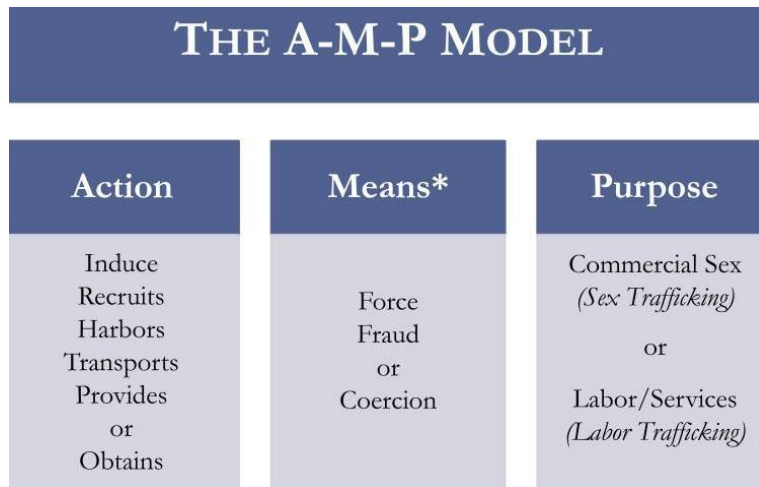
Palermo Protocol which was adopted in, Italy in November 2000 legally emphasized human trafficking.³ The protocol is to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.⁴ Unscrupulous people looking to make money or get other benefits for themselves can deceive and exploit vulnerable and innocent people both within and across national borders. For human trafficking, at least one element from each category of the “A-M-P” Model must be present. It is noteworthy that in any case of trafficking involving children, the elements of means are not relevant.

² United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. n.d. *Human-Trafficking*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html> [Accessed 5 January 2022].

³ Migration and Home Affairs. n.d. *Palermo Protocol*. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/palermo-protocol_en [Accessed 5 January 2022].

⁴ Ohchr.org. n.d. *OHCHR | Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx> [Accessed 6 January 2022].

Figure 01: “A-M-P” model.



Source: National Human Trafficking Hotline, (2022)

Children are a vulnerable group that easily becomes the victims of human traffickers. Traffickers deceive the child victim's parents or make false promises to force children to beg, work as domestic servants, sex workers or work in dangerous environments. Women are another vulnerable group who are frequently trafficked. Particularly young and middle-aged women are being cheated, tricked by false promises of employment, marriage, and education opportunities, or traffickers misuse their dreams for a better life. Being trafficked outside of national borders is a catastrophe when compared with being trafficked within national borders as they face far more dangers and risks. Not only vulnerable groups such as children and women but also men become the victims of human trafficking. Many men are deceived into accepting overseas jobs including construction sites, agricultural farms, and factories but they are forced to work extended hours with no rest, no food, less salary, no proper accommodation, and under dangerous and unsafe conditions.

In 2019, the COVID-19 outbreak knelt down the whole world by impacting every aspect of society horribly. The pandemic has pushed children and their families' lives into chaos, with health systems collapsing, borders closing, and schools and businesses shuttering. People lose their employment, numerous businesses struggle to pay their employees on time, and day-to-day wage-earners lose their way of life. Poverty is on the rise in recent times. Discrimination and stigma are also fueled in this context. Moreover, it encourages criminal activities such as theft, smuggling, and human trafficking.

The United Nations International Organization for Migration takes a comprehensive approach in addressing human trafficking globally. IOM is an intergovernmental organization committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits the migrants and the society. Since 2002, IOM Sri Lanka supported actions to address human trafficking. Moreover, IOM also successfully advocated for and assisted with the establishment of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force led by the Ministry of Justice to increase coordination in combating human trafficking in Sri Lanka (IOM, 2015). In a nutshell, this paper addresses the Covid-19 impact on human trafficking in Sri Lanka and the opportunities, strengths, challenges, and threats to IOM to reduce the range of human trafficking in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

The first-ever agreed definition of trafficking was incorporated into the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2020). This protocol defines human trafficking as;

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.⁵ (Unodc, 2003)

According to Luis CdeBaca and Jane Nady Sigmon⁶ (2014) human trafficking is defined as, “all acts involved in recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled service or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion”. Human trafficking is a human rights violation. Olga Gajic and Donna E. Stewart⁷ (2007) mention that trafficking represents “a denial of the person’s rights to liberty, integrity, security, and freedom of movement”

Vulnerable women, Children, and men are the victims of human traffickers. According to Riutort, Rupnarain, and Masoud⁸ (2017) women are the primary victims of human trafficking. They mention; “Although men may also be impacted by such forms of violence, women continue to be the primary victims of these abuses, thus making the gender a key health determinant of violence”. There are many risk factors for being a victim of human trafficking including gender, age, race, and economic and social status. National Center of Safe

⁵ Unodc.org. 2003. [online] Available at:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/organised-crime/UNITED_NATIONS_CONVENTION_AGAINST_TRANSNATIONAL_ORGANIZED_CRIME_AND_THE_PROTOCOLS_THEREO.pdf [Accessed 6 January 2022].

⁶ CdeBaca, L. and Sigmon, J., 2014. Combating trafficking in persons: a call to action for global health professionals. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 2(3), pp.261-267.

⁷ Gajic-Veljanoski, O. and Stewart, D., 2007. Women Trafficked Into Prostitution: Determinants, Human Rights and Health Needs. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 44(3), pp.338-358

⁸ Riutort, M., Rupnarain, S. and Masoud, L., 2017. New Roads to Anti-racism, Anti-oppression, and Equity Services for Survivors of Violence: Significance of Determinants of Health. *The International Journal of Organizational Diversity*, 17(1), pp.11-23.

Supportive Learning Environments⁹ (2020) recognized that runaway and homeless youth, as well as lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual individuals, are placed at an increased risk of human trafficking. According to Barrett¹⁰ (2010) average age of victims is averaging around 13-14 years old.

On December 31, 2019, the China Health Authority alerted the World Health Organization (WHO) about several cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan City in Hubei Province in Central China. The cases had been reported since December 8, 2019, and many patients worked at or lived around the local Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market although other early cases had no exposure to this market.¹¹ (Lu, Stratton and Tang, 2020). On January 7, a novel coronavirus, originally abbreviated as 2019-nCoV by WHO, was identified from the throat swab sample of a patient¹²(Hui et al., 2019). This virus has impacted every country in the world. According to an early forecast of the International Monetary Fund, the global economy would contract by about 3% in 2020. The contraction is expected to be of far greater magnitude than that of the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis¹³ (IMF, 2020). The impact of widespread employment income losses on poverty and inequality is examined by the World Bank group. Furthermore, lower social mobility as a

⁹ Safesupportivelearning.ed.gov. n.d. *Indicators | National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)*. [online] Available at: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools/indicators> [Accessed 7 January 2022].

¹⁰ Inc, M., 2010. *An Exploration of Promising Practices in Response to Human Trafficking in Canada - ICCLR*. [online] ICCLR. Available at: <https://icclr.org/publications/an-exploration-of-promising-practices-in-response-to-human-trafficking-in-canada/> [Accessed 7 January 2022].

¹¹ Lu, H., Stratton, C. W., & Tang, Y. W. (2020). Outbreak of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan, China: The mystery and the miracle. *Journal of Medical Virology*, 92(4), 401–402. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmv.25678>

¹² Hui, D., I Azhar, E., Madani, T., Ntoumi, F., Kock, R., Dar, O., Ippolito, G., Mchugh, T., Memish, Z., Drosten, C., Zumla, A. and Petersen, E., 2020. The continuing 2019-nCoV epidemic threat of novel coronaviruses to global health — The latest 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 91, pp.264-266.

¹³ IMF, 2020. *A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER*. IMF Annual Report 2020. IMF.

result of expanding differences in access to education, for example, could exacerbate long-term inequality¹⁴ (World Bank, 2020). According to Ubeysekara¹⁵(2020), COVID-19 has increased opportunities for exploitation, taking advantage of an increase in livelihood insecurity, school closures, job and income losses, desperation, isolation, digitalization, and more. Moreover, she emphasized on women and girls constitute over 80% of trafficked victims out of which 96% of women are being trafficked for sexual exploitation.

International Organization for Migration is one of the leading intergovernmental organizations dealing in the field of migration. With 174 member states, a further 8 states holding observer status, and offices in over 100 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.¹⁶ IOM's history dates to 1951. First IOM was named as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration in 1980, and, in 1989, received its current name: the International Organisation for Migration¹⁷ (IOM History, n.d.). Since the mid-1990s, the International Organization for Migration and its partners have protected and assisted nearly 100,000 men, women, and children who have been trafficked. The International Organization for Migration takes a comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking. Respect for human rights, individual and

¹⁴ Openknowledge.worldbank.org, 2021. *The COVID-19 Impact on Livelihoods and Poverty in Sri Lanka*. [online] Available at:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35496> [Accessed 6 January 2022].

¹⁵ Shareweb.ch. 2020. *Sri Lankan women migrant workers: more risks, more trafficking during COVID-19*. [online] Available at: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Migration/focus-area/Pages/Sri-Lankan-women-migrant-workers--more-risks,-more-trafficking-during-COVID-19.aspx> [Accessed 6 January 2022].

¹⁶ Iom.int. n.d. *Who We Are / International Organization for Migration, IOM*. [online] Available at: <https://www.iom.int/who-we-are> [Accessed 6 January 2022].

¹⁷ Gardiner Barber, P. and Bryan, C., 2017. International Organization for Migration in the field: 'walking the talk' of global migration management in Manila. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(10), pp.1725-1742.

community physical, mental, and social well-being, and the long-term sustainability of our actions through institutional capacity development and partnerships are at the heart of IOM's counter-trafficking efforts.¹⁸

Methodology

When considering the type of data that has been used in the study, secondary data have been used as its sources. Data was collected through different sources including books, journals, annual reports, websites, United Nations publications, and research conducted by various international scholars and institutions. An analytical and descriptive route is pursued to achieve the objective of the study as the nature and scope of this research is qualitative, dealing mostly with accounts of the impact of Covid-19 on human trafficking in Sri Lanka and the United Nations International Organization for Migration on counter-trafficking. This paper attempts to identify opportunities for the IOM to shrink human trafficking in Sri Lanka during and after the pandemic while mitigating possible threats and challenges. Based on the findings a SWOT analysis discusses strengths to identify and minimize the threats and weaknesses, opportunities, and strengths of the United Nations International Organization for Migration for counter-trafficking in Sri Lanka during the Covid19 Pandemic.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Covid-19 Impact on Human Trafficking

Due to the pandemic, the Sri Lankan economy fell both at the macro-level including trade and tourism while at the micro-level affecting specific industries such as start-ups, small businesses, and daily wage workers at the

¹⁸ Iom.int. n.d. *Counter-Trafficking / International Organization for Migration*. [online] Available at: <https://www.iom.int/counter-trafficking> [Accessed 6 January 2022].

domestic level. Individual vulnerabilities rise in tandem with the decline of the country's economy. Those who are experiencing severe financial difficulties may become easy targets for human trafficking. Internal human trafficking is becoming more common, especially among women from rural areas who are promised fake employment possibilities in urban areas by human traffickers. Child labor is frequently linked to a family's financial difficulties. Many families lack the financial resources to survive during the pandemic. As a result, children from these families may drop out of school and be more likely to enter the workforce to assist their families in survival. Furthermore, as a result of the school closures, an increasing number of children are turning to internet platforms for studying and socialization. They may be more vulnerable to online predators.

Threats to IOM for Counter-Trafficking

The rise of undocumented/irregular immigration is the main threat to IOM for mitigating human trafficking. They are at a high risk of losing their jobs due to Covid-19. Because they are more hesitant to report abuse through official means due to their unstable legal position. Migrant workers who are semi-skilled or low-skilled pose a threat to IOM's efforts to minimize the scope of human trafficking. Many migrant laborers take out loans to migrate, trapping them in debt and abuse for years. With an anticipated worldwide downturn linked to Covid-19 hitting enterprises, manufacturing, industries, and all sectors, employers in destination nations will take action to minimize their operations, such as terminating employment contracts, reducing wages, or closing their firms entirely by making these migrants more vulnerable and easy victims of human traffickers. Another threat to the IOM's action to mitigate human trafficking in Sri Lanka is the current judicial system. Human traffickers still face minimal and rare legal penalties. The traffickers are well

aware of this. It's worth noting that human trafficking is the second most profitable illegal activity, behind only the drug trade. Humans are sold in human trafficking whereas drugs are sold in the drug industry. This high reward and the low-risk dynamic structure of the prevailing legal system have been a threat to counter-trafficking.

Chart 01: Graphical demonstrating of Human trafficking profit and risk



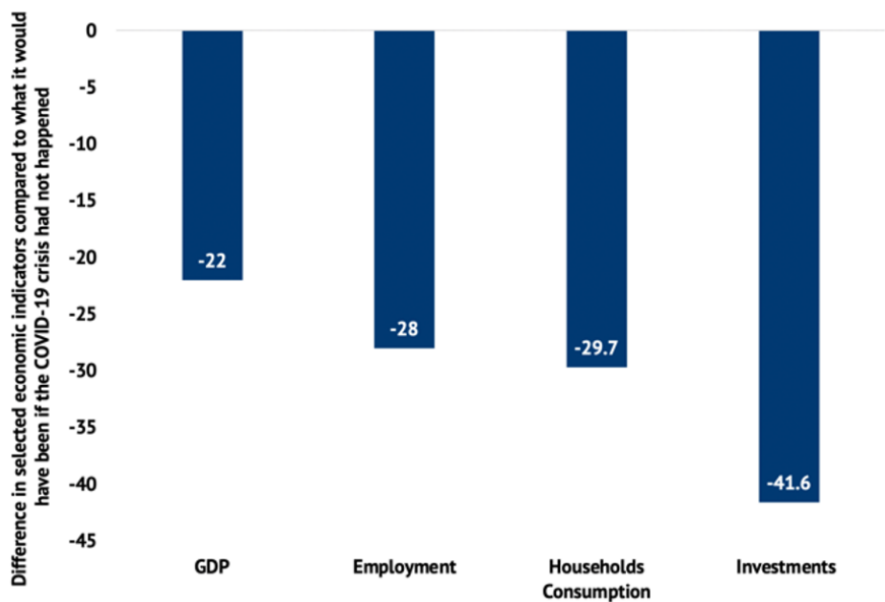
Source: What fuels human trafficking? UNICEF USA, Hannah Gould, 2017

Challenges to IOM for Counter-Trafficking

One of the most significant causes of human trafficking is poverty. These could be the justification for people to become human traffickers, or for parents to sell their own children or family members into slavery. Lower-income people are the major targets of human traffickers. Traffickers who promise a job with a good wage end up making their victims slaves with no or low pay, as well as mental and physical abuse. Furthermore, poverty is the primary motivator for migration. It makes education and legal jobs more

difficult to get and makes recovery from war and disaster impossible. Lack of education is another barrier to IOM's efforts to combat human trafficking, as it leads to fewer options for decent labor and a lack of knowledge about rights. As a result, people become more vulnerable, which leads to human trafficking. Another major challenge in combating human trafficking is the spreading of Covid-19.

Chart 02: Simulated impacts of the pandemic on selected indicators under a situation when the COVID-19 crisis lasts for six months in Sri Lanka



Source: Bubbico, A. and Moreira Daniels, L, (2020)

The graph above depicts the impact of Covid 19 in Sri Lanka, which is having an impact on all aspects of life for Sri Lankans, making it a difficult task for IOM to combat human trafficking. Poverty, lack of education, and the spread of Covid-19 are all challenges that the IOM must overcome in order to reduce human trafficking in Sri Lanka.

Strengths to IOM for Counter-Trafficking

IOM recommendations to respond to the human trafficking in Sri Lanka during and aftermath of Covid-19 were formulated under four approaches Prevention, Protection, prosecution, and partnership. Under the prevailing pandemic situation, a few interventions are recommended by the United Nations International Organization for Migration to prevent human trafficking as; raising awareness of potential trafficking schemes, Providing livelihood assistance and relief packages to vulnerable communities, and strengthening law enforcement and labor inspector capacities to detect exploitation at the workplace and borders and along migration corridors. Ensure access to services offered to victims by both government stakeholders to ensure continuity in their social inclusion, support services such as counseling, medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and shelter assistance, increase information sharing on referral and other support services available for children, women, and men at risk of exploitation, and strengthen IOM's efforts to protect victims of human trafficking. To combat human trafficking, effective prosecutions and penalties are required. The prosecution's few interventions are: ensuring the justice system's ability to investigate and prosecute traffickers despite ongoing lockdowns and restrictions and maintaining a high law enforcement alert on forms of trafficking that are likely to increase once lockdown measures are lifted. Reacting to the crime of people trafficking during the pandemic, coordinated collaboration among the Sri Lankan government, and civil society are more important than ever. As the pandemic spreads, IOM Sri Lanka keeps a close eye on the situation through its field offices and a network of local partner NGOs. During the Covid-19 crisis, IOM will continue to innovate in its programmatic work to reach the most vulnerable communities and work within them to prevent exposure, protect victims, and restore lives.

Opportunities of IOM to Minimize Human Trafficking By IOM

If people are aware of human trafficking, how human traffickers tricked people into this, and how to rescue if a person became a victim; there is the highest probability to reduce human trafficking. Due to the Covid pandemic following traditional methods like awareness campaigns can be risky. So, IOM is spreading awareness among the people through social media campaigns. Sharing flyers, and videos through the most common and everyday using social media platforms by many Sri Lankans such as Facebook is an effective opportunity to make people aware of human trafficking.

Image 02: A still from one of the campaign videos highlights trafficking from rural areas to the cities for labor exploitations.



Image 03: A still from one of the campaign videos which highlights trafficking from rural areas to the cities for labor exploitations



Sources: IOM Launches Media Campaign to Combat Human Trafficking in Sri Lanka, 2020

Another way for IOM to combat trafficking is to build capacity. To reduce human trafficking in Sri Lanka, capacity-building activities such as understanding law enforcement, migration, and security agencies, should be increased. Another possibility for the IOM is to provide a global, rapid response to victims of human trafficking. Otherwise, people continue to believe in human traffickers who sell their hopes for a better life.

Conclusion

This study depicts that the human trafficking range in Sri Lanka rocketed during the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper demonstrates that the key reason is increasing vulnerability among innocent, underprivileged people due to Covid-19 economic and social corruption. Moreover, with Sri Lankan government resources being diverted to respond to the ongoing pandemic, there is a higher probability that these crimes may be undetected. In such a context, the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) is trying to tackle this catastrophe. IOM addresses the rise of human trafficking from the grass-roots level, helping victims of trafficking, and helping them to reintegrate. It is noteworthy that IOM is trying to break the cycle of reoccurring human trafficking. According to the SWOT analysis present in the paper, there are plenty of opportunities and strengths for the IOM to counter trafficking in Sri Lanka during and after the Covid 19, as well as threats and challenges to disrupt the objectives of the IOM to counter trafficking in Sri Lanka. Thus, it is essential to mitigate the aforementioned threats and challenges to IOM to minimize human trafficking during the Covid-19 period and terminate traffickers who make innocent people as their selling commodities while selling their dreams for a better life.

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Taliban War against Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan 2021

D S M Jayasundara¹

Abstract

Terrorism is the act of calculating violence to create an atmosphere of general fear in a population and to achieve political aims. Through the all terrorist groups, the Taliban is one of the most active terrorist group around the world, especially they refer to itself as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Taliban Islamic Movement. The Taliban have returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021 after twenty years and they likely to impose harsh rules, refuse to provide basic services and violate human rights. In Afghanistan, another 2.6 million remained refugees in 2021 and several refugees were returning. Further, experts say, the US need to be involved in this issue and establish the correctness to respect the rights of women and minority communities. Moreover, seven months after Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, the Security Council renewed its mandate for a special UN political mission, from coordinating the distribution of humanitarian aid to facilitating human rights monitoring and dialogue and with a robust set of priorities. Apart from that, Norway Ambassador Mona Juul, the “penholder” of the resolution, said the text sends “a clear message” that the Council stands firmly behind the Afghan people at a time of unprecedented challenges and uncertainty. And it strengthens the activities of the campaign to promote women’s rights and their participation in public life (UN, 2021). This study mainly depends on qualitative data with secondary data with the UN reports about Afghanistan, E-news, books and articles. The prime objective of this research is to identify human rights violations in Afghanistan due to the 2021 Taliban attack. This article will identify the human rights that have been violated by Taliban rule likewise, women’s and girls’ rights, children’s rights, attacks on media and HR defenders, torture, freedom of expression, association and assembly, elections, and unlawful killings. But however, the Taliban’s endless war in Afghanistan is affecting the whole Asian region, because the region is very vulnerable to getting attacks. Therefore, there need to be mediations, peace missions from international organizations, NGOs and also state actors can get actions towards human rights violations in Afghanistan at least considering the Afghan civilians.

Keywords: Terrorism, Taliban, Human Rights violation, the United Nations.

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Introduction

The Taliban are mainly Pashtun, an Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group that returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. Following the US-led invasion that overthrew the original regime in 2001, the Taliban reunited across Pakistan's borders and began to retake territory less than ten years after their expulsion. By August 2021, the Taliban had captured most of the major cities, including the capital, Kabul. But it needs to know "What is the involvement of the US in Afghanistan and Why did the US fight a war in Afghanistan so long?". When we consider, back in 2001, the US was responding to the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. It nearly killed 3000 people. And the officials had identified Islamist militant group Al-Qaeda, and its leader Osama Bin Laden, as responsible. The problem is Bin Laden was in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban. When they refused to extradite him, the United States promised to intervene militarily, quickly remove the Taliban, support democracy, and eliminate the terrorist threat.

When 2021 the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan, today the violence in Afghanistan has made new heights of terrible human rights violations. Taliban are directly demonstrating the devastating tactics of directly targeting the civilian population. The latest report of violations in Afghanistan includes attacks on young women and girls, eradicating their rights to education, civil society, academics, health workers, human rights defenders, media workers and civil servants.

Geneva (16 August 2021) - UN human rights experts had issued a statement calling for urgent and preventive measures to prevent the killing of civilians, the destruction of vital civil infrastructure and the derailment of decades of human rights. Law and Gender Equality for the Improvement of Health, Education, Culture and Social Infrastructure in Afghanistan. Their statement is as follows;

“The work undertaken in partnership over the last 20 years by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community with Afghan human rights defenders, women’s groups, other civil society organizations, and the Afghan people is under grave threat.” (Annyssa Bellal & Maslen, n.d.)

According to the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) has stated that the Taliban are directly dismantling the human rights gains since the occupation of Afghanistan in 2021. They accused that, in just over five weeks since gaining control of Afghanistan, the Taliban have clearly demonstrated that they are not serious about protecting or respecting human rights. And also Afghanistan has been facing a wave of violations from reprisal attacks and restrictions on women, to crackdowns on protests, the media, and civil society.

Therefore, the Taliban pose a serious threat to the civil and political rights of Afghans. The foreign governments have warned that if the Taliban do not protect the rights of Afghans, aid to them could be cut off, leading to a serious humanitarian crisis. Observers fear that the Taliban will allow terrorists to operate in Afghanistan as a threat to regional and global security. Since the Taliban regained control, they have taken steps to commemorate their brutal rule in the late 1990s. They repressed protesters, detained and attacked reported journalists, and re-established their ministry for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, which had previously been banned under the Taliban regime. The group’s acting higher education minister said women were allowed to study in universities in gender-segregated classrooms and dressed in Islamic attire.

The Taliban threaten to raise the living standards of Afghans after the US invasion. UN officials have warned that Afghanistan is on the brink of collapse due to rising poverty rates, rising famine, and economic devastation. Hundreds

of thousands of people could flee their homes, joining the millions of Afghans already displaced. The escalation of the crisis is a cessation of aid from some countries and international organizations that have been the lifeline of the economy and the public health sector. The country is also in the midst of a drought and the COVID-19 epidemic.

And also a new UN report warns that the threat posed by terrorist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda is spreading in many parts of Afghanistan. It says the security situation is fragile, with uncertainty surrounding the peace process and the risk of further deterioration. Mainly they accused Al-Qaeda of operating under Taliban protection, the report said that the group has strengthened its positions in and around Kabul, where it conducts most of its attacks, targeting minorities, activists, government employees, and personnel of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (IANS, 2021).

This study basically focuses on human rights violations in Afghanistan due to occupation and the endless war of the Taliban. Further, the article mainly considers the human rights violations like the right to health, refugee and internally displaced people, women's and girls' rights, children's rights, and also freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

Literature Review

This literature review seeks to improve understanding of the Endless Taliban War against Human Rights in Afghanistan last year. Various articles, research papers and UN reports clearly describe how human rights in Afghanistan are being violated by the Taliban. The UN Security Council has warned to take immediate action to stop the recent Taliban offensive that has led to record numbers of civilian casualties and targeted killings. At the turning point, the *UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Deborah Lyons*

said the Security Council should seize the opportunity to expedite peace talks and prevent the crisis from spreading across national borders. In the *As Taliban Offensive Escalates, Afghanistan at Dangerous Turning Point, Special Representative Warns Security Council amid Calls for Ceasefire, Aid Access*; she said, “An increasingly brutal conflict combined with an acute humanitarian situation and multiplying human rights abuses.” (Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2021).

She called on the council to issue a clear statement calling for an immediate end to the attacks on cities. Members of the Taliban's Political Commission must insist on a general ceasefire and resumption of talks, and reiterate that a coercive government will not be accepted by the international community. This coming week could be crucial, she said, urging the council to send a strong signal that the differences should be put aside and fighting should be stopped and the parties negotiated. Otherwise, she warned, there would be nothing left to win.

Closing statement by *Fionnuala Ni Aolain* has emphasized in, “*The Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan & Victims of Terrorism: Accountability to Safeguard the Rights of Victims of Terrorism and Human Rights Defenders*”, “The international community must work with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its people to consider how to make collective efforts to prevent, remedy and account for such serious human rights abuses”.

Further, *Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: Rupert Colville* has stated that “all parties including the Taliban have an obligation to protect civilians and to uphold human rights. They must respect and protect both international humanitarian law and international human rights law” (Briefing notes on Afghanistan, 2021).

Amnesty International claimed Taliban militants have killed nine ethnic Hazaras since they seized control of Afghanistan's Ghazni province last month. The brutal killings represent a very small part of the total death toll that the Taliban have carried out so far, as the group has cut off mobile phone services in many of the areas they have recently captured and controls which photos and videos are shared in these areas. The social activist, Agnès Callamard has stated,

"The cold-blooded brutality of these killings is a reminder of the Taliban's past record, and a horrifying indicator of what Taliban rule may bring"

"These targeted killings are proof that ethnic and religious minorities remain at particular risk under Taliban rule in Afghanistan." (Amnesty International News).

Despite the peace talks, the armed conflict continued to increase the number of civilians wounded and killed and internally displaced throughout the year. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 2,177 civilians were killed and 3,822 wounded between January 1 and September 30. Although the statistics represent a 30% reduction in the number of civilian deaths compared to that period in 2019, the civilian death toll was largely the same.

The UNAMA reports that the Taliban is responsible for 45% of the civilian casualties and that the armed group known as the Islamic State in Khorasan is responsible for 7% of the civilian casualties from January 1 to September 30. The armed groups were collectively responsible for the deliberate targeting and killing of civilians, including health workers, judges, teachers, tribal and religious leaders, government employees and humanitarian workers. The Taliban attacks included deliberate targeting of civilians, as well as violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes. In May, gunmen

attacked a maternity hospital in the neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, west of the capital Kabul. They killed 24 people, including newborns, pregnant women and health workers. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Moreover, the UNAMA says violence escalates ahead of peace talks. In particular, armed groups and Afghan security forces pro-government militias and local police continued to recruit children for combat and faced a number of abuses, including sexual abuse. According to UNAMA, *“one of the deadliest countries in the world for children”* and also they said, both governmental and anti-governmental forces are responsible for more than 700 child casualties. (Amnesty International, Afghanistan 2020).

This article is provided to identify the brutal human rights violations that take place in Afghanistan. When considering the other reviews its clear other research articles are based on this critical issue. In Particular, the UN reports have voted to bolster UN priorities in Afghanistan. They have adopted a text that renews the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for one year with a shift in priority tasks. In light of the rapidly evolving situation on the ground, the mission focuses on coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance, providing outreach and good offices for dialogue, and promoting good governance and the rule of law (UN,2022). To achieve the goal of high quality and to help ensure this article is factually accurate and reliable, the reports are subject to extensive review by subject matter experts and relevant UN reports.

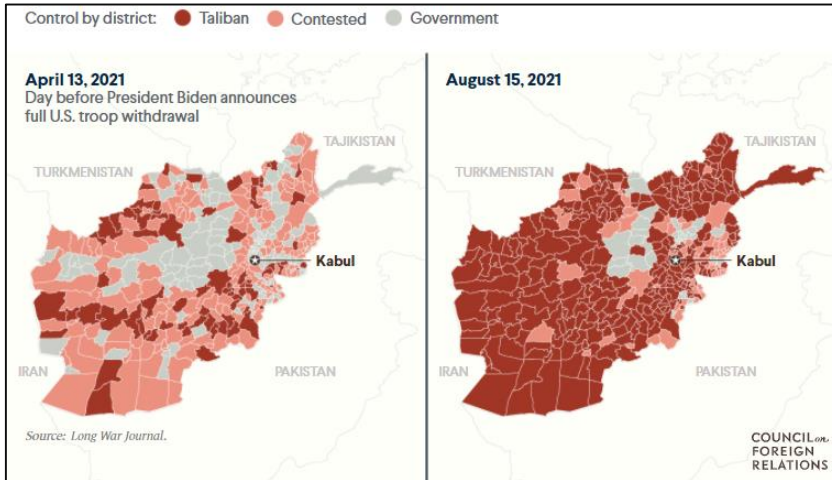
Methodology

This article is primarily based on qualitative secondary data gathered by journal articles, news (BBC/ALJAZEERA/AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL), research and UN reports. The above objectives of this article were achieved by the human rights violations like the right to health, refugee and internally displaced people, women's and girls' rights and Children's rights and also freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The current conflict in Afghanistan has entered its twentieth year and a large number of civilians have been injured. The Taliban and other militant groups have deliberately targeted civilians and civilians in violation of international humanitarian law. There was no accountability for these crimes due to the existence of impunity. Women and girls are continuing to face violence, harassment and intimidation. Violence against children continued. Afghan refugees were forcibly repatriated to Afghanistan, some of which were attacked by Iranian security forces. Many experts say, the Taliban pose huge threats to Afghan civilians and they do not protect Afghan rights and also they could stop providing aid, which could lead to a dire humanitarian crisis. Further, there has fear that the Taliban could allow terrorists to operate within Afghanistan, and then threats to regional and global security and also stability. We can get an idea from the following picture,

Map 01: Taliban Took Over as U.S. Pulled Troops.



Source; [https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan, the Taliban in Afghanistan](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan,the%20Taliban%20in%20Afghanistan)

The endless Taliban war has created massive human rights violations in Afghanistan, and the citizens are made as refugees and also they are like stateless people. There is no contribution or action that have been taken from other major countries or International Organizations.

Womens' and girls' rights

Violence and Sexual Harassment against Women

After the Taliban takeover of the country in August, the prolonged Afghanistan conflict immediately gave way to accelerating human rights and humanitarian crises. The Taliban immediately rolled back women's rights advances and media freedom among the foremost achievements of the post-2001 reconstruction effort and also most secondary schools for girls were closed. But the Taliban have said they support education for girls and women, but on September 18 they ordered secondary schools to reopen only for boys. Some secondary schools for girls subsequently reopened in a few provinces, but as of October, the vast majority remained shut. And also, on August 29, the acting minister of higher education announced that girls and women could

participate in higher education but could not study with boys and men. Women and girls are facing gender-based discrimination and violence across Afghanistan, especially in Taliban controlled areas, have had their rights violated with impunity and violent “punishments” for misinterpretation of Islamic law by an armed group. The violence against women and girls is less frequently reported, women often fear retaliation and do not trust the authorities if they come forward. According to the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan (AIHRC), more than 100 murders were reported during the year. Where these incidents were reported, they continued to fail to investigate.

In some cases, victims of violence were pressured by their communities or government officials to withdraw their complaints, or “mediation” was used to resolve complaints beyond the protection of the law. As a result, impunity for crimes such as assault, murder, torture, and other forms of mistreatment and corporal punishment became widespread. Apart from that under Taliban rule women are prohibited from participation in government jobs and many other areas. For example, in many parts of Afghanistan, Taliban officials have banned or restricted female humanitarian workers, a move that could likely worsen access to health care and humanitarian aid.

Children’s Rights

In this case, the Afghan children have continued to face harassment and sexual violence. Although Bacha Bazi (male children being sexually abused by older men) was criminalized by the Afghan government in 2018, it is happening again in the face of the Taliban rule. Children don’t have adequate opportunities to obtain the right to quality education. According to UNICEF, more than 2 million girls were out of school, and according to government statistics, about 7,000 schools in the country did not have buildings for studies.

The lack of facilities also has become a controversial issue in Afghanistan. Apart from that a large number of children continued to be forced to work or beg on the streets.

Attacks on Media and Human Rights Defenders

Under the rule of the Taliban, attacks and targeted killings against human rights defenders, activists and journalists have increased. For example, Abdul Samad Amiri, the acting head of the AIHRC office in Ghor province, was abducted on September 3 along with a government employee. On September 5, the bodies of both men were found in the Jalles district of Maidan Wardak province, an area where the Taliban had set up checkpoints to search for civil servants.

In a statement on June 24, the Taliban threatened to target all Afghan television stations, radio stations and other media outlets that broadcast or publish advertisements critical of its militants. On August 4, a magnetic IED exploded targeting a bus carrying employees of Khurshid TV, a private media outlet, killing and injuring the driver and passengers of the bus. Four others, including the media staff. On March 12, Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, a reporter for Sabawoon TV in Lashkargah, Helmand, was injured when an IED attached to his car exploded. And also, ISKP also attacked the media and privately claimed responsibility for the assassination of Sultan Mahmoud Khairkhwah, a reporter for Khost-based Zhman TV and radio broadcaster. On March 15, Khairkhwah was fatally shot in his car by two men riding a motorcycle in Khost. (Roth, 2021)

Torture

The UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) in its April 2019 report documented a reduction in torture for conflict-related detainees. However, persistently high rates were found in facilities, especially in the worst

detention centres, including Kandahar, or under the control of government special forces. The report found that 32% of detainees involved in the conflict were tortured or mistreated in 2017-2018, down from 39 % in the previous two years. Apart from that, the Taliban was responsible for the brutal massacre of ethnic minorities. Taliban fighters massacred nine ethnic Hazara men after taking control of Afghanistan's Ghazni province last month.

“The cold-blooded brutality of these killings is a reminder of the Taliban's past record, and a horrifying indicator of what Taliban rule may bring”

“These targeted killings are proof that ethnic and religious minorities remain at particular risk under Taliban rule in Afghanistan”

Agnès Callamard

And also, they used electric chairs to apply electric shock to torture the minority groups of men (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2021).

Freedoms of Expression, Association and Assembly

Increasing insecurity and killings targeting activists, journalists and moderate religious scholars have made it more difficult for journalists, media workers and activists to act. The government introduced a mass media bill that would have further restricted the right to freedom of expression. And the parliament was debating a draft of public meetings, strikes and demonstrations, which, if passed, would significantly limit the right to peaceful assembly.

Apart from that, The Afghan media came under growing threat since the beginning of the year, principally from the Taliban. For instance, in December 2020, Rahmatullah Nekzad, the head of the Ghazni journalists' union, was shot by the Taliban but they denied responsibility. Moreover, The ISKP [the Islamic State of Khorasan Province] took responsibility for killing Malala Maiwand, a TV presenter for Enikass News in Jalalabad, along with her driver,

Tahar Khan, on December 10, 2020. In two separate attacks in Jalalabad on March 2, 2021, gunmen fatally shot three women who worked at Enikass News dubbing foreign language news reports. (Roth, 2021)

Elections

In the September 28 presidential election, the Taliban issued a series of attacks and attacks to prevent voters from voting, killing at least five people and wounding more than 75. The government closed one-third of all polling stations on Election Day, saying it was a district. Critics allege that some of the closed centres were in opposition strongholds.

Apart from that, a bomb blast near a mosque in Kandahar has injured at least 16 voters, election officials, and police. One person was killed and several others were injured in an explosion near a polling station in Jalalabad. The Taliban fired rockets at polling stations in Kunduz, Takar and Wardak, and elsewhere.

Unlawful Killings, Enforced Disappearances, Violations of Laws of War

The United Nations has reported that Taliban forces were responsible for nearly 40% of civilian deaths and injuries in the first six months of 2021 (Roth, 2021). And women and children comprised nearly half of all civilian casualties and included assassinations and a number of deadly bombings. After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan cities like Malistan, Ghazni in mid-July they had at least 19 security force personnel in their custody.

Both the Taliban and ISKP carried out targeted killings of civilians, including government employees, journalists, and religious leaders. On January 17, 2021, unidentified gunmen shot two women judges who worked for Afghanistan's high court and wounded their driver. ISKP claimed responsibility for killing nine polio vaccinators in Nangarhar between March

and June. On June 9, gunmen killed 10 humanitarian deminers in Baghlan; ISKP claimed responsibility. In August, an ISKP suicide bombing at Kabul's airport killed 170 civilians, including many Afghans trying to flee the country.

The Rule of the Taliban Government

In September 2021, the Taliban announced that they would follow an interim government of hard-line leaders. And this regime will be known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Further, they said that the government will be led by a religious leader and draw its legitimacy from clerics. But the point to note is, they never mentioned holding elections. However, under the US-backed government, Afghanistan was the Islamic Republic and they led presidential elections with international law and norms.

As I mentioned before, women are not allowed to hold government posts or anything. Further, only a few representatives from ethnic minority communities were included in the Taliban's cabinet. If we consider the statements of the Taliban's, they have claimed that they have sought to build diplomatic relations in the regions, countries like China, Russia, and Pakistan. Moreover, they have encouraged other countries to keep their embassies and foreign activities to continue work in Afghanistan. But the issue is, the US and other European countries have refused to recognize the Taliban and Afghan's government. And also they haven't declared what kind of relationship they will have with the Taliban.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the United States will “*judge [the Taliban's cabinet] by its actions.*” Further, Chinese officials have said that China's support for Afghanistan will depend on how the Taliban prevents terrorist activities in the region.

The UN Response to the Taliban

Throughout history, Afghanistan has always been a very arguable country. If we consider the 19th and 20th centuries, it was the centre of the “GREAT GAME” played between the Russian Empire and British India. But the US involvement with Afghanistan began with the 9/11 attack in the US after the international forces invaded the country. Most recently, the Taliban occupied the country and made their government and named Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, the UN has deployed vast development programs and aid to portray the important role they execute in the globe. For now, Afghanistan is facing serious human rights violations due to the offensive governing system of the Taliban. The UN has claimed, the Taliban should cease the use of force to suppress the freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. Apart from that, the UN said the people should have a right to raise their voices and exercise their right to participate in public affairs.

Additionally, the World Food Programme [WFP] has warned that there is growing hunger amid mounting economic hardships and uncertainty. According to UN reports, 93% of households don't have enough food to eat. Moreover, the UN is already considering girls' access to education. Despite promises of inclusion and openness, the Taliban have yet to allow older girls to go back to school, restrict local media freedom and return to barbaric acts such as hanging bodies in public.

Moreover, the UN has appealed for \$4.4 Billion in humanitarian aid for Afghanistan, however, they say funds are needed this year as more than half the country's population is in need. The United Nations has stressed that Afghanistan is facing its worst drought in decades, following a series of crises facing the country. However, the Biden administration said it would provide

another \$ 308 million in humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. It brings the total amount of US aid to Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in the region to \$ 782 million since October. The White House said the aid was aimed at alleviating the effects of the epidemic as well as “drought, malnutrition and winter.

Conclusion

Taliban terrorist group is an ultraconservative political and religious group that emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. The collapse of Afghanistan’s communist regime after the withdrawal of Soviet troops made a serious breakdown in civil order. The origin of the Taliban consisted of Afghan religious students and scholars seeking to confront crime and corruption. The Taliban activities have been the focus of attention since the 9/11 attacks, but most recently, in August 2021, when they regained control of Afghanistan, the world’s attention was focused again. The main point of the Taliban regime is that they disregard human rights. Since their rule, people have been suffering from starvation, targeting to kill, poverty, and economy tanks. The UN officials have warned that Afghanistan is facing collapse and also millions of Afghan people are already displaced. Under the Taliban’s rule, women's lives have become endangered. Especially, their education, their right to enter the government’s posts, and also they are facing sexual violations as well. The economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has deepened since the Taliban seized control in August. The latest announcement by the Taliban underscores the country’s financial crisis. Although strict rules apply to remittances to Afghanistan, donors can raise questions about the Taliban’s use of humanitarian aid to fund their government.

This article is provided to identify the brutal human rights violations that take place in Afghanistan. And also the article has concluded that the United States

continues to have significant interests in Afghanistan. The fall of Kabul to the Taliban on 15 August 2021 caught the world by surprise. As the Taliban gained control of new districts, war crimes followed. Ethnic and religious minorities and supporters of the former government were targeted for torture and execution. And the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces launched mortar attacks on homes and conducted an airstrike on a hospital, all of which killed civilians hiding in fear. The attacks investigated in this report represent a small and fractured glimpse into the suffering visited upon Afghans during the last stage of US intervention in the country. And throughout the article based on findings likewise e-news, books, reports and also articles as well. As recommendations for the issue, engage in robust bilateral and multilateral diplomacy with other countries, Diplomatically, the United States can take the lead and open avenues for engagement with Iran and Pakistan on Afghan refugees in their countries. And also other countries should support to ensure the needs of refugees in those countries are met with dignity and try to improve the legal and economic status of these refugees. And also as another recommendation, can build on new capacities, create humanitarian carve-outs, and learn the lessons from the past. Apart from that world leaders, including international organizations, NGOs, or intergovernmental organizations, should continue to seek all possible means to ensure the rights and safety of vulnerable Afghans, in particular women and girls. In the intervening period, humanitarian assistance can play a meaningful part in helping vulnerable Afghans meet their basic needs.

If that lesson is learned and applied and the world demonstrates a lasting commitment to all civilians in Afghanistan, it will go a long way in helping the world re-establish its humanitarian identity. Finally, we can conclude that this endless Taliban war in Afghanistan poses a serious threat to human rights,

if the world couldn't stand against them it will be an unstoppable problem in near future.

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The Nature of China's Relations with New Taliban Led Afghanistan and its Impact on China's Geostrategic Ambitions in the South Asian Region

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Abstract

Afghanistan became a conflictual state with the beginning of the Afghan war after the 09/11 attack in 2001. The United States with the support of Western Powers entered into war with Afghanistan and defeated the Taliban. The US-backed government was established in Afghanistan and the war escalated for over two decades between the US and the Taliban. Then the US decided to withdraw from Afghanistan and the Taliban captured Kabul again in August 2021. Immediately, China announced its willingness to establish relations with the new Afghan government and Afghanistan also assured their desire to have relations with China requesting support for the reconstruction. This study, following qualitative methodology with the use of secondary data, focuses on the impact of relations with new Taliban-led Afghanistan on China's geostrategic ambitions in South Asia. It further identifies whether Afghanistan will play a supportive role for China in expanding its power within the region while considering China's strategic interests in Afghanistan. China seeks to enhance its ties with Afghanistan, especially with the security concerns regarding Uyghur Muslim movements in Xinjiang. China has the major aim to prevent the Taliban from supporting East Turkestan Islamic Movement and counter-Chinese operations within Afghanistan. Moreover, China aims to enhance its power within the South Asian region through the alignment with Afghanistan in economic relations and BRI. However, this alignment has impacts on the South Asian region with threats to Indian Big Brother status, fear of terrorism, and encouragement to Islamic extremism within the region. According to the study, Afghanistan is on its way to playing a supportive role for China within the region. Since this study is based on an ongoing incident, it aims to encourage future research in the field.

Keywords: *China, Afghanistan, Strategic ambitions, South Asia, Taliban*

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Introduction

Afghanistan, with a population of 38.93 million and 652,860 km² land area, is located with Pakistan in its east, Iran in the west, and Tajikistan and China from the northeast. The Afghan war escalated in 2001 in response to the 09/11 attack and led for more than two decades of tension in the country. At the beginning of the Afghan war, the Taliban rule that lasted in Afghanistan from 1996, which supported al-Qaeda was toppled and from then the United States with the support of NATO allies had continuous wars with the Taliban. With the invasion of the United States on Afghanistan after 2001, the Taliban had turned into just a pocket insurgency group allied with al-Qaeda with no governance or organized power. Then, with drug trafficking and extortion, they created their economic stability by 2010 and unified again as a political movement (Stewart, 2021). In 2008, a classic counterinsurgency doctrine was established in Afghanistan with a large presence of US military troops. The US-led Afghanistan government was established with dramatic transfer of responsibilities with severe tensions between the joint US and British forces with the Taliban groups. However, the post-2001 period under the US-backed government was considered as somehow favorable for the Afghans since it provided them more opportunities for freedom of ideas and chances to think progressively than the former Taliban regime.

Then, by marking an end to a two-decade war, the United States withdrew its last remaining troops from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021 (Atlantic Council Experts, 2021). One of the promises of President Joe Biden's campaign was ending the US longest war with Afghanistan and withdrawal was decided as a response to that promise. Even though the United States left Afghanistan, their drone warfare was not ended and it depicts even if the US presence is not on

the land, the threat of the US military can be still witnessed there (Stewart, 2021).

By filling the vacuum of the US military withdrawal and the escape of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, the Taliban captured Kabul on 15th of August 2021 and established a new rule in the country (Mohamed & Allahoum, 2021). The Taliban is an insurgency group in Afghanistan that originated in 1994 and they aimed to establish a pure Islamic order within Afghanistan imposing the Islamic law Sharia. Even though the Taliban had entered a deal with the US not to use the country as a terrorist base, many view the Taliban and al-Qaeda relationship as inseparable. Therefore, with the new transformation of power, Afghanistan has a threat of nurturing terrorism and become a base of training terrorists again as earlier (BBC, 2021). The international attention was drawn towards Afghanistan with the implementation of the fresh Taliban regime regarding women, education, and several other aspects.

When considering the role of China regarding the new transformation of power in Afghanistan, it seems crucial and tricky. China is a rapidly rising power in the international system with its expansion of soft power means. China is on its way to spread power through strategic techniques in the South Asian region. The US presence in Afghanistan made it difficult for China to reach the state. According to Derek Grossman (2021), it is said that China had unofficial discussions with the Taliban for many years and China was in the process of preparing for the possible rise of the Taliban to capture the power of Afghanistan. Soon after the Taliban captured Kabul, China expressed their willingness to develop friendly relations with Afghanistan while the Taliban too expressed their favor to take the assistance of China in the development process of Afghanistan (Abigail, 2021). On the other hand, China is trying to expand its power throughout the South Asian region and support of

Afghanistan can be taken as a sidekick to achieve its strategic ambitions within the region. Further, it can bring up a security threat to the South Asian region, especially towards the big brother status of India.

Since this power transformation of Afghanistan happened in recent months, the road of the China- Afghanistan relations are not intelligible yet. Therefore, since it is still a fresh matter, not much study was drawn towards it. Concerning the issue of the impact of Afghanistan's new Taliban rule on China's strategic ambitions in South Asia is an uncultivated area of study and this paper will identify its nature with relevance to the former relations of China and Taliban together with the contemporary tensions and China's strategic role within the region so far. It will be significant to define the nature of future relations between two nations and its impact on the Indian Ocean region and South Asian neighbors.

Literature Review

China has maintained relations with Afghanistan for a long period and their connections with the Taliban are controversial. China had closer relations with Afghanistan under several regimes and the diplomatic ties were officially established in 1955. However, during the Taliban regime from 1996-2001, China had relations with Afghanistan and the Taliban (Stone, 2019). In 2000, China had meetings with the Taliban in Kandahar, and China and the Taliban agreed on Uyghur Muslim extremism (Small, 2013). The biggest matter China had regarding Afghanistan was the threats of the Taliban on providing support to Uyghur militants and their independence movement in China. Therefore, Taliban leader Mohammed Omar assured China not to allow any militant to conduct operations within their territory against China and they asked for China's formal political recognition and support to protect from UN sanctions (ABC, 2021). However, they were unsuccessful since both parties had no deep

willingness to follow the assured facts. Even though the Taliban prohibited Uyghur Muslims to operate camps, they weren't expelled and got a chance to align with other militant groups within Afghanistan. On the other hand, China did not use its veto power to protect Afghanistan from UN sanctions and paused its decision to recognize the Taliban government with the 09/11 attack (Small, 2013). However, during this period, China maintained economic ties with the Taliban government of Afghanistan.

After the 9/11 attack and the US invasion of Afghanistan, China played a crucial role in reconciliation and diplomacy between the Kabul government and the Taliban. China defined Afghan Taliban as a pivotal military and political force while considering Pakistan Taliban as a terrorist group (Ren, 2021). China wanted to see a political settlement in Afghanistan since they believed that it may impact their security and economic interests in South Asia. In addition to the peace talks witnessed over the surface, China expanded direct connections with the Taliban and conducted discussions. After the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001, China maintained quiet relations with the Taliban's leadership council which is called Quetta Shura that was based on the Pakistan border. China and Pakistan were considered as the only two states that had continued relations with the Taliban during this scenario and it is said that Taliban representatives had meetings with Chinese officials that were at Pakistan and China (Small, 2013). The Taliban leaders viewed China as a chief ally and therefore, they did not want to lose that connection. Therefore, the Taliban tried to reassure the earlier promise to not allow Afghanistan to be used as a base for Chinese insurgency attacks and willing to have economic ties with Beijing. However, China doubted the Taliban's capacity to keep the promise and during the 2001-2021 period China had a fear that if the Taliban government may be re-established in Afghanistan,

it may affect the stability of the South Asian region. It was the reason for China to intervene in US-Taliban peace initiatives to achieve regional stability.

Methodology

The study in its nature is a qualitative approach based on empirical philosophy. Since this research belongs to the social science academic field, the most appropriate approach will be a qualitative study. This research is based on secondary data sources such as e-journals, newspaper articles, news sites, blogs, e-articles, websites, and other e-sources. To analyze collected data, the method of content analysis is used. Both manifest and latent contents will be analyzed through this research.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Geostrategic Ambitions of China in South Asia

China is one of the major powers in the contemporary international system that is on its way to achieving superpower status. According to the realist theoretical perspective, every state is power-centered and willing to achieve and expand power in an anarchic international system. Similarly, “China is acting exactly as realism would predict. Who can blame Chinese leaders for seeking to dominate Asia and become the most powerful state on the planet?” (Mearsheimer, 2021) China’s geostrategic ambitions and power expansion over the South Asian region is a strategic objective of their power competition to achieve hegemonic status. From a realist perspective, “Countries figure out that the best way to survive in an anarchic world is to be the most powerful actor of all, which in practice means being a hegemon in one’s own region and making sure no other great powers dominate their regions.” (Mearsheimer, 2021) China as an Asian giant aims to maximize its power through strategic means over its neighboring South Asian region. Chinese President, Xi Jinping

expressed his views at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, “China aims to strengthen ties with neighboring countries with the principles of friendship, amity, mutual benefit, sincerity, inclusiveness, and partnerships.” (Grossman, 2020)

South Asia is a close neighbor of China. It is a region that is considered to be one of the major strategic garrisons in the world due to its significant location, geographical factors, population, resources, and proximity to major powers. China has designed its geostrategic ambitions towards South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan. China has established several projects centering the South Asian region and they have already tried to dominate the developing nations in the region through their soft power strategies. China’s geostrategic ambitions in the region are beyond its mentioned aim of mutual benefit and partnership while touching further the side of their own national interest to achieve power (Grossman, 2020) while having competition within the region with South Asian Big Brother, India. “China’s increased engagement with the countries of South Asia has two important components... First, to counterbalance India, and second, to gain strategic space in the Indian Ocean” (Pattanaik, 2016). This performance of China in the South Asian region has frightened India of challenge and Singh pointed out it as, “the sustained maritime presence of China within the Indian Ocean will lead China to dominate the region while transferring regional security initiative away from the South Asian power, India” (2015, p.297). According to the point of view of Alfred Thayer Mahan (1890), the one who dominates the Indian Ocean may dominate the world. It was depicted in his sea power theory on geopolitics. Since the Indian Ocean is prominent as one of the most strategic bases of 21st-century geopolitics, Chinese ambitions to assure the power in the Indian Ocean are justifiable to achieve the superpower status of the globe. China has contributed to large-

scale investments, financial assistance, and loans on the developing nations in South Asia while it is accused by other world powers of ‘debt-trap diplomacy.’

(i) Belt and Road Initiative

The One Belt One Road or China’s Belt and Road Initiative is a massive infrastructure project that was launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013. The original Silk Road that was used in history was expanded towards Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan towards India and Pakistan to the South. They also extended towards Europe over four thousand miles. China plans reformation of this earlier Silk Road with a new phase of massive development project. It included the overland Silk Road Economic Belt together with the Maritime Silk Road and a network of railways, highways, energy pipelines, and streamlined border crossings. At present, over sixty countries representing two-thirds of the world population have expressed their interest in the project and it will enhance China’s power throughout the world both inland as well as sea. It was estimated that China will spend approximately \$1.2-1.3 trillion on the BRI by 2027 (Chatzky & McBride, 2020). The Indian Ocean and South Asian region play a central role in this initiative and there are four major sub projects based on South Asia; the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, Trans-Himalaya Corridor, and Cooperation with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives for 21st century Maritime Silk Road.

China’s Belt and Road Initiative can be defined with the essence of three geopolitical theories; the Sea Power theory, Heartland theory, and the Rimland theory. The Sea Power theory by Alfred Thayer Mahan depicted that those who controlled the sea would control the world while the Heartland theory by Halford Mackinder defined that who controlled Eurasia would control the world. On the other hand, Nicholas Spykman believed in his Rimland theory

that those who control the Rimland will control the world. The Maritime Silk Road for the 21st Century runs through the long sea passages to Southeast Asia, while the Silk Road Economic Belt passes the Heartland depicted by Mackinder and later the Rimland of Spykman (Jianqun, 2018). Even though China's Belt and Road Initiative can be defined through these traditional geopolitical theories, it is not following those theories but taking a new initiative with new developing trends in the current world.

(ii) String of Pearls Strategy

The String of Pearls refers to the series of ports and infrastructure built to secure China's Sea Line of Communication. The term was given by US analysts to indicate China's geostrategic tactic to the expansion of power. Currently, it includes ports of Sittwe in Myanmar, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan, and Chittagong in Bangladesh. China plans to expand it towards Maldives, Thailand, Malaysia, and African Countries. This strategy will disengage China from the Malacca dilemma regarding its SLOCs. It aims to access new markets, secure energy resources, independence of sea lines, and neutralize the energy competition (Chung, 2017). This strategy is also based on the Indian Ocean region and China's geostrategic ambitions within the region.

China's Strategic Ambitions over Afghanistan

After the establishment of the new Taliban regime in Afghanistan on 15th of August 2021, China was one of the first countries that showed its willingness to maintain relations with the new Taliban-led Afghan government. Since China is a rising world power to achieve hegemony, the steps China would take regarding other states have strategic ambitions mostly. It can be applied in the case of Afghanistan as well. China considered the two-decade-long

Afghan war and the conflictual situation in Afghanistan as a security threat to China as well as to the South Asian region together with the BRI bases. In addition, the presence of the United States in Afghanistan also was a challenging situation for the regional strategies of China. Therefore, some argue that since US withdrawal from Afghanistan is beneficial for China, they'll soon fill the vacuum in Afghanistan by maintaining relations with the fresh Taliban government (Sacks, 2021).

The most predominant strategic ambition of China over Afghanistan can be indicated as the security threat that China faces with the insurgencies, terrorist attacks, and extremism. China, especially in the case of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang experiencing internal tensions and has the fear that Afghanistan may support those extremists and it will affect the security of China. Afghanistan is proximate and shares a nearly 76km border with China including the Xinjiang region, which was the base of Uyghur Muslims.

Map 01: Afghanistan and China's far western region Xinjiang share of borders



Source: ABC Graphic by Jarrod Fankhauser (ABC, 2021)

12 million Uyghurs live in Xinjiang and most of them are Muslims that speak their own language that is similar to Turkish. China has been accused of genocide and committing crimes against humanity on this population and Uyghur culture is claimed to be at the face of a threat. In response to this, Uyghur militants have organized violent campaigns against China with sabotage, civic unrest, and bombings (BBC, 2013). They have created the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) intending to establish a separate state for Uyghur Muslims as 'East Turkistan.' ETIM has ties with al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and received financial and training assistance from them (Bikhchandani, 2021). This situation is the largest threat to China in the region and it can be considered as the major reason for China needing to expand its ties with the Taliban.

In the consideration of China's strategic wills of initiating relations with the newly established fresh Taliban government in Afghanistan, even before the withdrawal of the US from the country, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had meetings with Taliban representatives on 28th of July and they were requested to crack down on the ETIM (Bikhchandani, 2021). Then, the Taliban assured that they wouldn't let any force engage in Chinese counterattacks within Afghan territory. On the other hand, China has the fear that since Afghanistan is a landlocked state that is bordered between China and Pakistan, the internal instability or tensions in the state may affect the implementation of BRI and the security of China (Sacks, 2021). In addition, China has the fright that the terrorism in Afghanistan may flow into China and Pakistan and the situation may get worse with the Taliban interference. Therefore, the new Taliban regime in Afghanistan has become a big headache for China due to fear of sponsoring extremism and the security concerns of China itself and the South Asian region (Ren, 2021).

Moreover, Afghanistan as a South Asian country can be used as a significant partner to support China in achieving its geostrategic ambitions within the region. The BRI is the major project of China towards South Asia and Afghanistan was an initial supporter of China's BRI, but with the controversial situation in Afghanistan and the US interference there, China was not concerned about investing much earlier in Afghanistan. But now, with the withdrawal of the US, China has plans on taking Afghanistan as a part of China's BRI with a cooperative role like Pakistan. China has the strategic will of expanding its BRI into Afghanistan and through that to Central Asia and the presence of a stable and supportive administration in Kabul is necessary for that (ABC, 2021).

In addition, China's strategy of spreading its soft power throughout the Indian Ocean region may further expand with the connection of Afghanistan. China has already conquered the countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh with its soft power of debts, and investments, and Afghanistan will also add to the list in near future as a supporter of China within the South Asian region to expand its power.

Impact of China-Afghanistan Alignments to the South Asian Region

The fresh start of the new Taliban regime within Afghanistan and its transformation towards China will bring up changes in the South Asian region. The US presence in Afghanistan made the situation safer for India while suppressing the Taliban was also favorable for the region. However, the recent withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan by ending the two-decade-long Afghan war and vacuum filling of China by strengthening the relations with the Taliban may impact South Asia in several aspects.

For a long period, India had fear about the danger that could occur with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. They had twofold fears on the favorable conditions of the political and economic engagement of India with the US-backed Afghanistan will end and then Taliban-led Afghanistan would again promote Jihadi terrorism against India by partnering with Pakistan (Mohan, 2021). Therefore, one of the significant threats is on the side of South Asian Big Brother India in security and power expansion with the alignment of Afghanistan with China. Even though the Taliban had previously assured that they will remain neutral and independent out of Chinese interference, the contemporary situation seems a bit difficult. Both China and Afghanistan show up their willingness to cooperate and therefore it is in the face of India to counter the Afghan front which will play a sidekick role for China within the region in near future (Rashid, 2021). This China-Afghanistan alignment will further enhance the Chinese power within the region and it will affect the power struggle of India and China to dominate the region while bringing up challenges to India (Bhatnagar, 2021). In addition, India is in the face of the threat of terrorism due to this China and Taliban-led Afghanistan alignment since new Afghanistan's closest allies, both China and Pakistan are counterparties for India in the power struggle.

On the other hand, Pakistan too will be heavily affected by the new Taliban regime in Afghanistan and its alignment with Pakistan's closest ally, China. As a result of Taliban sponsorship to Tehriki-Taliban which is a Pakistani counterpart of Taliban and other terrorist groups in Pakistan, the temper between Pakistan and Taliban is not positive within the current context (Rashid, 2021). Moreover, due to the proximity, the tensions, insurgencies, and political instabilities in Afghanistan will directly affect Pakistan. In addition, the relations with China will strengthen the Taliban regime and Afghanistan while it will be implied as sponsorship to terrorism within South

Asia. “During the 1990s when Taliban had controlled Afghanistan, it was known to be the role model for the South Asian terrorism. The countries in the region such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives had threats of terrorism during that era. The Taliban had sponsored many terrorist groups and provided training within Afghanistan” (Rashid, 2021). The re-emergence of the Taliban into the governance of Afghanistan brings the old fear of terrorism to South Asia (Pandey, 2021), and China’s support to them will further encourage Islam extremism in the region as well. Therefore, the Taliban’s rise as the governing power of Afghanistan and its relations with China brings up security threats to the region and it will further affect the power balance as well. Afghanistan may start to play a supportive role for China in the region and through that China will further enhance its dominance over the South Asian countries.

Conclusion

South Asia is considered as a strategic garrison in the contemporary international system and China in its long run to achieve world hegemonic status, has several strategic ambitions regarding South Asia. China is on its way to dominating the region and established several soft power means such as debts, investments, financial assistance, together with the major projects of the Belt and Road Initiative and String of Pearls Strategy. Since the former US presence in Afghanistan was a challenge for China to expand its power throughout the region, now the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan has become a supportive factor for China in the means of its power expansion.

This study has identified that the major strategic will of China regarding the strengthening of relations with Taliban-led Afghanistan is based on security. China has the fear of the Taliban’s sponsorship of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement led by Uyghur Muslim extremists in Xinjiang and aims to isolate

ETIM by terminating the Taliban's support and training assistance for them. In addition, China is planning to expand the massive project BRI into Afghanistan while supporting the reconstruction of the country. The economic relations and investments in infrastructure development may be enhanced between China and Afghanistan and through that Chinese interest regarding Afghanistan may run through a similar view of Pakistan, a country which was also a closer ally of the United States earlier, but after the 9/11 attack, acts as China's major supporter within South Asia. Therefore, the study understood that China has aims of using Afghanistan to affirm their dominance further in the region.

On the other hand, this paper studied how the alignment of China and Afghanistan may impact South Asia. It may impact the security and the Big Brother status of India within the region while making challenges to the power balance and will impact the power struggle between India and China to conquer regional hegemony. It has ended the favorable economic and political relations between the US-backed Afghanistan with India and has created the risk of terrorism sponsorship in India through the Taliban-led Afghanistan. The alignment of Afghanistan with China has created a severe threat for India since Pakistan, which is a counterpart of India too, is in the same alignment with those two countries. Moreover, it may affect Pakistan's security since Pakistan is having strained relations with the Taliban while China's relations with Afghanistan may bring up worries for Pakistan, which is the Chinese closest ally so far. Then, as a region, it will bring up security threats of terrorism, and Chinese relations with the Taliban regime may nurture other terrorists in the region and empower the Islamic extremism. This may create instability within South Asia and natural tensions.

In conclusion, with the facts studied, according to the contemporary situation, the alignment of Afghanistan with China is observable and as a rising power in the world, China is on its way to achieving its geostrategic ambitions in the South Asian region and may use Afghanistan as a supportive ally to achieve its interests in South Asia. Since giving up on Afghanistan will be challenging for China especially in assuring its domestic security as well as BRI and regional security, China won't lose the opportunity and will maintain cordial relations with Taliban-led Afghanistan. This alignment may enhance the Chinese power within the South Asian region and be beneficial in the power struggle with India. However, since this incident is fresh and still prevailing in its initial stage, the findings and conclusion of the study is based on the incidents that have happened so far.

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The Human Rights Violations in the Face of Religious Extremism in Afghanistan

(The Taliban Extremist Rule in Afghanistan)

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Abstract

Religious extremism is any behavior, attitude or belief outside the norm of religious beliefs or practices. Often, this extremism manifests itself in the form of violence or the creation of smaller groups or cults. Religious extremism is present in all religions. Today, religious extremism has led to the brutal killing of human rights. Religious extremism is spreading destructively in many parts of the world and the Taliban in Afghanistan is a prime example. The Taliban based on strong traditional and religious ideologies from about a century ago, began to emerge influential in various parts of Afghanistan and spread as political and religious groups. The Taliban regime, freed from democratic constitutional rule, is based on Islamic laws that severely restrict freedom and do not care about the well-being of its citizens. The Taliban rule in Afghanistan is based on gross human rights abuses and the daily lives of Afghans are being devastated today. The purpose of this article is to further study religious extremism, its origins and developments in Afghanistan as well as the Taliban's threat to civilian lives and human rights abuses. The entire study is based on secondary sources and a qualitative approach is followed. The findings and data analysis are based on the grave and catastrophic violation of human rights in various strata of civil society under the Taliban, which most recently took control of the whole of Afghanistan. The conclusion sums up the Taliban's evolution from its inception to the present day, as well as some of the recommendations made to the Afghan government in this regard.

Keywords: *Religious extremism, UNAMA, Taliban, CEDAW, CRC*

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Introduction

Even though religious extremism is a widely disputed topic, it is frequently reduced to a one-dimensional construct associated with religious violence. In recent years, Islam has taken on new meaning in Central Asian nations as a religious heritage and a source of cultural and political identity. There has been an increase in the observance of Islamic customs such as the acceptance of 'Assalamwalaikuan' as a greeting, religious marriages, daily prayers, and mosque attendance. There has also been a massive increase in the number of religious buildings built.

Primary character of our research; Afghanistan suffered from religious extremism for a long time, notably since the 1990s, when the Taliban emerged as active extremists and an ultraconservative political and religious team. By 2001, they had taken control of the entire country of Afghanistan, with the exception of a small portion of northern Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, we've just seen a spike in emotional research studying the significance of religion in human life. When it comes to the spread of religious extremism in Afghanistan, the Taliban have consistently violated human rights and made no attempt to promote the rule of law or a decent governance. Instead, they imposed fundamentalist religious mandates on the whole Afghan populace with little regard for the country's normal functioning or the well-being of its citizens. They are changing the country's constitution to reflect Islamic law. Women lost the majority of their basic rights under Taliban control including access to health care, the right to education, employment, the ability to travel alone, and the right to engage in politics. They had completely lost their human life's freedom. Women were not allowed to laugh or walk-in public according to Taliban regulation. Harassment and sexual violence against children have continued. There were insufficient opportunities for children to seek their

entitlement to a good education. Thousands of children were still being forced into forced labor or begging on the streets. Men were treated similarly; they were compelled to attend religious services, and those who did not could risk jail or execution. The Shias, the other extreme sect of the Muslim religion, were compelled, like all non-Muslim races to present themselves as minorities with different logos while other religions and races were required to reject items according to Taliban legislation.

By 2009, the Taliban had gained control of more than 80% of Afghanistan, and more than 50,000 Afghans were estimated to have perished because of the torture and fighting. Under the pretext of religion, these radicals have taken many lives today, targeting hospitals, schools, administrative institutions, and other places of safety. As a result, religious fanaticism is inhumanely restricting all of the human rights of every Afghan person, from the right to life to the right to die. The Taliban now has complete control of Afghanistan, and the international peacekeeping forces have entirely withdrawn from the country. Despite the fact that the United Nations and the Human Rights Council strive to defend human rights in Afghanistan, they have yet to find a solution to the current situation.

While these fanatics are attempting to spread their religion and ideology around the world, their adherents have undertaken a number of operations targeted at massacring people in public places in Asian and European nations. For instance, on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka, religious zealots carried out a massacre targeting Christians. We intend to learn more about the origins and growth of religious extremism in Afghanistan as well as the Taliban's danger to civilian life and human rights violations. With the rise of religious extremism and the rise of terrorist activities, the fundamental problem is the blatant violation of basic human rights. Accordingly, extremism seems to be

growing rapidly throughout the world today. This is also the first time in the world that a state has been taken over by a terrorist group. While these extremist acts of terrorism are provoking other countries in the world, the fundamental human rights of the people of the world, such as freedom of religion, freedom to live and being free from discrimination are severely restricted. And more than the capitalist countries of the world, underdeveloped countries are under the threat of extremism. Because of that we need to prevent or eliminate extremism from the world using the international community and using human rights declaration as a law.

Methodology

This study is entirely based on secondary data retrieved from academic journals, articles, and some other secondary data sources such as e-books and web-based academic publications. This has a qualitative approach since it consists only of secondary data which will be analyzed using content analysis. The objective of this study will be achieved through analyzing the collected data as mentioned above in order to create a new piece of thorough knowledge on the scope of extremism and its impact on human rights.

Literature Review

The literature review consists of previously written and published academic studies regarding the impact on the protection of human rights in front of the rapid growth and expansion of extremism in the world, specifically in the Asian region concerning the Taliban extremist threat in Afghanistan. In simple terms, religious extremism is the advocacy of extreme levels of believing in specific ideology, belief system or religious views that are considered to be far outside the mainstream attitudes of the whole society. This study was carried out to identify the tremendous threat of religious extremism to protect the

human rights of humans even though all humans deserve human rights from womb to tomb. Likewise, this article analyses how the Taliban extremists violate human rights by using their own rules despite the rule of law.

According to the report “Over a century of persecution: Massive human rights violation against Hazaras in Afghanistan”, as one of the ethnic groups in central Afghanistan: The Hazaras have become vulnerable in enjoying their human rights due to the threat of Islamic extremism which has been widely expanded in the country (Hasrat, 2019). “The Hazaras have been carrying marks of ethnic cleansing, land confiscation, slavery, and persecution since 1981 resulting due to the fact that the Afghans and the Hazaras are different in cultural and linguistic values” (Mohammad, 2019). The study broadly analyzes the impact of religious extremism in violation of human rights in Afghanistan with related information.

FIDH and Armanshar Foundation carried out a study to analyze data regarding the Human rights phenomena in Afghanistan: “Human Rights at a Crossroads”, and this describes the need for a rights-centered approach to peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was a battlefield for decades and it has been rooted in the influence of extremism. However, Afghan civilians have become humans who are unable to enjoy the inherent human rights in the country as a result of widespread terrorism and extremism. Democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights cannot be found in Afghanistan. The US-led NATO, United Nations and other NGOs have taken various measures to overcome the threats in the country for years but the issue is not fully solved. This document also recommends some mechanisms to the government of Afghanistan to re-make the peace, stability, and security in the country.

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution that introduced a special report to understand the necessity of countering Violent Extremism in Afghanistan. The study describes “Violent extremist groups appear broadly unpopular and mistrusted throughout the study area, being perceived as un-Islamic and controlled by foreign powers. Nonetheless, the activities and ideologies of such groups have not been effectively countered by the government of Afghanistan, civil society, or the international community” (Fazli, 2015). The authors emphasize that the international community has the accountability to take countermeasures in order to overcome the threat of religious extremism in order to make the peace and stability in the country where people can freely engage in their day-to-day works without fear or any kind of discrimination.

These views have highlighted the interconnection between the existence of religious extremism and the violation of human rights. Accordingly, here we could identify a range of academic studies about how religious extremism impacts the protection of human rights in Afghanistan. Through this study, the researcher will most importantly focus on identifying how the expansion of religious extremism affects the violation of human rights in Afghanistan.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Terrorism and its Origin in Afghanistan

In the mid-1990s, the communist regime in Afghanistan collapsed and Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan. The Taliban emerged in the ensuing crisis. They emerged as a group based on a highly traditional political and religious ideology. It began as a small force of Afghan religious students and scholars seeking to confront crime and corruption. The new government formed after the 1978-1992 Afghan war failed to bring peace and stability to

the Afghan city of Kabul and beyond. Much of the country was subjected to extortion and attacks by local militias and warlords.

Many Afghans who faced displacement during the Afghan war were organized in Islamic schools of learning (madrasa schools) in southern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. In 1994 a group of former fighters, associated with a madrasah in a village of Kandahār province, successfully subdued a local warlord and began pacifying nearby areas. The faction, which enjoyed popular support with its promise of security and its religious fervor, quickly grew into the movement now known as the Taliban. By late 1996 the Taliban had seized the capital Kabul, and gained effective control over some two-thirds of the country.

The Taliban, however, faced stiff resistance because of their interpretations of law and order. The Taliban mixed violent religious ideology with traditionalism and created a brutally repressive regime with a traditional social order. Its policies included the near-total exclusion of women from public life (including employment and education), the systematic destruction of non-Islamic artistic relics (as occurred in the town of Bamiyan), and the implementation of harsh criminal punishments. Resistance was particularly pronounced among non-Pashtun ethnic groups—namely, the Tajik, the Uzbek, and the Hazara—in the north, west, and central parts of the country who saw the power of the predominantly Pashtun Taliban as a continuation of the traditional Pashtun hegemony of the country. By 2001 the Taliban controlled all but a small section of northern Afghanistan and only Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates recognized the regime.

However, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, the Taliban came under heavy criticism and the Taliban was overthrown due to the unrest in Afghanistan following the US bombing. They

rose again in 2005 and from then until 2020 there were occasional fighting and negotiations with the United States also failed.

The United States withdrew all US troops from Afghanistan on August 30, 2021, marking the end of the 2001-2021 war, and by September 6, 2021, the Taliban had overtaken control of the whole of Afghanistan.

Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan

At the request of the Afghanistan government, on 28th of March 2002, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan UNAMA was established by the Security Council of the United Nations (from the resolution 1401) to assist the Afghan government to make sustainable peace, development and to rebuild the Afghan humans' lives. This is a political mission which is placed in Kabul, Afghanistan and the current head of the UNAMA is Mrs. Deborah Lyons. UNAMA is giving troops and military assistance and financial assets to the Afghan government under the regulation of the Security Council to defeat the terrorism. UNAMA reported that the Taliban was responsible for 45% of the civilian casualties, and the armed group calling itself the Islamic State in Khorasan was responsible for 7% of the civilian casualties between 1st of January and 30th of September. Armed groups were collectively responsible for the deliberate targeting and killing of civilians including teachers, health workers, humanitarian workers, judges, tribal and religious leaders, and state employees. The attacks included violations of international humanitarian law including war crimes, with civilians and civilian objects deliberately targeted. In May, a maternity hospital in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood in the west of the capital Kabul was attacked by gunmen. They killed 24 people, including newborn babies, pregnant women, and health workers. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Children continued to be recruited for combat, particularly by armed groups and the Afghan security forces – pro-government militias and local police – and faced multiple cases of abuse, including sexual abuse. Afghanistan continued to be, according to UNAMA, “one of the deadliest countries in the world for children”, with both pro-government and anti-government forces responsible for more than 700 child casualties each. In October, First Vice-President Amrullah Saleh announced ordering the arrest of an individual who reported civilian casualties in an Afghan government airstrike on a school which had killed 12 children.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are included in the International Bill of Human Rights, which has been widely incorporated in order to address and implement actions against the human rights violations in Afghanistan where the human rights are threatened in a broad sphere.

Right to Health

Afghanistan’s weak health care infrastructure was overwhelmed when COVID-19 swept across the country. A total of 52,011 cases and 2,237 deaths were recorded which certainly did not represent the true scale of infection in the country. In most Afghan provinces there was no possibility of receiving a COVID-19 test and samples were transported to the capital. The government’s response – implemented with the support of international donors – was sharply criticized with allegations of corruption and people with the greatest need of assistance being left behind. During quarantine, there were many reported cases of poor households having not been included in lists for the distribution of bread because they were not members of the community mosque while those who were relatively better off received bread. Across the country, the

number of people living in poverty remained high at 55% of the population, and this figure was predicted to rise because of the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic.

The proper execution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is important to the protection of the health of human beings. The protection of UDHR Article 25 (Right to Adequate living standard) is important in protecting the right of health in a country like Afghanistan where the human rights are severely damaged.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People

According to the International Organization for Migration, there were 4 million people internally displaced in Afghanistan in 2020, an increase from 1.2 million in 2016 and half a million in 2013. Throughout this time, internally displaced people languished on the brink of survival, in many cases living in densely populated camps and facing constant difficulties accessing clean water, healthcare, and employment. Their situation deteriorated further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Afghanistan signed the 1951 Convention related to the status of Refugees as a special incident for a country like Afghanistan which used to be one of the world's largest bearer refugees and asylum seekers. Through this, the refugees and asylum seekers of Afghanistan got the advantage to be protected from human rights violations.

Violence against Women and Girls

Women and girls continued to face gender-based discrimination and violence throughout Afghanistan, especially in areas under Taliban control where their rights were violated with impunity and violent “punishments” were dealt out

for perceived transgressions against the armed group's interpretation of Islamic law.

According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), more than 100 cases of murder were reported during the year. Where these cases were reported, there was a persistent failure to investigate them. In some cases, victims of violence came under pressure from their communities or state officials to withdraw their complaints or "mediation" was used to resolve complaints beyond the protection of the law. As a result, there was a widespread impunity for the perpetrators of beatings, killings, torture and other ill-treatment and corporal punishments.

As a result of a climate of fear bred by the Taliban's takeover, many Afghan women are now wearing the burka refraining from leaving the house without a male guardian and stopping other activities to avoid violence and reprisals. Despite the myriad threats now presented to women's rights, women across the country have been holding protests. While some protests have been allowed to continue peacefully, many were violently repressed by the Taliban. On 4th of September, approximately 100 women at a protest in Kabul were dispersed by Taliban special troops who fired into the air and reportedly fired tear gas.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is one of the international human rights conventions which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 in order to protect women rights as one of the vulnerable groups in the society. In August 1980, the government of Afghanistan signed the CEDAW, however it entered into force after 2003 due to the instabilities of the country because of internal conflicts. From then, CEDAW has led the way to gender equality in the country in a better way.

Children's Rights

Children continued to face harassment and sexual violence. Despite the sexual abuse of children being well-publicized and the abusive practice of “bacha bazi” (male children being sexually abused by older men) being criminalized in 2018, the authorities made little effort to end impunity and hold perpetrators accountable.

Children lacked adequate opportunities to pursue their right to quality education. According to UNICEF, over 2 million girls remained out of school, and according to government figures about 7,000 schools in the country had no building. Large numbers of children continued to be pressed into forced labor or begging on the streets.

As a special approach to address and execute against the human rights violations of children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) entered into force on 2nd of September 1990 and within a year it was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly. In 1994, this convention was ratified by the government of Afghanistan and through the ratification, it can be observed that there is progress in the protection of children's rights in Afghanistan.

Freedoms of Expression, Association, and Assembly

The conditions grew more difficult for journalists, media workers, and activists and it was difficult to function due to increasing insecurity and the targeted killings of activists, journalists, and moderate religious scholars. Journalists raised concerns over the lack of access to information and did not enjoy adequate protection from attacks by armed groups. The government introduced a draft mass media bill which would have imposed further restrictions on the right to freedom of expression. It was forced to withdraw

the bill in the face of widespread criticism. The execution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are important in protecting the freedom of expression, association and assembly in Afghanistan in front of the brutal expansion of Taliban extremism in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Following 30 years of war, grave human rights atrocities, and frequent political turmoil, Afghanistan has been working for more than a decade to promote democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Since the 1990s, Afghan citizens have been victims of religious fanaticism. And this moment started with a small group of Afghan religious students and academics who wanted to stop crimes and atrocities. With the promise of security and religious favor, the party that gained public support slowly blossomed into the Taliban movement. However, initially they were a religious group with popular support, but later their hardliners turned their traditional religious beliefs and traditions into a brutally repressive regime.

The recent request by UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs for fast action in response to crises is a step in the right direction for the unjust actions of the Taliban. However, US soldiers have left Afghanistan and Taliban extremists have gained control of the whole country. When withdrawing US troops, violation of human rights continued to rise, and some of these rights are, health, refugees, women and child, freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The problem of religious extremism, which is now the focus of the entire world, is yet to be properly addressed. But the recommendations that the Afghan government can make for this are as follows. investigating breaches of human rights in Afghanistan and holding those guilty accountable.

In the present, having strong leadership and proper guidance is essential for the well-being and security of the country as well as the people of the country. Ensure that women will be represented equally in all phases of any peace negotiations, as well as in important government positions, the judiciary, and decision-making bodies. And most importantly the quality reforms in the educational sector should be adopted to change the existing bad ideological and believing systems in order to rebuild the harmony, peace and love in such societies. Because education is the best way to prevent extremism in a gradual manner in the future. For the Afghan government to protect the human rights of its people in this way, they must move away from religious extremist ideology in legislation and act for the socio-economic and political well-being of the country.

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Cultural Diplomacy as a Successful Tool of Soft Power: Special Reference to South Korea

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Abstract

The Korean wave has emerged as an influential force in many countries around the world. The "Korean Wave" (Hallyu in Korean) encompasses everything from television dramas to movies, popular music (K-pop), dancing (B-boys), video games, food, fashion, tourism, and language (Hangul). South Korea uses its cultural values as a type of diplomacy while conducting its relations with other countries. The study examines what kind of impact South Korea's relations with other countries have had due to its cultural diplomacy since 2010. The key goals of this study are to identify how South Korea uses cultural diplomacy to establish new relations and maintain relations with other countries, as well as to determine the strategy's successful method for use. The qualitative method approach was used to conduct the study. Secondary data has been collected from resources such as journals, and academic papers published on blogs, websites, and newspapers. Korean dramas like Jewel in the Palace, movies like Parasite, and K-pop groups like BTS have been the main part of South Korea's cultural diplomacy. Moreover, South Korea currently uses BTS as its cultural ambassadors and special envoys to maintain relations with international organizations like the United Nations. Finally, South Korea uses cultural diplomacy as a successful tool of soft power

Keywords: *Soft power, cultural diplomacy, South Korea, globalization, Korean culture*

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Introduction

Simply, Diplomacy can define itself as the art of maintaining peaceful relationships between nations, groups, or individuals. Due to changes in the international system, such as globalization, numerous new avenues of diplomacy have been added to the diplomatic process. Diplomacy was limited to the use of hard power as the primary tool for determining foreign policy and diplomatic procedures in history. However, the introduction of the notion of soft power into diplomatic practices offered a slew of new options to the field of diplomacy, in addition to the hard power strategies used in foreign policymaking. With globalization came the concept of soft power, which refers to the ability to influence others to do something through culture, spirituality, music, film, and political views, without employing force or coercion.

Joseph Nye wrote about the possibilities of South Korean soft power in a 2009 paper for Harvard's Belfer Center. South Korea was gradually establishing itself as a significant middle-power, for a country that had been "dealt a bad hand" by geography. "Soft power," according to Joseph Nye, is defined as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than compulsion or payment." It stems from a country's attractive culture, political beliefs, and policies." South Korea has produced 'Hallyu,' a Chinese phrase for South Korea's cultural wave, by shaping the world view through K-tinted lenses. This study sought to investigate the current state of South Korean cultural diplomacy, as well as what type of impact it has and whether it is effective as a soft power tool.

Government funding for the creative industries in South Korea extends back to the early 1990s. The South Korean government established the basis by encouraging corporate investment and vertical integration in the film industry, as well as gradually reducing barriers such as screen limits for foreign films.

It meant giving South Korean creations a secure financial foundation while simultaneously motivating them to develop and compete with their overseas competitors.

Literature Review

Diplomacy is the process by which countries throughout the world handle their affairs in such a way that peaceful relations are maintained. Diplomacy is derived from a Greek word that means "ancient diploma" and is made up of the words "Diplo" which means "folded in half" and the suffix "ma" which means "objective." The folding paper conferred a privilege, usually a permit to travel on the bearer, and the terms have come to refer to the documents by which the prince gave such favors. Diplomacy, on the other hand, is the establishment of mechanisms for influencing the decisions and conduct of foreign governments and people through communication, negotiations, and other non-violent means.

The post-Renaissance European state structure gave birth to modern diplomatic practices. Diplomacy has traditionally been defined as the management of official (typically bilateral) ties between sovereign governments. By the twentieth century, however, the diplomatic practices pioneered in Europe had spread throughout the world, and diplomacy had expanded to include summit meetings and other international conferences, parliamentary diplomacy, supranational and subnational entities' international activities, and nongovernmental elements' unofficial diplomacy, and the work of international civil servants.

On the other hand, cultural diplomacy is a type of public diplomacy that refers to a nation-strategic state's efforts to advance its national interests "by making its cultural resources and successes recognized abroad and/or facilitating cultural transmissions abroad" (Cull 2008, p. 31). Cultural diplomacy,

according to Mark (2009), is "a subset of public diplomacy or the operation of a state's culture in support of its foreign policy aims, to counteract stereotyping, build mutual understanding, and advance the national reputation and cross-border connections" (p. 9).

Cultural diplomacy can define as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding," but the conceptual field of the term has broadened over time to include "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their people to foster mutual understanding" (Cummings 2003, p. 1).

The concept of soft power was first introduced to the diplomatic procedures with the changes in the international order. Early diplomatic practices were primarily concerned with hard power. Later, diplomats and policymakers recognize the importance of soft power in diplomatic practices and foreign policymaking. In the contemporary world, most of the countries in the international system use soft power in tandem with hard power in making foreign policy decisions. (Giulio, 2011)

With globalization came the concept of soft power, which refers to the ability to persuade others to do something without using force or coercion instead by utilizing other means such as culture, spirituality, and political views. Soft power was initially established by Joseph Nye, who defined it as the ability to acquire what you want through attraction rather than force. This indicates that it arose as a result of a country's beliefs, culture, and policies being appealing. (Nye, 2004) Mostly, a country's soft power is based on its resources, culture, political principles, and foreign policy. Because of the links of attraction and duty that it establishes, when a country's culture includes universal ideals and

its policies to promote values and interests that others share, it raises the possibility of achieving its decisive outcomes. (Andrew, 2013).

In the context of middle power, South Korea's cultural diplomacy efforts, Nye and Kim (2013) noted that the country's global expansion of its popular culture in the twenty-first century signifies the Korean Wave's potentiality as a set of soft power resources that could have a significant and complex impact on cultural diplomacy, as well as on trade, tourism, the academy, and other national interests in multiple contexts. According to Nye and Kim (2013), a country's soft power is essentially based on three resources: cultural attractiveness; political ideals, and foreign policies, when they are recognized as legitimate and possessing moral authority (p. 32). Nye and Kim (2013) argued that "Korea has to pay more attention to soft power" (pp. 31–32) as one of the country's most important cultural diplomacy methods, citing the success of others, particularly the United States government, in using the film industry as a cultural diplomacy resource.

Methodology

The goal of this research is to highlight the usefulness of cultural diplomacy as a soft power strategy. The article focuses on the role of cultural diplomacy in the country branding strategy of South Korea. The analysis was conducted utilizing qualitative data obtained from secondary data sources such as online journals, websites, and social media such as Twitter and Facebook to demonstrate that a cultural diplomacy is a successful tool of soft power. This study uses the discourse data analysis method to conduct the research.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Beginning of Korean Wave in South Korea

The country transitioned from a series of authoritarian governments to a democratic one during the Sixth Republic, which began in 1988. The country's economy, press, and borders were all liberalized. It also began to normalize relations with North Korea, its neighbor. However, during the Asian financial crisis of 1997, this expansion hit a snag, which was resolved by restructuring steps prompted by a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund.

As a result, South Korea had two mutually compatible agendas. The first is to produce cash to help the South Korean economy thrive, and the second is to transform the country's image abroad while fostering international connections. In the 1990s, South Korea emerged from its isolationist cocoon, and Hallyu was both a solution to some of its problems and a necessity for the country's new identity.

As a result of globalization, many countries throughout the world have developed a considerable interest in South Korean culture, such as the Korean language, Korean cuisines, Korean cosmetic items, and, most notably, Korean drama and films, as well as K-pop. Korean culture has been spread through K-dramas, movies, and K-pop. At present, it has achieved global recognition and has become one of the most powerful cultural exports. Korea recognizes the importance of cultural diplomacy in promoting its national interests worldwide.

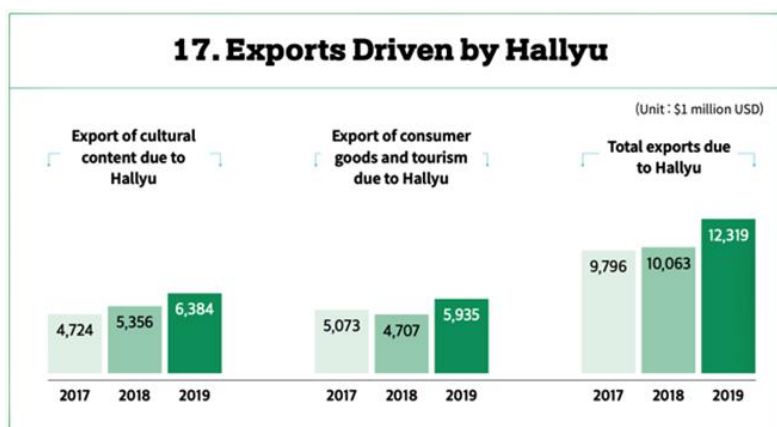
Present Situation of Korean Cultural Diplomacy

Hallyu has ensured South Korea's long-term viability and visibility in a variety of industries. Today, the letter "K" precedes several important sectors, transforming it from a cultural oddity to a brand. South Korea has no qualms about using this brand in other industries, with President Moon Jae-in dubbing the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine a K-Quarantine.

The total economic benefits of Korean culture are difficult to determine because they include both direct and indirect revenues, as well as the connected effects on other industries such as tourism and increased sales of products promoted by Hallyu performers. South Korea gains economic benefits as a result of the Korean wave.

According to a study by the Korean Foundation, Hallyu's direct impact has doubled from 2016 to 2019 and is still growing, as is its indirect value (exports of consumer goods and tourism). Hallyu has benefited the South Korean economy and will continue to do so in the coming years.

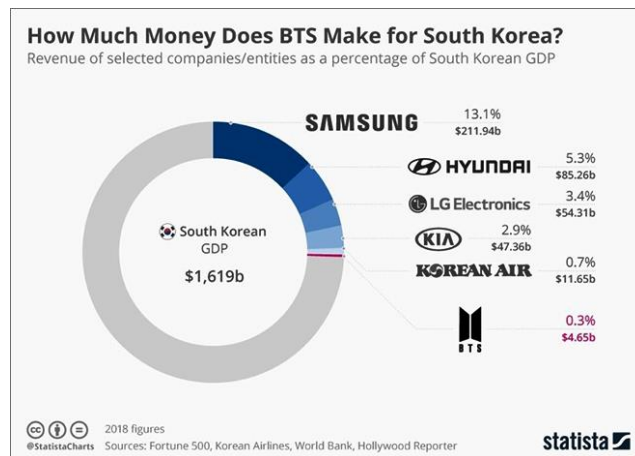
Figure 01: Export patterns driven by Hallyu wave



Source: [http://eng.kofice.or.kr/data/\[KOFICE\]%202020%20Global%20Hallyu%20Trends.pdf](http://eng.kofice.or.kr/data/[KOFICE]%202020%20Global%20Hallyu%20Trends.pdf)

The "BTS effect," which is a term used to describe the impact that Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS, the main K-Pop band) has had on the Korean economy, can be easily applied to Hallyu's impact on the Korean economy. According to Forbes, BTS' contribution to South Korea's GDP is greater than that of Fiji, the Maldives, and Togo combined. According to a study conducted by the Hyundai Research Institute in 2018, BTS has a direct economic worth of \$3.54 billion and an indirect impact of \$1.26 billion every year. Furthermore, BTS attracts one out of every 13 foreign tourists to South Korea. The Seoul City government credited BTS with reviving the city's tourism business following a drop in Chinese visitors as a result of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system's installation.

Figure 02: Contribution of BTS towards South Korean economy.



Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/19854/companies-bts-share-of-south-korea-gdp/>

The government-affiliated Korea Foundation announced in August 2020 that it would collaborate with Big Hit² and Hankuk University to support language programs using the textbooks at six universities in four countries, including the famed Middlebury Language Schools in the United States. As special

² Big Hit- Agency of BTS, currently known as Hybe labels.

presidential envoys, BTS performed and addressed the United Nations General Assembly, promoting the 2030 SDGs.

Korean Culture as a Tool of Soft Power

Cultural diplomacy as a soft power technique makes use of culture, which is largely a soft power asset. According to UNESCO, the former are goods and services that convey ideas, symbols, and ways of life, such as publications, magazines, multimedia applications, software, recordings, films, videos, audible programs, crafts, and fashion, while the latter are audible distribution actions, promotion of performing culture and art events, cultural information services, and the preservation of books, recordings, and artifacts.

Rather than passively allowing K-pop and Korean dramas to continue to attract global audiences, the South Korean government now wants to get actively involved in assisting the country's powerful pop culture and other soft resources to become an actual soft power. Soft power combines soft resources, attractive pop-culture fixtures like movie stars and pop idols, tourist attractions, and a hospitable climate for study abroad programs to produce and establish new long-term changes in how people think about or interact with the country in question.

President Moon Jae In greeted BTS well on Twitter after they won Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards, mentioning Joshep Nye's statement regarding South Korean soft power.

Figure 03: Translation of tweet

I send a big congratulation and thanks/gratitude to BTS for winning/being awarded the AMA daesang.

Last month, the US's global think tank 'Center for Strategic and International Studies(CSIS)' held an unprecedented/rare conference with 'South Korea's Soft Power' as the topic. At the conference, Joseph Nye, who coined the concept of soft power, praised that South Korea is showing the most dynamic soft power in the world by combining an unprecedented economic success with a vibrant democracy. It shows/means that South Korea's culture is dominating the world and that is also demonstrating/exhibiting its strength in national character and diplomacy.

BTS receiving the daesang at this year's AMAs confirmed that fact once again.

News on this conference has been partially reported [before], and the reason I'm introducing it once again is because the words Joseph Nye added came to mind. He said like so. "In the past 60 years, even though there aren't any countries that has been more successful than South Korea, a great number of Koreans think that they are weak and falling behind. That influences/impacts their optimism and creativity."

How is it/what do you think, everyone?
Don't you think it's worth having confidence and pride now?

Source: Twitter

According to the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, the "Korean Wave" of K-Pop, TV dramas, and games boosted the Korean economy by USD 9.5 billion in 2018. Korea is most likely one of the few countries in the world with a Ministry of Culture (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to be exact). The Popular Culture Industry Division of the Ministry concentrates on Korean pop music, fashion, mass entertainment, comic books, cartoons, and other essential items. The Cultural Content Office, which includes three other sections, is referred to as such. It has a whopping USD 5.5 billion budget, intending to boost economic growth, particularly by expanding the country's cultural sector export industry. Furthermore, the Korean government funds 20-30% of a USD 1 billion investment fund dedicated to nurturing and exporting popular culture.

One of Hallyu's management tactics is to conduct extensive research on its targeted population, who are mostly Asians. The Korean government and its departments actively monitor these Asian countries and cultures to determine which Korean Wave items have the most chance of success in various markets.

The Korean government seems very successful in managing Hallyu outside of Korea by hosting various cultural festivals showcasing Korean offerings, running public relations campaigns to publicize Korean uniqueness, and indirectly assisting the entertainment industry has created a very positive environment. To promote Hallyu, the Korean Culture and Information Service have established 32 Korean Cultural Centers in 28 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and America as of August 2020. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, global trade in cultural commodities totaled USD 16.4 trillion in 2017, with the Korean government aiming for a sizable piece of that pie in the future.

Conclusion

South Korean officials, however, must be smart in their use of celebrity power as a result of this more aggressive posture. At the moment, it appears that this approach is based on trial and error, with celebrities being invited to high-profile political events in the hopes of generating an audience of interested global fans. It seems like there will be major challenges for the Korean wave in the future, such as maintaining cultural product innovations, avoiding the overexposure of Korean stars, and maintaining Korean government investments.

Korea needs to be able to strike a balance between not over-commercializing Hallyu and marketing and building its identity. Furthermore, it's interesting to see how the Korean wave will sustain its appeal to global audiences and enhance the nation's brand equity. This contributes to the continued success of Korean society, economy, and culture. South Korea's government, on the other hand, needs to be more deliberate in integrating celebrity influence with specific foreign policy aims, if it is to fully realize the political potential of its

pop culture. To summarize, South Korea has been employing its culture as a soft power tool, and it has proven to be effective.

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The Taiwan Strategy – Concealed Motives behind US Involvement in China – Taiwan Conflict

M.J.D Parami Thathsarani ¹

Abstract

Taiwan is an island nation that is separated from Chinese mainland through the Taiwan Strait. After the formal division in 1949, Taiwan operated with a democratic governing system without politically attaching to the People's Republic of China. China strongly believes that Taiwan should be unified with the Chinese government as per their historical roots. But Taiwan completes all the characteristics to become a sovereign state. China – Taiwan conflict emerged in this backdrop as a result of the contradictory interests between the two countries. At first, China used peaceful and diplomatic means to unify Taiwan but Taiwan's progressive exertions to declare independence made China follow coercive methods to achieve their interest of unification. The United States majorly followed a policy of maintaining peaceful diplomatic relations with China but the contradictions have continued to support Taiwan to gain independence. The United States admired the democratic governance system of Taiwan and considered Taiwan as a strategic threshold to spread their ideological influence in the Asian region. The United States always had complex relations with China in the Asian region but they always maintained healthy relations with Taiwan knowing it would alarm their Chinese counterparts. Furthermore, the US has always assisted Taiwan in the aspects of military and trade while supporting them diplomatically to achieve a powerful voice in the international arena. "The Taiwan Strategy" explains how Washington would be utilizing Taiwan as a main strategic point to achieve their interests against China in the Asian region. This study explains how the China- Taiwan conflict would emerge as a secret ideological war between Washington and Beijing in their intentions of implementing their own supremacy in Asia. This research was conducted as a qualitative study based on secondary data such as research papers. Research Objectives and findings were acquired through rigorous reading and content analysis.

Keywords: *United States, Taiwan, China, Unification, Ideological conflict*

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Introduction

Taiwan or the Republic of China (ROC) is an island-bound diaspora that is separated from mainland China from the Taiwan Strait. Mainland China or the People's Republic of China (PRC) views Taiwan as a renegade province. Even though Taiwan exhibits the nature of a sovereign nation, PRC is with the motive of unifying Taiwan under the government of mainland China. In contrast, Taiwan operates with an independent and democratically elected government with the ambition of becoming a sovereign state. But under the unification policy of China, which is also known as the "One China" policy, the PRC is planning to unify Taiwan under the mainland. One China policy designates that the PRC should be the only legitimate government of China. This policy is rooted based on Chinese historical grounds which imply that all the Chinese grounds that were once separated from the mainland should eventually unify under the PRC. China has attempted to use the vision of "One China Two systems" as a mechanism of unifying Taiwan as they did with Hong Kong and Macao. But this has met with complete deterrence from the end of Taiwan.

The opposing interests between the PRC and Taiwan have created an age-long conflict in the region which now sees the potential of an emerging war soon. The United States has been very keen on the relations between China and Taiwan since the beginning. Among many other strategic points in the Asian region, the US has prioritized Taiwan because of its significance as a strategic threshold. Washington has always believed that Taiwan could be the strategic point that is capable of securing the US interests in the region. According to Heartland (2009), Taiwan has been the most sensitive issue in US-China relations and likely will remain so for many years to come. He implies that the issues between the China and Taiwan conflict including the constrained relationship over the Taiwan Strait likely will hold the key to China's future

ambitions regarding the region. The China-US relationship in the region has always been complex and they have also been driven by historical reasons as well as the present realities (Chang, 2001). Watchman (2006) explains that Taiwan is very crucial to both China and USA and both countries would probably use Taiwan to spread their influence in the Asian region. This theory can be justified by the series of events that unfolded recently.

The main objective of this paper is to assess the importance of Taiwan for both China and the USA. In terms of the United States, identifying their underlying motives for spreading influence in Taiwan will be the second most important objective of this study. These objectives are built under the speculation that Taiwan is expecting complete political withdrawal from China. Another key objective of this paper is to assess the degree of the United States' involvement in the Taiwan – China conflict. This study will explain how the United States would be strategically utilizing the China – Taiwan issue to maintain the balance of power in the Asian region against the rising Chinese supremacy. This study will then present and analyze different strategies that the US has used and is yet to use on the Taiwan - China issue. The main findings of this paper will be presented to prove the ground hypothesis that the US will be keen on balancing their interest with both China and Taiwan to achieve their underlying motives within the region.

Literature Review

Many scholars have researched the history, background, and root causes of the China - Taiwan conflict. As most of them agree, the China – Taiwan conflict was created as a result of historical remnants and present realities. Romberg (2007) believes that China is identifying the conflict with Taiwan as a trace of civil war and a relic of the cold war. In terms of the theoretical perspective of this issue, Shan Wu (2010) attempts to explain the cross-strait relations and

the current tension between Taiwan, China, and the United States within the framework of nine theories. These nine theories do belong to different research traditions. Wu explains the vote-maximizing model that emphasizes rationality and structure between the making of Taiwan and at the same time China's motive behind reintegrating it. He brings in the political psychology approach and constructivism focus to explain the cultural closeness of the two nations. The international system theory and the strategic triangle model are applications of established paradigms to the study of Cross-Strait relations between the three nations. In his study, Wu has also attempted to align the integration theory, divided-nation model, and developmental state approach to explain the constraint between Taiwan, China, and the United States. But it is doubtful if the aforementioned theories cannot be easily synthesized to the Taiwan - China issue. It is impossible to talk about cross-strait relations without taking the perspective of the Washington-Taipei-Beijing triangle. Therefore, WU suggests using the strategic triangle approach. He suggests that it is the best theory to explain the current triangle. Washington is taking the role of an 'unintended pivot', torn between Taipei and Beijing, also the US makes tilts between the two Chinese states from time to time and their next move is not very clear. It may not reap strategic benefits, but mainly follow the rhythm of its electoral cycles, which coincide with Taiwan's presidential cycles. Wu applies the vote-maximizing model here. As much as the American politicians, their Taiwan counterparts are also concerned with gathering the maximum electoral support to remain in power. On the other hand, even without genuine electoral mechanisms, Beijing's leadership is also primarily concerned with its power base and formulating the Taiwan policy accordingly. This theory explains the contradicting interests of the three parties.

When looking closely at the historical context, this statement becomes fairly agreeable. In the present scenario, attaching Taiwan to the mainland is one of

China's vital political interests. Especially in this instance where the US involvement challenges China's stance towards Taiwan. Alternatively, there are bigger problems hidden within the issue of Taiwan, China's underlying motive of changing the US lead world order takes priority among these subordinate interests.

As Mao Zedong states "The small issue is Taiwan but the big issue is the World". This statement reflects the idea that China could use Taiwan as a strategy or as an approach to achieve bigger and more complex objectives which undoubtedly will alert the US interests. China sees the issue of Taiwan as a way to challenge the US and its role as the dominant power in the current world order (Mckennen and Zeng, 2012). It is very vital to understand that the Taiwan issue and its overlapping strategic importance will be crucial in deciding how the United States and the PRC would act in the future. It will also explain how their mutual interests in preserving their balance of power would prosper in the Asian region (Watchman, 2007).

In that context, it is important to identify the current international status of Taiwan. From the perspective of China, Taiwan is a breakaway province that has historical and strong demographic ties to China. But according to the Taiwan Policy, Taiwan is more than a province of China and it completes all the characteristics to be a sovereign state with its very own constitution and democratic governing system. (de Torri, 2020). But since many countries have given in to the ambiguity of the clashing perspectives of China and Taiwan, it is clear Taiwan still has to remain within its unclear legal status. The obscurity of the status of Taiwan goes way back in history. As Alan. M. Watchman (2007) explains that Taiwan did not appear on Chinese documents until the late Ming period. The island was not included in the Chinese maps until the time of the great Quing emperor and many early emperors dismissed the island as an insignificant piece of land.

According to the records of Xiaminn (2004), the great Qing emperor dismissed Taiwan stating that it is “no bigger than a ball of mud and the dominion would gain nothing from processing it”. It is interesting how the neglected island of Taiwan became one of the most critical strategic interests of China later in the day.

Anderson and Berger (2007) identify a few major reasons for China’s fraught need of unifying Taiwan. Currently, Taiwan's assets are more than just a territory to China. As a result of 19th and 20th-century colonization, China was divided by outside powers and Taiwan represented the final piece of territory for China to overcome the “Century of Humiliation” that resulted from the division. Taiwan also represents a long-desired traditional requirement of China. Romberg (2007) elaborates that China is on a journey of regaining its lost self-respect. Taiwan plays a major role in the path of re-achieving Chinese unity. Therefore, China progressively believes that Taiwan should accept the Chinese unification policy under its traditional and historical roots.

Taiwan has become one of the most vital strategic points of the Asian region in the eyes of the United States. The sudden surge of Chinese power has complicated the China-US interests in the region, more than it was ever before. Both the US and China have entwining yet conflicting interests in Taiwan. After the cold war, the geopolitical value of Taiwan had considerably decreased. (Peterson Institute, 200). Since the US is trying to create a constructive relationship with China in political and economic aspects, they were compelled to maintain a neutral relationship with Taiwan. Nevertheless, the US maintains its long-standing bilateral relations with Taiwan in terms of defense and economy. (Henson and Quinn, 2010). Because of these close relations, the US is in a threat with facing Chinese military might. This doesn’t discourage them from involving in the China Taiwan issue or supporting

Taiwan as an ally. (Mann and Tylor, 2006). The US and Taiwan have a strong historical relationship. With Taiwan's current progressive democratic governing system and its rising economy, the US predicts Taiwan to be the last hope of promoting the American lead western legacy in the Asian region. (Romberg, 2007). In this setting, China is intimidated by the progressive relations between Taipei and Washington. Especially because China has finally decided to take coercive measures for Taiwan's unification. According to the recent reports by BBC (2021), the tensions between Taiwan and China have escalated to their worst after 40 years. Beijing is getting more and more aware of the fact that Taiwan is moving towards a formal declaration of independence. Since American President Joe Biden has agreed to sell weapons to Taiwan, China is more alarmed about the State's growing robust relationship with the Taiwanese government. Since China has decided to execute "use of force" against Taiwan and Taiwan is also gradually occupying itself with arms with the military assistance of Washington, there are prospects of the emergence of war. Since the Taiwan issue is a central factor to decide such an illustration, it is quite vital to review Washington's relationship with Taipei. Since many scholars haven't paid much attention to analyzing the dimensions of certain US policies and some of the hidden interests of such plans, this study will specifically address the literature gap in that area.

Methodology

This paper was written based on the secondary data that has been used to construct and demonstrate the objectives of the study. Therefore, qualitative methodology was chosen as the predominant method of data collection and analysis. Online journal articles and web articles that are found through desktop research were used as preliminary data sources for this study. Apart from those materials; books, videos, audio documentaries, and podcasts were used as additional resources to develop the findings. Mainly, this paper was

based on the secondary data that has been available and retrieved through internet research. Standard content analyzing methods were used to analyze the collected data. As a cause of primary reading and evaluation of available data, the research questions were formed to support the research hypothesis. Then the selected, suitable data were subjected to attentive analysis and they were structured to answer the research questions and fulfill the research objectives. When arranging the data, the most relevant data basis was used as an effective technique to easily obtain the findings. There was much detailed research done within the study scheme of the China - Taiwan conflict but this particular study is attempting to address the research gap in the scheme involvement of the United States and their strategic motive behind acting as a pivot in the China - Taiwan conflict.

Data Presentation and Analysis

China's current invasive policy toward Taiwan's unification has captured recent global attention. The contradictory views regarding the island's status have complicated the China – Taiwan relations over the years and recently with China's coercive policies, the bilateral relations have turned into greater turmoil. Chinese policymakers believe that Taiwan should be unified with its mainland respecting its historical and cultural roots while Taiwanese people strongly state that Taiwan has a right to become an independent nation. (Mu Chunshan, 2021). Therefore, it is important to see the historical roots behind the division of China and Taiwan. According to Richardson and Ming (2018), Taiwan was not among the active interests of China before its imperialist period. Taiwan was ruled by the Qing Dynasty between the periods 1683-1895 straight after a brief period where it was governed as a Dutch colony. Taiwan was populated mostly by Chinese migrants that came from different regions of China. They used Taiwan as a destination to settle after escaping

adversities from their places of origin. The diverse demography of Taiwan is a result of such migrations. (Hearnfield, 2020).

In 1895 Taiwan was given over to Japan by the Qing dynasty after the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese war. After the World War I, China again regained the control of all its lost territories including Taiwan and with the consent of the ally parties China began to rule Taiwan again but within a short period of time a Civil war broke out between the Chiang Kai-shek's troops and Mao Zedong's Communist armies (Leonan, 2005). Facing the defeat of the Civil war, Chiang Kai- Shek's remaining troops and the supporters of the Kuomintang (KMT) government fled to Taiwan in 1949. This point can be identified as the formal division between Taiwan and China. (Romberg, 2007). Thereafter, the Chinese communist party took over the power of the mainland and formed the People's Republic of China as a nationalist government. This Nationalist government evacuated the recognition of Taiwan and its separate governing system known as the Republic of China (ROC). After the separation, Taiwan started to adopt a democratic governing system under Chiang's son, Ching Kuo, and later under President Lee Teng- Hui (Mu Chunshan, 2021). Under these leaders, Taiwan embraced constitutional changes within a democratic layout. This democratic system was completely different from the governing system of the mainland and it was close to the western and American ideologies. As a result of promoting western ideologies, Taiwan progressively gained US support. (Henson and Quinn, 2010).

China attempted to initiate positive relations with Taiwan and brought out a strategy known as "One Country Two Systems", the same approach they used to unify Hong Kong. Under this technique, the PRC planned to give significant autonomy to Taiwan if they accept the unification policy of China. Taiwan solely rejected the offer but liaised with economic and other diplomatic relations they had with China to some extent. (The Diplomat, 2021). But

China was more and more alarmed when the leaders of Taiwan took turns supporting independence. As a comeback China decided to use anti-secession law, emphasizing China's right to use "non-peaceful means" against Taiwan if it tried to "secede" from China. These series of events gradually created an environment for a possible escalation of war between China and Taiwan over unification.

According to Chung – Lai (2021), the current president of China, Xi Jinping has vowed a peaceful unification of China, conversely, he has also warned about Taiwanese Independence on several occasions. “Current Taiwanese government is the strongest enemy of Chinese unification and the biggest hurdle in the way of a “great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” (Jinping, 2021). These sorts of statements explain how China is threatened by the Taiwanese efforts for independence. It is also important to review Taiwan’s recent political perspective regarding the Chinese unification policy. According to recent opinion polls conducted in Taiwan, more than 55.7% percent of the total Taiwanese population supports countries’ independence. (PEW research center, 2020), Taiwanese people believe that they have a unique national identity that is separated from the Chinese national identity. Under the PEW research, the majority of the Taiwanese population supports more economic relations and less political relations with China. Compared to the opposing Taiwanese attitude towards China, Taiwanese people encourage fruitful relations with Washington. Taiwanese believe maintaining optimistic relations with the US would push their country towards independence and away from Chinese influence. (Devlin and Haung, 2020).

As Blackwill and Zelikow (2021) explain, as long as Taiwan remains independent and unconquered, China’s dream of national greatness can never be realized. There are a few other reasons behind China’s desperate attempts to unify Taiwan. In the past, China sought to be the largest trading partner of

Taiwan and they largely depended upon the Chinese economy (Cameron, 2020). But with its newly booming economy, day by day Taiwan is becoming less dependent on the Chinese economy. This introduces the novel phenomenon of “reverse dependence” which explains the growing Chinese economic dependency on Taiwan. In the current context, Taiwan exports large amounts of tech equipment to China which are essential for them in their trade rivalry against the US. In past years Taiwan developed its economy in many sectors including tourism and investments and gradually weaned away from Chinese economic dominance. (Wuang- Leng and Harrold, 2020). Since Taiwanese economic development has complimented their motives for gaining total independence, China had to settle for another strategy to fulfill its interests. Therefore, Beijing decided to adopt a strategy of military provocation and coercion, combined with an assertive global diplomatic isolation campaign, all aimed to force the Taiwanese people to give up their resistance to unification. (Xiaowe, 2020). China’s military harassment of Taiwan is seemingly increasing by the day. Taiwan is threatened, but they are strongly holding its stance toward full independence in a possible threat of war. According to the closest incident, in October 2021, China’s air force violated the air defense identification zone of Taiwan while PRC vessels started to increasingly drift within the Taiwan waters. With these developing aerial and naval skirmishes, president Xi continuously refuses to rule out the use of force and settle the unification through peaceful means. (Sheng, 2020)

The United States plays an active role in the belligerence between China and Taiwan. It is fair to believe that Taiwan often becomes a political football between China and the US. (The Diplomat, 2021). The US involvement does not limit to controlling the war between China and Taiwan but it includes some underhanded objectives. For years the US has stood on the ground of Taiwan as a great ally and through this, they have implied their alliance with Taiwan

as a means of security. As Garner (2019) explains, the US is worried about the defense of Taiwan as much as the Taiwanese themselves. This alliance has always concerned China. Hence, Beijing has urged Washington several times to “be cautious in word and deed,” to “stop moving chess pieces around” in the region, and to “stop flexing its military muscles around China under the cover-up of Taiwan” (Reuters, 2021).

Even though the relations between China and the US have been complex over the years, in the 1970’s Washington attempted to normalize the bilateral relations with China under the Shanghai Communique. After establishing formal relations with the PRC, the US started to recognize the one-China policy. Against this backdrop, China has demanded the US to wean its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Under this implication, PRC has urged the States to withdraw their troops that are stationed in Taiwan, but the US has refused to promise an exact date for this military withdrawal unless PRC gives up the notion of using force for the Taiwan unification. (Kamalath, 2020). In fact, the US never stopped giving military assistance or weapon aid to Taiwan. As an example, over the past year, the US has maintained special operation units in Taiwan and deployed contingents of US Marines amidst the Chinese aggression in the Taiwanese Air Defense Zone. Therefore, we could suggest that the United States secretly supports the possible escalation of war between China and Taiwan. Since Taiwan is not geopolitically or economically significant to the US, then it is important to identify the real strategic motive behind the US involvement in the China – Taiwan Conflict.

One possible motive behind the States’ expectations of the China- Taiwan war is distracting China from their economic diplomacy. There is no doubt that China is close to overthrowing the US from its long-held economic and trade dominance. Therefore, a possible range war could hold back China from achieving its long-awaited global economic authority. Consequently, a

possible war would give a rest to the continuous trade war between US and China. It is fairly believed that this trade war itself was created by the US by Washington's fear of losing to China". (PaMello, 2020). Since, the Taiwan-China war could happen on the brink of miscalculation (Chung- Lai, 2021), there is a fair prediction that if China initiates a war, Washington would be ready to provide defense and assist Taiwan in terms of Military. On the brink of an uncalled war, China will have to utilize many resources and funds that would eventually affect its economic expansionism in the long run. This probably will resonate to challenge Xi's narrative on China's rise. Unlike China, the US considers the importance of preserving its long-held national image as the superior nation of the world. Undoubtedly, Xi's statement which says "China rises and the US falls" has hurt the State's pride.

On the other hand, with the possible rise of Chinese dominance, Washington sees an immediate threat in the spread of Communist ideology. Holding Taiwan's power makes more sense at this juncture to Washington. Because, as a country that supports western ideologies and diplomatic and liberal principles, Taiwan demonstrates wider importance to the United States. Ironically a war between Taiwan and China could lead to an underlying ideological war between the US and China. Therefore, we could possibly assume that the US would support the war between Taiwan and China to promote and protect their own ideological and strategic interests in the region.

Unlike the US, China is known for peaceful means of expansionist policies. But when it comes to the Taiwan issue, China is invested in using coercive measures to nullify Taiwan's resistance to unification. On the surface, it looks like the US is completely supporting a non-military settlement, contradicting it as it seems they keep assisting Taiwan in military aspects. This implies a different picture. Since China has been keen on maintaining its national image as a peaceful nation, a rival war against its people over territory could change

its total global perception. As a country that devolved from its peaceful policies, such a war could imply great damage to the national image of China. Interestingly this would favor the US image in return. Therefore as Garcia (2021) explains China – the Taiwan issue could be a secret opportunity for the United States to regain its lost trust and allies in the Asian region. Washington has openly supported China’s One China or the unification policy but has always supported Taiwan to remain independent as a sovereign state. The US has continued to assert Taiwan economically through initiating FTAs and backing its economic prosperity. The US has also assisted Taiwan diplomatically to increase its power of the international voice which indirectly supports their independence. These facts justify the argument that the US never wanted Taiwan to be unified with China but to remain as an independent liberal state in Asia.

Conclusion

After the formal division in 1949, Taiwan operated as a separate democratic government apart from the political control of the PRC. But the PRC strongly believed that Taiwan should be a legitimate part of mainland China. Taiwan was completely against this offer and the China – Taiwan conflict emerged as a result of Taiwanese resistance to Chinese unification efforts which followed after the one “One China Two Systems” policy. China has always considered Taiwan's unification as a strong need for its national interest. They believed that Taiwan was the only hurdle in the way of achieving national unity. Since peaceful measures for unification showed no success, China decided to use coercive methods as the last resort to achieve its target. In this background, there is a strong possibility of an escalation of war between China and Taiwan as a matter of miscalculation and initiation from either of the parties.

The United States plays a major role in the conflict between Taiwan and China as an outside power. The US works according to a unique agenda to fulfill its very own national interests and Washington clearly has some concealed motives to achieve, from the rivalry between Taiwan and China. Even though China-US relations have always been complex, the US has maintained vigorous relations with Taiwan since the creation of the Republic of China. The US has closely maintained diplomatic and economic relations with Taiwan and they have militarily assisted Taiwan over the unification issue in many instances. Compared to other strategic interest points, Taiwan holds a low significance to Washington, but many US strategists believe that Taiwan could be the only weak spot of China, that the US could use to counterattack China in the present context. The US believes that a war between the two countries could hinder blooming Chinese expansionist policies and their growing economic prosperity. A range war in the region could directly favor the US in their economic competition and trade war against China. Since Taiwan is following liberal democratic policies, the US believes that Taiwan could be the only way of preserving and protecting the American lead western ideologies in the region. Therefore, Washington provides a significant interest to protect Taiwan from any Chinese invasion. On the other hand, the United States secretly supports Taiwanese efforts to achieve independence. Washington believes China's war against Taiwan would be a war against its people. This could transform the Chinese image as a peaceful nation and as a cross benefit, this war would allow the United States to put Chinese military capabilities to test and show their dominance in wars. It is clear on the surface that the US wouldn't support a military outbreak but it's not a secret that they are ready to assist Taiwan in a possible outbreak of war. Therefore, in the end, the China-Taiwan war holds the possibility of becoming an ideological conflict between the United States and China. Washington's Taiwan Strategy

would eventually decide the power dominance between the United States and China in the Asian region.

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Human Rights Violations in Contemporary China

P.G.A. Sandeepani¹

Abstract

Human rights give people the freedom to choose how they live, how they express themselves. Human rights are universal, inalienable, interconnected, indivisible and non-discriminatory. If all of these words were put together, the core meaning of it is that it applies to all and cannot be taken away from someone. But, the 1.9 billion people in China would have a different opinion on their human rights. China: the world's most populated country has been accused as one of the largest human rights violators. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a historic document which outlined the rights and freedom that everyone is entitled to. Among the 30 articles in the UDHR, China has violated many of them. Since the President Xi Jinping came in to power in 2013, the government has continued to conduct many human rights violations. China has been subjected to many criticisms. On the other hand, many have seen China as a threat to international human rights system too. Also, many scholars have stated that China is using her power in the United Nations to prevent discussions related to human rights issues. This article is mainly focused on examining and identifying the widely violated human rights in contemporary China to provide a better understanding and to show how the international community has responded to these human rights violations. This study is a qualitative study based on secondary data. The study has focused on human rights violations during Xi Jinping's rule. The study has found that there have been massive human rights violations in Hong Kong and Xingjian and human rights defenders' rights have been violated as well. The widely violated human rights include, right to life, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, freedom for arbitrary arrest and detainment, and freedom from torture and degrading treatment, right to privacy, freedom of movement. Also when analyzing the world's response, studies have found that many countries and the UN has responded to these in different ways, some have spoken up against these while some have supported or ignored China's human rights violations.

Keywords: *China, Human Rights, United Nations, UDHR, Xi Jinping*

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Introduction

According to the United Nations, “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status”. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the document that presents all the rights and freedoms of every human. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without any discrimination. Like many other countries, China has also ratified the UDHR.

The People’s Republic of China has experienced rapid and important changes in its political, economic, and societal realms over the past years. But, when considering the world’s most populated country’s human rights situation, China has left recognizable concerns related to human rights issues. The main problem is most of the violations are done by the government itself. Since Xi Jinping began his presidency in March 2013, widespread human rights violations in China have been documented.

China’s human rights records have been criticized for years. The justice system in China is largely under the Chinese communist party’s control and leadership. The Chinese communist party is particularly, wary of unsanctioned collective activity related to sensitive groups, such as religious and labor groups, ethnic minorities, political dissidents, and human rights activists. China is often accused of using heavy-handed tactics against protesters (Lum & Weber, 2019). Furthermore, there have been complaints over the aggressive handling of large pro-democratic protests in Hong Kong over the years. In China, religious freedom, discrimination against ethnic minorities such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians, freedom of expression, LGBT people’s rights, workers’ freedom of association, women’s rights, and many other rights are under threat.

Regardless of being a signatory or ratification of international human rights instruments, China has shown no significant progress in following them. Despite official recognition and the fact that human rights are written into the constitution since 2004, the concept and topic remain highly sensitive in China. As depicted above, China has also violated many UDHR articles. Therefore, the main aim of this article is to identify and provide a better understanding of contemporary China's domestic human rights violations and to examine what are the responses of the international community to these human rights violations.

Literature Review

China's evolving approach to human rights has been shaped by the various threads of its cultural and political traditions and the distinctive time and manner in which it adapted that traditional inheritance in the process of integrating into the global modern political and economic system which has pfcourse itself continued to evolve (Biddulph & Rosenweig, 2019). As Subedi (2015) states, although Communist China has embraced capitalism by liberalizing its economy, joining the WTO, and by recognizing private entrepreneurship and the right to private property, it has not been an enthusiastic partner when it comes to promoting and protecting human rights. There is an apprehension in the democratic world about the possible impact of the economic rise of China on the UN human rights agenda.

As Lum (2017) shows the era of Hu Jintao (Xi's predecessor, who was China's leader from 2002 to 2012) was marked by serious human rights abuses. At the same time, the era was significant for an emerging civil society consisted with non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups, a growing number of human rights activists and lawyers, and the rise of limited investigative

reporting and public discourse on social media platforms. As he explains, despite moving forward with some policies aimed at reducing abuses and making the government more transparent and responsive, Xi has implemented new laws that appear to strengthen the role of the Communist Party and the state, over a wide range of social and civil society activities in the name of national security and instated greater government control over the media and the Internet.

In Amnesty International's submission for the UN periodic review (UPR) 2018, they discuss how, even two decades after becoming a signatory to the ICCPR and despite accepting recommendations in this regard, China has shown no significant progress towards its ratification. It further explains that China continues to severely repress a range of human rights, such as freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information, as well as the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, religion and belief, to fair trial and non-refoulement, freedom from arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment and discrimination.

Focusing on the domestic aspect, Paul Chaney (2017) examines religious freedom in the People's Republic of China using a critical frame analysis of state and civil society organizations' (CSOs) policy discourse associated with the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The findings show how indigenous Chinese CSOs' input to the UPR is limited. Their voice is muted. According to him, international CSOs are highly critical of what they see as state failure in upholding religious freedom. The analysis reveals a significant disjuncture between the policy discourse of international CSOs and the CCP.

According to BBC, human rights campaigners say that China continues to target activists and their family members with harassment, imprisonment, and torture. The death of Nobel Peace Prize Winner Laureate Liu Xiaobo in police

custody in 2017 is among such issues. After this China's human rights violations became more visible including violations such as increased internet censorship, lack of women's and workers' rights, repression of minority groups, and imprisonment of human rights defenders.

According to Human Rights Watch (2018), China's growing global influence means many of its rights violations now have international implications. As they further describe, in June 2018, the European Union failed for the first time ever to deliver a statement under a standing agenda item at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) regarding country situations requiring the council's attention.

As Richardson (2020) discusses, in recent years, the Chinese government has become considerably more active in a wide range of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, including in the global human rights system. The author further explains that particularly under President Xi Jinping's leadership, the Chinese government does not merely seek to neutralize the UN Human rights mechanisms' scrutiny of China, it also aspires to neutralize the ability of that system to hold any government accountable for serious human rights violations. Increasingly, Beijing pursues rights-free development worldwide and tries to exploit the openness of institutions in democracies to impose its worldview and silence its critics. This shows how China's human rights violations have become a threat to human rights globally as well.

Piccone (2018) examines China's behavior at the United Nations, including seven specific votes at the UN Human Rights Council from 2016-to 2018, as well as gives examples beyond the Council where China has influenced human rights decision-making at the UN and elsewhere. The paper then considers how other states, including swing states that alternate between Western and non-Western positions, are responding to or working alongside China's more

assertive behavior on human rights. He suggests that states with important economic and political ties to Beijing are more likely to mute any criticism of China's human rights record and/or support its efforts to weaken the international human rights system. As a growing major power, China should focus on promoting human rights both domestically and internationally instead of undermining them.

Methodology

Human rights violations in China are a widely discussed topic in the contemporary international system. This article is a qualitative study mainly based on secondary data collected through books, research papers, journals, online reports, online articles, and news websites. Since this study is related to violations of human rights, the annual reports from the UN, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have been used to provide a better understanding of China's human rights violations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

China's Human Rights Violations

China adopted human rights to its constitution in 2004. Yet, the practice of the rights is rare to see. The Government has an obligation to respect and protect individual rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). China also signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on 27 October 1997 and ratified it on 27 March 2001, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), acceded to by China on 29 December 1981 and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) signed on 12 December 1986 and ratified on 2 March 1992. Most of the time China has violated UDHR articles such as the right to

life, liberty, and personal security; freedom from torture and degrading treatment; the right to peaceful assembly; freedom of arbitrary arrest and exile; right to a fair public hearing; freedom of interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence; freedom of belief and religion; etc. (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

When discussing the freedom of religion in China, Xinjiang's case is the best example to explain it. Not only freedom of belief and religion but also freedom from arbitrary arrest and exile; freedom from interference with privacy; freedom from torture; etc. have also been violated by the Chinese government. These people continue to face discrimination and restrictions on their freedom. The Chinese government began waging a "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Extremism" in Xinjiang in 2014. As UDHR explains, everyone has the freedom to change, and manifest their religion but China takes away that right. Authorities subject Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Turkic Muslims, and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang to intrusive surveillance, arbitrary detention, and forced indoctrination, forced labor by which they violate three of the UDHR articles at once. Also, coercive population control has also been a part of this. By 2020, it is estimated that more than 1 million people (Kirby, 2020) are being held in internment camps, clearly designed to erase religious and ethnic identities. Turkic Muslims are being forced to learn Mandarin Chinese, praise the government and party and abandon many aspects of their distinct identity. Those who resist or are deemed to have failed to "learn" are punished. Authorities have recalled passports throughout the region and to travel from one town to another by violating the freedom of movement, people have to apply for permission and go through checkpoints (Human Rights Watch, 2019). All of the above are violating article 02 of

UDHR which clearly states that no one can be discriminated against based on their differences.

As seen in the case of Xinjiang, the freedom of belief in China is challenged gravely by the government's violation of the right. Furthermore, the government restricts religious practice to five officially recognized religions on officially approved premises. Authorities retain control over religious bodies' personnel appointments, publications, finances, and seminary applications. The government classifies many religious groups outside its control as "evil cults," and subjects' members to police harassment, torture, arbitrary detention, and imprisonment. Also, in its continuing campaign to crack down on Islamic traditions, authorities in Gansu, Ningxia, and other Hui Muslim areas, demolished domes on mosques and banned the public use of Arabic script in 2019.

The situation in Hong Kong also cannot be neglected. Hong Kong is a special administrative region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. As per many reports, Beijing's assault on Hong Kong's freedoms, particularly the rights to free expression, association, and political participation worsened considerably in 2018. The Hong Kong and Chinese governments have harassed people for peaceful pro-independence speeches. In 2019 from June to the year's end, Hong Kong experienced frequent protests, with some exceeding more than one million participants. Most protesters were peaceful, but some were engaged in violence and vandalism. But this caused significant human rights issues such as police brutality against protesters and persons in custody; arbitrary arrest; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association (State, 2020). The government took steps to prosecute and punish officials who committed human rights abuses but resisted widespread calls for a special inquiry into alleged police brutality that

occurred during the demonstrations. China unveiled new security law for Hong Kong in late June 2020. The text provided a far-reaching blueprint for the authorities and the courts to suppress the city's protest movement and for China's national security apparatus to pervade many layers of Hong Kong's society (Buckley, Bradsher, & May, 2020) The new law threatens the basic human rights of all Hong Kong people, including freedom of speech and assembly. Among other provisions, the new law deeply undermines the city's independent judiciary. Hong Kong's chief executive would be able to choose by himself which judges to hear security cases and where the new security law conflicts with existing Hong Kong law, the new law will prevail. Under the new national security law, the central Chinese government is able to establish its own intelligence-gathering national security branch in Hong Kong. This has caused many criticisms against China internationally.

Furthermore, the government has frequently imprisoned people who have spoken about politically sensitive topics (BBC, 2015). Human rights defenders in China continue to face discrimination. Prominent human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, who launched a memoir detailing his experience of enforced disappearance, torture, and other ill-treatment and illegal house arrest, was forcibly disappeared in August 2017 violating their right to freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention. Authorities also tried to silence Chinese human rights defenders, harassing and detaining their families in China. In January 2018, Guangzhou authorities forcibly disappeared Li Huaiping, wife of Chen Xiaoping, a US-based journalist for the Chinese language mirror media group (Human Rights Watch, 2018) violating the freedom of interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence. Authorities retaliated against citizen journalists and NGO workers reporting on human rights violations. In 2019, they detained Wei Zhili, Ke Changbing, and Yang Zhengjun, editors of

a Chinese labor rights website in Guangzhou. Huang Qi, the co-founder of 64tianwang.com, a website that reports and documents protests in China, was sentenced to 12 years in prison (Amnesty International, 2019). These incidents of human right defenders in Hong Kong prove Beijing's cruel actions against freedom of expression, right to privacy, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, and how, day by day, the government strengthen its control over the right to association and peaceful assembly.

Even during the pandemic, internet censorship continued in China. Medical professionals were targeted claiming they spread 'false rumors'. Even journalists were punished by the government for revealing the details of the Corona outbreak (Zhong & Mozur, 2021). According to the Human Rights Watch (2020), for years China has limited access to foreign TV and publications. The government blocked hundreds of websites and targeted users of apps such as WeChat. Censors also target Chinese social media. In January 2019, Chinese users had reported that they had been threatened for being active on Twitter which had officially banned in the country. Meanwhile, the government launched a disinformation campaign on Twitter and Facebook that frames Hong Kong's protesters as violent and extreme, prompting the platforms to suspend hundreds of accounts originating in China. By doing all these, China violates the freedom of expression and the right to receive and impart information and ideas.

International Response towards China's Human Rights Violations

China's human rights violations have been subjected to many international criticisms. Chinese authorities have long pushed back against foreign concern for human rights as an infringement on its sovereignty (Human Rights Watch, 2020). When considering the United Nations in July 2019, at the UN Human Rights Council, 25 governments have joined together for the first time in such

numbers to express concern about the extraordinary crackdown in Xinjiang. In October 2019, at the UN General Assembly, the United Kingdom read aloud a parallel statement regarding a similar coalition of governments, but the initial hesitation towards these kinds of actions showed the great reluctance of even the most committed countries to challenge China frontally. In response to these two instances of collective criticism, the Chinese government organized its own joint statements of support in which 54 governments signed including infamous human rights violators such as Russia, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, Belarus, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia. In December 2021, the UN has announced that it is planning to issue a report on Xingjian. Furthermore, UNHCR has sent out letters to many international companies such as textile companies, about their potential use of forced labor in China using the Xingjian people and urged them to conduct reviews of their supply chains (Bussiness and Human Rights Resource Center, 2021).

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) members such as Turkey and Albania supported the call for an independent UN assessment in Xinjiang. Qatar withdrew from China's counter-statement, while many other Muslim countries did nothing. In total, about half of the OIC member states declined to sign China's attempts to whitewash its record in Xinjiang. The projects like BRI, also have an influence on countries not to speak against China. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, for example, whose government is a major BRI recipient, said nothing about his fellow Muslims in Xinjiang as he visited Beijing. World leaders who visited China, including those who see themselves as human rights champions, have not performed significantly better. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron visited China in November 2019 but made no public mention of human rights.

In October 2019, the United States imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials “believed to be responsible for or complicit in” the detention of Muslims in Xinjiang. It also blacklisted more than two dozen Chinese companies and agencies linked to abuses in the region, including surveillance technology manufacturers and Xinjiang’s public security bureau, effectively blocking them from buying U.S. products. In June 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed legislation that was passed with overwhelming support from Congress, mandating that individuals face sanctions for oppressing Uyghurs. The law also mentioned that U.S. businesses and individuals selling products to or operating in Xinjiang must ensure that their activities don’t contribute to human rights violations, including the use of forced labor (Maizland, 2020). Also in 2021, the USA imposed trade restrictions on more than 30 Chinese entities and announced a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing due to human rights violations (Macias, 2021).

European governments have begun to recognize China’s threat to the global human rights system. The European Union has made several strong statements on Xinjiang at the Human Rights Council, including one that became the basis for the largest joint governmental statement that China has ever faced. In Hong Kong's new security law, the German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas defended the autonomy of Hong Kong, asserting that "the freedom of expression and assembly and also democratic debate in Hong Kong must continue to be respected in the future". Moreover, Japan decided to set up a nonpartisan group following China’s implementation of national security law in Hong Kong 2020. Moreover, it is reported that the country’s lawmakers were formulating plans to set up committees to protect Hong Kong people fleeing from Chinese pressure. Reportedly, Japan is also considering pursuing a legislative act to probe cases of Chinese human rights violations (Kirubakaran,

2020). Similarly, Canada has led more than 40 countries in expressing concerns over Xingjian, Hong Kong, and Tibet. Canada also urged the Chinese government to make an environment for independent observers to visit Xingjian (Aljazeera, 2021). Besides all of the positive responses to China's human rights violations, it is no secret that China is using its economic ties and continues to use its permanent seat on the UN Security Council to block important discussions of human rights issues.

Conclusion

Over the past few years under the regime of President Xi Jinping, the PRC has violated the human rights of its own people. Today China is violating many of the articles in the UDHR. Domestically, Hong Kong and Xingjian are the best examples that can be provided to prove China's human rights violations. The cases of human rights defenders have also brought the attention to the international level. Forced disappearance and interference with their families are the consequences of speaking about the government's human rights violations. Furthermore, the censorship in China is huge as well. People cannot express their opinions and do not have access to many sites on the internet. When considering all of these cases, China violates freedom of belief and religion, freedom of expression, assembly, right to life, freedom from torture and degrading treatment, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and freedom of interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence. These are the widely violated human rights in contemporary China.

Many international actors have responded to China's domestic human rights violations. But, it is frustrating that not many countries are willing to speak against China. It is clear that during the Xingjian case, even the Muslim countries have not shown their interest to speak up for Uyghur Muslims. In a

way, China's economic power must be playing a huge role in silencing other countries from responding to massive human rights violations. This study was built to provide a better understanding of China's widely violated human rights and how the international community has responded to these violations. In conclusion, it is clear that China is violating its own people's rights and even the international community has not been successful enough in preventing China from conducting human rights violations. However, the United Nations and the rest of the international community have a huge responsibility to take much stronger steps toward the Chinese government to stop these human rights violations.

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The Role of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a Potential Instrument for China's New Strategy: With Special Reference to the OBOR Project

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Abstract

China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), which connects China to two ends of Eurasia, Africa, and Oceania, was officially inaugurated in 2013 and it is the world's largest inter-continental infrastructure development project. Since connectivity necessitates financial support, China has undertaken a number of institution-building activities at both national and international levels in recent years, primarily in the financial and economic sectors, demonstrating a willingness to influence global economic governance. The establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in particular has drawn international attention, and it was announced by Beijing as part of a grand economic and diplomatic strategy aimed not only at resolving the country's domestic economic problems but also at promoting Chinese influence in the region and beyond, as well as at undermining US dominance in the regional and global economy. The AIIB is a broad-based multilateral agency that has embraced a commercially oriented approach to infrastructure funding by borrowing international governing standards. This paper attempts to examine Beijing's dual initiatives of the OBOR and the AIIB, explore the major driving forces behind them, and assess the impact of these two initiatives on regional and global economics, politics, and security, as well as their relationships. This article is a qualitative case study based on secondary data. The main sources of data collection include journal articles, reviews, annual reports, websites, etc. In terms of the study findings, the OBOR and AIIB efforts will inevitably have a substantial impact on the economic architecture in a number of key areas, which will have strategic repercussions in the region and around the world.

Keywords: *Asian Infrastructure Bank, One Belt One Road Initiative, China, Global economics, AIIB loans, Multilateral Development Bank*

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Introduction

In October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a new, China-led multilateral development bank that will promote interconnectivity and economic integration in the region and cooperate with existing multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The bank began its operations in January 2016 and presently has 86 recognized members all over the world (Cai, 2018). In the case of this bank, China owns half of the voting shares, giving the impression that the AIIB will serve the Chinese government's interests. Projects that promote sustainable infrastructure and support countries that aim to accomplish environmental and development goals are among the bank's top priorities (Callaghan, 2016). The AIIB's formation has received a lot of attention around the world, especially since many western countries have signed it as founding members. The bank supports regional connectivity initiatives as well as cross-border infrastructure projects for roads, trains, ports, energy pipelines, and telecommunications across Central Asia, as well as marine connections in Southeast Asia and the Middle East (Hsu, 2017). Private capital mobilization and supporting partnerships that boost private capital investment, such as those with other multilateral development banks, governments, and private financiers, are also goals of the bank.

The OBOR concept, also known as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, was first suggested by Chinese President Xi Jinping in September and October 2013 during his visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia. While the One Belt program covers countries along the ancient Silk Road, which runs through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, the One Road initiative covers South Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania,

and Africa (Cai, 2018). This article evaluates whether financial support for the OBOR through the AIIB can truly be defined as a win-win opportunity as stated in the official OBOR documents, or if the money flows are simply supporting China.

Methodology

The study is desk research which is predominantly based on qualitative secondary data retrieved from online journals and other sources such as e-books, articles on the subject available on the internet, books, research articles, and journal articles. This study has used some principal methodologies to examine the above-mentioned objectives and those objectives of the study will be achieved in the light of various information taken from secondary sources.

Literature Review

The literature review deals with previously written and published information regarding Beijing's dual initiatives of the OBOR and the AIIB. Above all, the BRI is a connectivity project, and the construction of new transport infrastructure, the creation of new channels where goods and services can be traded freely and the opening of cross-border economic zones lie, in fact, at the core of the geo-economics and geopolitical vision proposed by President Xi Jinping (Gabusi, 2017).

Connecting the Eurasian Continent with the Belt and Road Initiative

President Xi Jinping originally announced the concept of the "Silk Road Economic Belt" in September 2013 in Astana, Kazakhstan. In October of the same year, he proposed the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" in Jakarta, Indonesia. After an ADB working paper supporting a new "Silk Road" for

Asia (Bhattacharyay and De, 2009) was published in Chinese, the Chinese government began working on the notion in 2010 (Chan, 2016).

The BRI is a connectivity and cooperation project that spans Eurasia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and a portion of East Africa, including more than 60 nations. It is a systemic project of integration of national development strategies, officially presented at the Boao Forum in 2015 (Tiezzi, 2015), aimed at exploiting all market potentialities through promoting investment and consumption, creating demand and employment, and encouraging people-to-people exchanges (National Development and Reform Commission et al., 2015). The BRI is predicated on the assumption of a worldwide free trade framework and an open global economy. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will broaden and strengthen China's opening and mutually beneficial collaboration with the countries involved.

The official document presenting the BRI to the world highlights five pillars of the project: adherence to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence," which have been a cornerstone of China's foreign policy since at least the Bandung Conference in 1955; openness to cooperation with all willing states and international organizations; harmonious and inclusive character, because respect for different national strategies is at the core of its conception; conformity to market rules and regulations; and, finally, compliance with market rules and regulations (National Development and Reform Commission et al., 2015).

Indeed, a content study of the official text reveals that the words "common" and "cooperation" appear 25 and 136 times, respectively, in the official document (Ke, 2015, p. 2). China-Mongolia-Russia; Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar; China-Indochina; China-Pakistan; China-Central and West Asia (Pavličević, 2015); and China-Kazakhstan-Russia ("New Eurasian Land

Bridge”) are the six economic corridors that make up the “Belt” (Strategic Comments, 2015). Coastal China is connected to the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, as well as the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, via the oddly titled “Maritime Road”.

The original Silk Road routes, which were more of a labyrinth of diverse paths than straight lines across land and water, do not precisely correspond to the New Silk Roads. In line with former President Hu Jintao’s “Move West” policy began at the end of the 1990s, the BRI would encourage deeper integration of China’s coastal and inner regions (Economic Intelligence Unit, 2015). Indeed, the BRI would turn China’s “go west” policy into a “March West” strategy (in reaction to President Obama’s “pivot to Asia”), a concept first proposed by famous researcher Wang Jisi (Sun, 2013). In fact, the foreign economic policy serves as a lever for a more open China: in the north, Xinjiang would serve as a “window” to the West, with Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang serving as “bridges” to the Russian Far East; in the Southwest, Yunnan would serve as an economic “pivot” towards South and South-East Asia; on the coast, the Pearl River Delta would serve as a maritime hub; and in the west, cities such as Wu serves as a lever for a more open China (National Reform Commission et al., 2015).

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank:

The China Center for International Economic Exchange first proposed the AIIB as an International Financial Institution (IFI) that would be founded and led by China in early 2013. (Ren, 2016). A memorandum of understanding was signed by 21 countries in Beijing in October 2014. Originally intended to be a regional bank, the AIIB gained global status on March 12, 2015, when the United Kingdom (followed shortly by Germany, France, and Italy) opted to join as a founding member (Kamal and Gallagher, 2016). While criticizing

the UK, the US announced that it would not join the AIIB because of serious concerns about the bank's lack of transparency and global standards, as well as it feared that the AIIB could become a rival to the World Bank, posing a new Chinese challenge to the US-dominated liberal economic order (The Economist, 2015).

The AIIB worked closely with the IMF, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank in 2014 and 2015 (Chan, 2016), and by 2015, the bank had its Articles of Agreement in place, allowing it to begin operations in 2016. The bank which has \$100 billion in capital (making it a medium-sized Multilateral Development Bank (MDB)), is headquartered in Beijing (after Indonesia unsuccessfully lobbied for Jakarta), and it is led by Jin Liqun, a former Vice Minister of Finance, World Bank veteran, and the former vice president of the Asian Development Bank. China has the highest voting share (26.6 percent), vetoed over critical AIIB decisions that require a 75 percent supermajority, even though it appears that Beijing would be willing to accept a dilution of its vote if new members were admitted (Kynge and Pilling, 2017).

The AIIB's website (www.aiib.org) makes it apparent that the bank wants to operate as a true MDB, with policies and lending conditions set by a non-sitting board of governors (similar to the European Investment Bank) and based on the highest social and environmental criteria among MDB. The AIIB will invest in five areas: energy, transportation, rural development, urban development, and logistics, as well as in non-BRI projects (Gabusi, 2017).

According to the bank's president, the AIIB should have a lean and efficient structure (Miller, 2016), with no more than 500-600 staff for an annual loan approval volume of US\$15 billion in comparison, the ADB has approximately 3000 staff to disburse the same amount of funds, and the World Bank needs

approximately 10,000 staff to approve US\$ 40 billion in yearly loans (Chan, 2016).

The AIIB's foundation has been a huge diplomatic win for China (Hsu, 2017), far exceeding Beijing's expectations. In fact, despite China's initial intention to use the bank solely to serve Beijing's interests in the BRI's implementation, the AIIB was eventually firmly embedded in the global financial architecture for development, thanks to the warm response of the Europeans, and thus became just another "boring bank" like the others (Miller, 2016). Playing by the rules became a necessity, especially following the United States' reluctance to join because Europe would have backed only an institution that could demonstrate a serious commitment to the highest (Western) standards.

Data Presentation and Analysis

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October 2013, he suggested the OBOR concept, which is officially called the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-First Century Maritime Silk Road. While the One Belt program covers countries along the ancient Silk Road, which runs through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, the One Road initiative covers South Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania, and Africa (see OBOR Map).

Map 01: OBOR Map



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/OBOR-Map-by-XFA-Xinhua-Finance-Agency-2017a-Xinhua-2017_fig1_323119134

While nearly 60 nations are reported to be located along the OBOR initiative's route (see Table 1), many more countries beyond the OBOR route are either engaged in OBOR initiatives or are considering doing so.

Because China's development banks already disburse more funding on a bilateral basis, Beijing's supply of public goods through the AIIB has more political than economic significance as a vehicle to promote China's interests and grow its influence in a global arena (Wang H., 2014, p. 15).

Table 01: Loans Approved by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, June 2016–May 2017

Approval date	Country	Project	Sector	Loan (US\$m)	Co-financing ^a (US\$m)	BRI corridor (author's classification)
22.03.2017	Indonesia	Dam Operational Improvement and Safety – Phase II	Multi-sector	125	WB (125)	Maritime Road
22.03.2017	Indonesia	Regional Infrastructure Development Fund	Multi-sector	100	WB (100)	Maritime Road
22.03.2017	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Natural Gas Infrastructure and Efficiency Improvement	Energy	60	ADB (167)	Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar
21.12.2016	Azerbaijan	Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline	Energy	600	WB (800) EBRD, EIB (2,100)	China–Central and West Asia
08.12.2016	Oman	Duqm Port Commercial Terminal and Operational Zone Development	Transport	265	SEZAD (88.33)	Maritime Road
08.12.2016	Oman	Railway System Preparation	Transport	36	OGLG (24)	Maritime Road
27.09.2016	Myanmar	Myingyan Power Plant	Energy	20	ADB (N.A.) IFC (N.A.)	Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar
27.09.2016	Pakistan	Tarbela 5 Hydropower Extension (T5HEP)	Energy	300	WB (390)	China–Pakistan
24.06.2016	Indonesia	National Slum Upgrading	Multi-sector	216.5	WB (216.5)	Maritime Road
24.06.2016	Pakistan	National Motorway M-4	Transport	100	WB (100)	China–Pakistan
24.06.2016	Bangladesh	Distribution System Upgrade & Expansion	Energy	165	–	Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar
24.06.2016	Tajikistan	Dushanbe–Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement	Transport	27.5	EBRD (62.5)	China–Central and West Asia

Source: www.aiib.org.

This perception is supported by a review of the bank's first year of operations. Table 1 lists all of the AIIB's 12 sanctioned loans at the time of writing (May 2017). Indonesia (3 projects), Bangladesh (2), Azerbaijan (1), Oman (2), Myanmar (1), Pakistan (2), and Tajikistan (2) are among the countries involved (1). Energy (Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, and Pakistan) and transportation (Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, and Pakistan) are the two main industries where loans are issued (Oman, Pakistan, and Tajikistan). The three projects in Indonesia, on the other hand, are multi-sectoral, indicating a degree of complexity.

To begin, all of the nations engaged are BRI countries and all of the projects can be linked to one of the six BRI corridors. The development of Duqm Port and the planning of Oman's railway system aims to establish transportation infrastructure in a country that might become the Persian Gulf's gateway to the Maritime Road's Indian Ocean segment. The loans to Jakarta target structural environmental fragilities in the country, with a focus on a dam, slums, and the creation of an appropriate national institutional framework for infrastructure development, making Indonesia the second-largest recipient of AIIB after Azerbaijan.

The second aspect that should be emphasized is, with the exception of Bangladesh's electricity distribution system, all projects are co-financed by other MDBs (i.e., the World Bank, the ADB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, and the International Finance Corporation, itself an arm of the World Bank). This co-financing totals US\$ 4.061 billion, with the European Banks receiving the largest portion (US\$ 2.163 billion), followed by the World Bank (US\$ 1.732 billion). When we consider the AIIB funds allocated for these projects which totaled US\$ 2.015 billion (roughly half of the money provided by MDB), it shows that the AIIB loans were generously supported by the Western-led MDB as a whole and that these projects were not dominated by China's narrow interests but were based on international credit standards.

It can be deduced that the AIIB is supporting Chinese geopolitical and economic interests based on an examination of the initial loans sanctioned by the bank in relation to China's trade flows with recipient countries. In actuality, all loans are given to BRI countries who have seen their trade ties with China, steadily improve in the recent years, as "China has been injecting money into [...] regional economies in order to boost their ability to spend on

Chinese industrial goods” (Wang, Z., 2015, p. 18). Furthermore, these seven countries are all rapidly expanding markets for Chinese industrial supply. Second, there is a key ally (Pakistan), a strategic country in the South China Sea (Indonesia), an important oil source (Oman), and a key partner (Myanmar, which China appears to have "lost" in 2011 when President Thein Sein presided over a transition to a semi-civilian government, opening the country to Western investments).

Conclusion

China, being the world’s largest trade nation, is vital to the international system. The People’s Republic of China has never actively initiated any program equivalent to the OBOR and the AIIB in its diplomatic history. Clearly, Beijing has moved to pursue these two agendas under its new leader, Xi Jinping, in direct reaction to both economic and diplomatic imperatives as a result of changing domestic and external realities. Meanwhile, it underscores Beijing’s growing confidence in using its fast-expanding power to address issues that are critical to the country’s economic well-being and national security.

The AIIB’s formation in 2016 marked a watershed moment in Asian economic regionalism. It is the world’s first infrastructure-focused Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) and China’s first international institution. It has also sparked a lot of debates. AIIB is a vehicle for Chinese geostrategic ambitions that may weaken good governance measures and compete with other MDBs in the region. China had to strike a balance between its own national economic ambitions and the desires of its partners for a transparent and commercially oriented bank while establishing the AIIB. The AIIB strategy of China has evolved over time. To assure the bank’s credibility, it

reached an agreement with member governments to establish an institution that follows worldwide best practices and collaborates with current MDBs.

Finally, the successful execution of the OBOR and AIIB programs implies that the developing world recognizes and accepts China's growth model, laying a firm platform for China to become a truly global superpower in the near future. In this regard, the OBOR and the AIIB are crucial components of Beijing's overarching global geo-economics and geopolitical agenda.

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Maritime Security and New Trends in International Law; Study Based on South Asia

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Abstract

This research is primarily a study of new trends in international law in maritime security. It also studies the emerging trends in maritime security and international law in the South Asian region. The study examines how to enhance maritime safety and security in order to ensure long-term peace, stability and economic growth in South Asia. The research problem is what are the current trends in modern international law on maritime security in the SAARC region?. Secondary data were collected by means of a literature review and reference sources such as legislation, international treaties, academic literature, newspaper articles and sources. The qualitative research methodology was primarily used this research. The research identified the emerging international laws on maritime security in South Asia. The study also underscored the importance of regional agreements on maritime security. Until now, The SAARC has failed to accomplish any significant achievements in building cooperation on serious issues like marine pollution, except for some declarations and a Road Map. The first steps taken by UNEP, in that respect are some developments at the policy level and a pair of guiding instruments that have come up as a result of cooperation among the coastal countries of South Asia. Even the and ecological, social and economic problems have been fundamentally confirmed. The study confirms that the direct involvement of various states in the region, in reaching legal agreements, is minimal. Therefore, the strength of maritime law can be seen in South Asia as a weakness in international law.

Keywords: *Maritime security, international law, south Asia. Legal issues*

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Introduction

Maritime security can be equally analyzed by recognizing relationships in other terms. Maritime security organizes a network of relationships, supersedes or underpins older and established concepts, as well as more recent concepts. At least four of these factors must be taken into account: marine strength, maritime security, the blue economy and human resilience. Each of these concepts provides an indication of the different dimensions of marine security. The concepts of maritime power and maritime safety are secular concepts of danger at sea, the latter two having arisen around the same time as maritime safety. A discourse on offshore security preceding the current “maritime security” debate is that of naval warfare, the importance of projecting maritime power and the concept of maritime power. Firmly grounded in a traditionalist understanding of national protection as the shelter of the survival of states, the concept of ‘sea power’ aims at setting out the role of naval powers and at elaborating strategies for their purpose. In peacetime the role of warships is mainly experienced in protecting the core sea lines of communication in order to ease trade and economic prosperity by way of deterrence as well as surveillance and interdiction. Marine energy is related to marine security in a number of ways. One is that the navy is a major player in maritime security. Moreover, discussions of sea power address on how far state forces should play outside their territorial waters, engage in other regions than their own and possess a presence in international waters.

The concept of “marine security” focuses on the safety of ships and marine facilities and focuses on protecting marine professionals and the marine environment. Maritime security is closely connected with the work of the International Maritime Organization and its Maritime Safety Committee. Notably oil spills recorded since the 1970s have brought up the profile of the

environmental dimension of marine safety, while events such as the 1991 Gulf War oil spill revealed the connection between traditional security and environmental fears. Safety concerns lie at the heart of marine safety, as it can involve environmental and cultural interests. Marine safety is also increasingly linked to marine security as the marine industry, shipping companies and its employees are simultaneously potential targets (e.g. hackers, terrorists or criminals) as well as potential perpetrators (engaging in maritime crimes such as trafficking in illicit persons, goods or weapons, or working with violent actors).

Marine security is also linked to economic development. Historically, oceans have always been vitally important to the economy. The majority of trade is done by sea, and fishing is a big industry. Global shipping and fisheries have grown into billions of dollars of industries. The commercial value of the oceans has moreover been increasingly re-assessed due to the economic potential of offshore resources, centrally fossil energy, and also seabed mining, as considerably as the economic promises of coastal tourism. Out of the core dimensions in the concept of blue economy, food protection and the resilience of coastal populations are at once tied to the fourth concept which is used in understanding the semiotic relations of maritime protection, that is, human security. Human security is a major proposal for an alternative to the national security understanding invented in the 1990s. Originally proposed by the United Nations Development Program, the concept aims at focusing on security considerations on the needs of people rather than on those of states. The main dimensions of human security pertain to food, shelter, sustainable livelihoods and safe employment. Since fishing is a vital source of food and employment, particularly in least developed countries, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a major problem affecting human security. However, there are a number of marine dimensions to human security, ranging

from the safety of seafarers to the vulnerability of coastal populations to marine threats. The resilience of coastal populations has been identified as a key factor for the emergence of maritime threats and is therefore, vital to their prevention.

Research Objectives

The navigation industry is the global economic driver. This includes building a common inclusive narrative towards overcoming security challenges, including maritime terrorism; seeking a complementary approach towards maritime domain awareness; ensuring a regional legal framework for maritime governance; and building content on all of these areas. The study examines how to enhance maritime safety and security in order to ensure long-term peace, stability and economic growth in the SAARC regional area. There is a special focus on the nature, development and change of maritime law nationally and internationally. The research provides a study of the role of these states in their maritime borders, as well as their role in international maritime borders and strategic threats and opportunities.

Significance of the Study

South Asia is an important region globally as well as regionally. This research is primarily intended to descriptively study trends in international law in maritime security. It examines the regional trends in maritime law. This research is of broad importance to the legal background of the maritime security of the regional states. But the national law applicable to states varies according to the internal law of the country. Recent trends in maritime law and the steps being taken by international law to build maritime security have a broad relevance to maritime security and strategy.

Methodology

The Research methodology is qualitative research. Secondary data were collected by means of a literature review and reference sources such as legislation, international treaties, academic literature, newspaper articles and sources. The quality research methodology was primarily utilized for this research. The quality research method was primarily utilized for this research. Ethnographic methodology was used as a specialized research methodology as well as in-depth interview and research-related observational methodology were also used. Moreover, the study was extensively scrutinized based on the analysis of international maritime law sources and security theories. The study of traditional maritime issues in the South Asian region was broadly analyzed based on SAARC countries, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Regional Maritime Security Issues in South Asia

South Asia and the surrounding area is the hub for terrorist activities, and the links between terrorist groups are stronger. Cross-border terrorism networks operate throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. A lucrative narcotics trade is conducted from the Gold Crescent involving Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran and the Gold Triangle, including Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. Among the few terrorist organizations that gained marine capabilities, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was the most effective group. It has been described as “the most sophisticated military and technological terrorist organization in the world.” The LTTE had legal and institutional repercussions and established their own naval combat unit called the Sea Tigers. They attacked the Trincomalee naval base in

October 2000 and sank a naval ship and damaged many more after a three-hour battle. Another attack was launched in November 2006 against the Dakshina Naval Base in Galle with heavily armed gunboats and fast cruisers. A special unit called the Black Sea Tigers was formed in 1990 to carry out suicide bombings. In July 1990, she performed her first suicide mission by attacking the Edithara Navy Command Ship. The LTTE was also building their own U-boat. When the LTTE engaged in peace negotiations with the Sri Lankan government in 2003, they demanded de facto marine status for the Tigers. India is very concerned about a different “navy” in the Bay of Bengal. In the present context, it is not hard for terrorist groups to form their own fleets of ships while concealing their identity because their ships can be registered under the Flag of Convenience (FOCs). In fact, the LTTE has established its own fleet of vessels for commercial transport, narcotics trafficking, and weapons smuggling.

India has assisted Sri Lanka with patrolling the Palk Strait. During the 2006-2008 period, the Sri Lankan Navy quickly developed its offensive capabilities by adopting the “small vessel concept”. It developed three categories of small craft that were better suited to meet the suicide missions of the Sea Tigers, a wolf pack style. The Navy also destroyed 8 weapons-carrying vessels of the LTTE between 2006 and 2008. The destruction of ships and the ongoing patrols of the navy in the seas effectively disrupted the supply of LTTE weapons, significantly weakening its offensive capabilities. This is apparent from the fact that in 2006 there were 21 engagements with the Sri Lankan Navy each lasting about 12 hours; in 2007 there were eleven; and just two in 2008. As Tim Fish, a maritime reporter of the Jane’s Navy International has pointed out, “conveying the fight to a close after 30 years war would not have been possible without the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN.)

The Maldives is another South Asian country that has already been confronted with marine threats. In November 1998, a group of Sri Lankan guerillas, engaged by a Maldivian national, arrived in a freighter off the Maldivian capital Male. Later, they came to Male by outboard boat and took control of a part of the capital, after killing 19 innocent Maldivians. With the help of the Indian paratroopers that arrived at Male 12 hours later, President Abdul Gayoom was able to regain control of the capital. In the context of the Mumbai terrorist attacks of November 2008, there are new concerns in Male regarding the possibility of terrorist attacks from the sea. In August of this year, when India's Minister of Defense, A.K. Antony, met with Maldivian President Mohammed Nasheed, he offered naval patrol and air surveillance assistance to the Maldives. In promoting defence cooperation between the two nations, the Indian Navy and Coast Guard ships will be taken in a joint mechanism to confront challenges terrorism, drug trafficking and piracy. Southern Asia also has a high level of marine piracy. Numerous piracy attacks have been reported from the territorial waters off Bangladesh. The SAARC countries are aware of the need to step up their preparedness to deal with maritime threats to their security. However, existing mechanisms, such as STOMD and MDRDS, are not designed to address the needs of a broad range of sectors that face terrorist threats. Thus, in that respect is a vital need to produce an integrated mechanism capable of collecting info/intelligence relating to key sectors which are of crucial importance from the perspective of internal protection.

Given the transnational character of modern terrorism, SAARC countries are also expected to seek support from other regional organizations. In fact, some of the South Asian states have made membership in other regional forums where discussions are taking place on issues such as terrorism, piracy, cross border crimes, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) members include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The ARF

is a high level political and security forum, founded in 1994, to facilitate greater security and defense cooperation among nations within the Asia-Pacific region as well as those in Europe. SAARC countries can take advantage of the ASEAN Anti-Poverty Pact, which entered into force in September 2006. The compact requires signatories to collaborate on the sharing of information and intelligence on piracy and other threats to maritime security. There is a large maritime presence of extra-regional and coastal countries in the Indian Ocean. Even though the coast resists the presence of extra-regional powers, there is also intra-regional competition and rivalry among the coastal powers. Competition between states for access and influence is inevitable; however, the development of maritime cooperation strategies to address common threats from asymmetrical non-state actors has become extremely important. Indian Ocean nations thus far not produced a comprehensive collective security organization to take on the challenges of maritime security and the maturation of such a system in the near future is not workable. They already exist in practice, but at an unequal level. They must be strengthened and all countries should benefit from a cooperative maritime commitment on the part of extra regional powers and coastal powers.

Table 01: Information available in SAS (South Asian Sea) countries related to ecological, social and economic issues

Country	Ecological Issues	Social Issues	Economic Issues
Bangladesh	While general ecological information is available in the vicinity of major coastal cities, long-	Negative impact on the economy. General information is usable. No	General info accessible but country wide, specific to the site

	term research is not available.	national and local social information available.	quantitative data Does not exist.
India	The overall impact info is suitable, with marine waste along the beaches near populated areas of large seaside towns.	Generalizations, but rural area and sites specific social data are non-usable.	Generalizations, but not any quantifiable data is usable.
Maldives	Local data available in different areas, but not enough to represent nationwide status.	A general statement states that this is an emerging issue, but that the data is not site-specific.	The high-level statement indicates that this is an emerging issue, but the data is not site-specific. The shocks are not well read.
Pakistan	Some isolated information on turtles and fishing damage has been identified. Large-scale information about	No specific info or data available on social aspects.	Increased degree of pollution, mainly plastic related material posed a threat to different

	unobserved environmental issues.		economic activities like tourism, merchant vessels, fishing, and so on
Sri Lanka	Turtle entanglement information, Coral reefs, Mangroves, Lagoon and estuaries, physical damages due to marine litter are available but quantities are non-usable	Disruption to fishing and sightseeing activities.	Impact on aesthetic and recreational activities Impact on tourism, damages to the fishing gear boat engine- but no information is usable

Agreeing to the above table all SAS countries are causing problem to identify the magnitude of the marine litter issues which are impacting on the ecological, social and economic arrangements of the SAS region. This situation is severely affected in the preparation of management strategies and policies to resolve marine litter problems in the region.

In that respect are several international conventions, laws, rules and treaties introduced by various international authorities to control and minimize the generation of marine litter at the worldwide level and regional level. Some of them are explained above.

There are several regional level conventions, laws, agreements and treaties such as SAS Program, EU Port Reception Facility (PRF) Directive, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, EU Initiatives on Land-Based Waste Management, Helsinki Convention and Its` Associated Initiatives, OSPAR Initiatives on Monitoring Marine Litter, OSPAR Fishing for Litter, and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Resources (CCAMLR) established. Among these, OSPAR has developed guidelines for the monitoring of marine litter at the beach and has also provided practical guidance to the countries concerned. The SAS program is one of the 18 program set up by UNEP and the South Asia Sea Action Plan was adopted in March 1995. The SAS Action Plan is based on the environmental issues facing the region and its socio-economic and political situation. It is based on a sound legal framework, in the form of a regional convention and related protocols on specific problems. The legally binding convention reflects the commitment and political will of governments to address their shared environmental problems through joint and coordinated activities.

SAS Region Country Initiatives

The SAS region coastal countries initiate beach cleaning programs on the 16th, of September each year to mark the International Coastal Cleanup Day arranged by the SACEP and several local level activities are also being carried out in every country. There is no marine waste management agency in the country. However, many organizations are present for waste management, environmental protection, resource conservation, water management, wildlife conservation, and so on. Indirectly they have laws and rules that prevents marine pollution or waste. Bangladesh has initiated a procedure to produce a National Program of Action (NPA) under the Global Program of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based

Activities in 1999. Although Bangladesh has signed and rectified a number of international conventions, policies and laws, it has been observed that there is no appropriate implementation mechanism to practically implement litter management activities. Several management bodies, committees and policies are directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of international conventions, legislation, regulations and treaties on the management of marine litter in India. The country has endeavored to prepare numerous laws and regulations for the protection of the environment, which have come into force from time to time. India has also limited its marine garbage management activities to the beach. The Maldives, as well as many other SAS countries, have addressed the issue of marine litter through various laws and regulations. But there are no specific laws or legal frameworks governing marine litter in the Maldives. The 1997 Pakistani Environmental Protection Act (EPA), (revised 2013) prohibited the manufacture, sale and use of regular non-degradable plastics. Further, as per order issued by the Pakistan EPA in February 2005, the powers related to monitoring and pollution control in the areas of Pakistan's Maritime Zones have been assigned to the Maritime Security Agency. Pakistan is lagging behind in the implementation of the Strategy on International Conventions, Laws, Regulations and Treaties due to the unavailability of a directly accountable agency to manage marine pollution and the marine environment. In addition, Sri Lanka has brought together a number of organizations to manage marine pollution. Even though in that respect are many agencies to handle the marine litter only Marine Environment Protection Agency (MEPA) has been absorbed in to implement marine litter management activities in relation to the strategy on International Conventions, laws, ordinances and treaties.

Table 02: Status of the implementation of the Strategy on International Conventions, laws, ordinances and treaties in the deferent marine environment component of the SAS region

Country	In the beach/Coastline	Coastal Sea floor	In the water column	On the water surface	Deep sea	In the water column at deep Sea
Bangladesh	None	None	None	None	None	None
India	Very few but confined limited beach area	None	None	None	None	None
Maldives	Nationwide implementation quite well under waste management	Marine protected areas. Green fins and some private parties (for	Falls under WMR 2013/R-58, but weak implementation			

	regulations (WMR 2013/R-58) as it falls under island Management plans.	localized regions				
Pakistan	None	None	None	None	None	None

The above table very clearly argued that implementation of the majority of international rules, laws, agreements; treaties and local level acts and regulation have been restricted to the beach areas of the states.

Even though there are numerous international and regional conventions, agreements, laws, and treaties already in existence and they provide a good legal platform for management and minimization of marine litter issues, several cases indicate that cooperative action on marine litter has lagged behind, or the participation of states in these initiatives was insufficient. Some countries in the region have not even taken action under the UNEP World Initiative. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a regional plan for the implementation of international conventions, agreements, laws, regulations and treaties.

Table 3: Status of International Instruments for Marine Pollution in Focus and South Asian Countries

International instruments for sea pollution.	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Geneva Convention on the High Seas, 1958.				x	x
International Convention on the Protection of the High Seas from Oil Pollution, 1969.	x	x	-	x	x
International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution (1969).	-	d	x	-	d
Fund Convention 1971	-	d	x	-	d
Rule on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by the Dumping of Wastes and other Matter, 1972	-	-	-	x	-
Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973/78	x	x	x	x	x
United Nations Convention on the Right to the Sea, 1982.	x	x	x	x	x
Convention of Preparation, Intervention and Cooperation, 1990	x	x	-	x	-
International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage Related to the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances at Sea, 1996.	-	-	-	-	-
International Convention on the Control of Anti-fouling Harmful to Ships, 2001.	-	-	-	-	-
2004 Ballast Water Management Convention; and	-	-	s	-	-
Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmental Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.	-	-	-	-	-

x = party to the instrument; d= denounced the instrument; s= signed the instrument
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Regional initiatives play an essential part in ocean governance and hence UNCLOS 1982 has put considerable importance on regional initiatives for the prevention, reduction and control of maritime contamination. As a region, South Asia does not experience any significant regional legal framework for the prevention, reduction and control of maritime contamination. SAARC is the only regional organization in South Asia established in 1985 with a view to make cooperation between and among the member states in the economic, social, cultural, technological, scientific and other expanses of mutual interests. The environment also become an area of cooperation soon after the organization was set up. Tackling marine pollution was one of the first thirteen possible areas of cooperation between SAARC countries. 1992 was proclaimed the Year of the Environment of the SAARC during the fifth meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SAARC. However, unfortunately for a number of reasons (ex: lack of follow-up measures and cooperation) the SAARC has failed to accomplish any significant achievement in building cooperation in such a serious issue like marine pollution until now, except for some declarations and a Road Map. But, with the initiatives taken by UNEP, there are some developments at the policy level and a couple of guiding instruments that have come up as a result of cooperation among the coastal states of South Asia.

Marine Law in South Asian States

Bangladesh

The Constitution of Bangladesh 1972 has recently been amended in 2011 to include protection and improvement of environment and biodiversity under article 18A, which proclaims that ‘the State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and preserve and safeguard the natural resources, bio-diversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife for the present and future citizens. The Territorial Water and Maritime Zones Act 1974⁵¹ was the first act of the Government of Bangladesh that sought to influence the maritime boundaries and to some extent, to prevent marine pollution. The Territorial Waters and Marine Areas Act of 1974 established the Territorial Waters and Marine Areas Rules in 1977. Port Act, 1908 and Port Rules 1966, the Chittagong Port Authority Ordinance 1976 and the Mongla Port Authority Ordinance, 1976 are also very important for the protection of the marine environment from vessel-source contamination. In order to minimize environmental pollution, including marine pollution, the Government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives.

Thus, even though the subject of marine pollution is not directly addressed in this Rule, it can be inferred in light with the provisions dealing with the prevention of hazardous waste, that the subject of marine pollution was a consideration while drafting the Rule. The said Rule provides a punishment for infraction of the victuals of the Rule in Chapter- VIII and also provides in case of environmental criteria, non- compliance shall be administered with the Environment Conservation Act 1995 and the Environment Court Act 2010. The purpose of the bill was to preserve the marine environment and prevent marine pollution in Bangladesh by adopting a holistic approach to the problem. The proposed Marine Conservation Act also empowers the

government to bring into force seven other international conventions related to the marine environment through delegated legislation.

India

India has a federal system of governance and the responsibility for preventing and controlling marine pollution is shared by the provinces and central governments. India has no complete law for preventing and controlling marine pollution. The Indian Constitution contains provisions similar to Article 18A of the Bangladesh Constitution. Article 48A of the Constitution while shedding focus on protection and improvement of the environment and safeguarding of forests and wildlife, stipulates that 'The State shall strive to protect and improve the surroundings and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the state. This planning is extensive enough to authorize the government to consider steps to protect and improve the surroundings, including marine environment. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1974) covers the control of pollution from land-based sources that have a jurisdiction of 5 km at sea.

The Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Exclusive Jurisdiction provide the government of India to uphold and protect the marine environment and to prevent and control marine pollution. This law also provides for criminal measures if one of its provisions is violated. Under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986, the 1991 Coastal Control Zone has been notified. It categorizes coastal areas into four categories, specifying which activities are allowed and which are not allowed in each category. Aquaculture has been approved for use on the foreshore. In 1996, the Coast Guard also developed the National Oil Spill Emergency Plan (NEP-CAC) that came into effect. It puts down a serial publication of actions to be conducted in the case of a major calamity of this nature.

Maldives

The Constitution of Maldives provides some guidance for protecting and preserving the environment. However, there is some concern that following the enactment of the Constitution in 2008, no new environmental legislation was passed. There is no specific municipal law that targets marine pollution in Maldives; however, on that point is a general statute called Environmental Protection and Preservation Act which prohibits all forms of pollution to the surroundings which includes marine environment as well. An environmental assessment report done on whatever project that may possess a significant impact on the environment and it should be presented to the Ministry of Environment and Energy prior to the execution of the task. However, there is no specific legislation for the application of the MARPOL Convention in the country.

Sri Lanka

On average, more than 350 ships traverse Sri Lanka each day. Of the countries in South Asia, Sri Lanka has the most comprehensive domestic legal framework to combat marine pollution. Sri Lanka's Marine Pollution Prevention Act is enabling to bring into force international conventions to which Sri Lanka is a signatory. Therefore, this Act is serving both the purposes; it is presenting a domestic legal framework for the prevention of marine contamination and at the same time, it is integrating the relevant international legal obligations into domestic legal framework.

- Part I addresses the creation of a marine pollution prevention authority.
- Section II of the Act provides that electric arc of petroleum or other pollutants shall be regarded as a criminal offence and the responsible person or office shall be liable criminally for this crime.

- Section III of the Act states that any emission or leakage of petroleum or other pollutants shall also entail civil liability and the authority or person responsible for the safety valve or discharge shall have to stick out the costs or expenses caused by such discharge or get away.
- Section IV of the Act deals with preventive measures to fight marine pollution and demands that every vessel or Ship registered in Sri Lanka shall have to conduct a record book with the necessary details of oil and pollutants.
- Part VI deals with the situation where a spill or evasion occurs following a marine accident and Part VII deals with the implementation of international conventions.

National Environmental Act 198075 also includes, to some extent, pollution prevention.

- Part IV addresses the protection of fish and other water resources. Section of Part IV prohibits the use or possession of toxic or explosive substances in Sri Lankan fisheries water.

Likewise, the Port Administration established under the Sri Lankan Ports Authority Act, not only considers port activities but also considers the offences under the Piracy Act and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it is in charge of monitoring activities under the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation Convention. In 2009, the government of Sri Lanka issued a draft Ship Breaking Policy though, which the government strongly expressed its intention to give up all sorts of ship breaking activities in Sri Lanka when neighboring Bangladesh and India were projected to be very easy in terms of ship breaking industry.

Despite the existence of two maritime agreements in 1974 and 1976 with Sri Lanka, maritime issues are still ongoing. The largest maritime case with Sri Lanka is the status of Kachchativu, a small sterile island in the Palk Bay area. Recently, because of the high level of surveillance by Sri Lankan authorities, the arrests and shootings of Indian fishers have increased. This problem persists due to the reliance on livelihoods of Indian fishermen with limited access to marine waters. Addressing maritime safety issues within South Asia is new. In 2010, maritime security and piracy issues were brought forward for inclusion in the SAARC negotiations. For India and Sri Lanka, the surrounding maritime environment continues to be a contributor to the national interest.

Conclusion

Maritime security is a buzzword. Doesn't make sense at all. It reaches its meaning through actors who relate the concept to others, through attempts to fill it with different questions and acting in the name of it. If there is consensus on the value of maritime safety in general terms, its practical significance will always vary depending on the actors, time and space. This article aims to find ways to cope with the multi-voice of the concept. Three strategies have been outlined to make maritime safety meaningful and to disentangle political interests and world views. These strategies provide a productive gateway to the study of maritime safety and the examination of the divergent perspectives of actors in distinct spaces. Such studies have a direct impact on domestic and international politics. They enable to cope with coordination problems, and allow for a dissimilar type of interpretation of maritime disputes that do not start with assumed interests of actors, but with an analysis of the meaning actors subscribe to the maritime as a safe distance. Ultimately, such studies will also aid in setting up the contours of the emerging sub-study of Maritime

Security Studies and elaborate on its trans disciplinary links to economics, development studies, environmental studies or global governance studies. The countries of South Asia are home to more than twenty per cent of the world's population and this enormous population constitutes a serious threat to the marine environment. Due to socio-economic conditions, the majority of the population is not in a position to take precautions and take action to reduce marine pollution. They are also developing countries, and most of the time they have to jeopardize economic development in the interests of the environment. The waste management system is unknown in most of these countries and in the absence of such an enterprise, for most of the waste produced due to domestic or industrial use, the sea is the ultimate destination and hence the issue is turning to be worse day by day. These nations should also realize that unless such a waste management system can be inaugurated, they may suffer economically Due to the decrease of tourists in this area as a result of dirty and unhealthy beaches. Other important steps to address marine pollution in national and regional level are to establish institutions dedicate to oversee the issue, to manage the financial and technical know-how, and most importantly, to change the mindset of the political leaders who put maximum importance to economic development and minimum to the maritime environment. Thus, the process of preventing the marine environment from contaminating itself should be stopped before it is also behind schedule. Whatever are the laws in these countries on marine pollution, strict implementation of these laws is seriously desired to set an example, so that prospective polluters get a warning to refrain themselves from marine pollution. It has been observed that even though some of the tribunals in this region are very active in environmental degradation issues and set some high standards on different facets of environmental protection, one may hardly notice the dynamic use of the courtrooms to protect the marine environment

from contamination. Maybe one of the principal reasons is that these states are mainly English common law countries and hence, the courts cannot act unless there is any definitive cause of action and the issue of locus standi is solved. Determining the most appropriate method and advising on dispute resolution requires careful consideration of costs and risks. The admiralty law is an area of growth, and it plays a critical function in protecting the citizens as well as ascertaining that no organization or individual breaches the legal philosophy of the sea. With the evaluation of the case laws and the bill it can be asserted that the maritime laws in India are at a very nascent stage which requires much careful assessment and focus. One of the major requirements of the time was the introduction of piracy laws into India's domestic laws. Since, piracy is recognized and reckoned as a crime by the legislatures, India's maritime law will be considered perfect and effective soon.

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Colombo Port City: An Economic Game Changer or a Chinese Enclave?

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Abstract

Colombo Port City also known as Colombo International Financial City is a special economic zone and International Financial Centre located in Sri Lanka, which is currently under construction on reclaimed land adjacent to the Galle Face Green. The project is a result of the growing foreign relations between the country and China, and part of China's Belt and Road initiative which is further identified to be one of the priority projects in the Central Business District and the Colombo Metro Area (CMA). Project is claimed to be a concept by former Presidential Government, although it is said that the modern proposal is by the China Harbor Engineering Company. This study focuses on identifying the extent of the impact of the Port City development in the country. Thus the study explores all positive and negative outcomes available on the said project and the influence of the countries involved over the matter and then analyses to draw conclusions relating to the topic. Basically, this study is a qualitative case study based on secondary data, which aims to review the nature of impact of the project within the island. Many authors have provided contested ideas on the development of Port City and many related topics, but not specifically on the topic of this study. The study is not limited to any political era, and stands to provide an unbiased view on the topic, with equal significance to both positive and negative impacts created by the said project. Looking at the findings it is important to highlight the necessity of Sri Lanka to strategically balance between safeguarding its National Security while reaping the foreseeable benefits in the most diplomatic conduct possible.

Keywords: *Port City, China, World Class City, Chinese Colony*

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Introduction

The growing relations between Sri Lanka and China have brought in numerous investments into the country mainly during the regime of former Presidential Government. Although the success and the contribution of these investments to the development of Sri Lanka lead to many questions and arguments, it should be noted that the Chinese assistance has indeed greatly influenced Sri Lanka both politically and economically.

Port City Colombo, the single biggest private sector development in the country is expected to transform Colombo into a hub of commerce, tourism and culture. The city developed on more than 200ha is to be a large-scale integrated city. China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) is in charge of developing the project through its subsidiary China Harbor Engineering Construction (CHEC) and the project will be an extension of the Colombo Central Business District with the aim of creating a high-quality urban environment. CCCC has been actively involved with the development of Sri Lanka since 1998, executing massive construction projects, such as the Southern Highway, Outer Circular Highway, Hambantota Port, Mattala International Airport, Colombo South Container Terminal, and many other major infrastructure projects. The urban project is said to consume an amount of \$1.4bn till its completion in 2041 and is designed to include residences, schools, offices, hotels, exhibitions, leisure, commercial and public spaces, etc (Design-Build Network, 2017).

Created with a vision of Building a World Class City for South Asia, the project aims to develop the most livable city in South Asia, built on sustainable values, a healthy environment with future ready infrastructure to enhance living convenience, an exemplary city providing the highest quality commercial, entertainment, medical, education and lifestyle opportunities, the

catalyst for growth, a place that fuses the culture and energy of a nation with international best practice (CHEC Port City Colombo (Pvt) Ltd., 2022).

In accordance with the master plan details available on Port City, the city will comprise of five main urban precincts or districts, namely International Island, Island Living, Central Park Living, Financial District and The Marina. The 'International Island' will be a commercial and leisure destination featuring a resort and theme park, convention and exhibition center, healthcare and education facilities, as well as a waterway park. 'The Island Living' district will feature villa-style residences and public parks, including the Malvathu Park. A city beach will run along the southern edge of the district. 'The Central Park Living' district will include open blocks, public parks and pavilions. 'The Financial District' will offer Grade-A office space and serve as a retail destination. 'The Marina' provides access to the sea and includes public parks and water features. Canal quays and boulevards across all districts will serve as meeting points and viewpoints. The development is protected from rising sea levels and high waves by a 3km-long offshore breakwater (Design-Build Network, 2017).

Since the beginning of the project, Colombo Port City has gained both positive and negative criticism from a wide array of stakeholders and internal and external personnel thus it is being labeled as a controversial project since its inception. If it happens as planned, this will be the first Chinese-funded project to create thousands of jobs and generate family incomes for Sri Lankans which is indeed a great benefit for the country. But against this piles up the criticism from all quarters some being: consistent opposition from environmentalists on the detrimental impact of rock extraction on bio-diversity and marine life. In addition, there has been opposition from fisher folk regarding its impact on their livelihood. Sand mining is also expected to affect lagoons, particularly

the famous Negombo lagoon. Though the CPC project has completed three Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), the criticism is based on the fact that these assessment reports have not addressed several related issues adequately enough. There are numerous related issues that could arise as the project progresses, such as water pollution, waste-dumping, port-dredging, discharge of ballast water from cargos, soil pollution, acidification, and acid rains being few among the many. Moreover, the political Opposition, NGOs, and civil societies opposed the government's move. In April 2021, when it presented the CPC Economic Commission Bill to the Parliament, they argued that the bill surpassed Sri Lanka's sovereignty, as it gave the CPC Commission immunity from Sri Lankan law. Some Buddhist monks too opposed the bill on similar grounds. When considering international reaction especially from India, UK, USA whose influence is directly affected with increasing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, also has much to add on the subject adversely (Observer Research Foundation, 2021).

As such this leads to the question on the actual impact of Port City project on Sri Lanka. Thus this study delves deep into the positive and negative impact of the project development on Sri Lanka and thereby draw conclusions on how it stands to become 'The Economic Game Changer or if it's leading towards becoming a mere Chinese Enclave'.

Literature Review

The literature review of this study will guide to develop an understanding of the significance of the port city project in Colombo and how different scholars have brought up different point of views in relevance to the impact of the port city project on the socio-economic status of Sri Lanka.

Most of the scholars view the establishment of the port city project which is known to be a world-class city in South Asia – as a highly controversial project for Sri Lanka politically, socially, economically, and environmentally. According to the case study of Karthik Sivaram entitled ‘Locked in China – The Colombo Port City Project’, Sri Lanka has great potential in the tourism sector, but still, Sri Lanka has an obstacle on poor infrastructure. As a solution, the Sri Lankan government led by the former president Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005-2015) considered the port city project a high-end real estate project to enhance tourism and attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in the long run by using it as a second home for foreign high net-worth individuals. The friendly and historically strong relationship between China and Sri Lanka led Rajapaksa government to start the project. However, the main opposition came from the fishermen and the environmentalists with the concern of its negative impact on the coastline and marine lives and as a result, with the regime change with the presidency of president Maithreepala Sirisena by reviewing the project and suspending it in 2015 by citing that it contains “environmental regulatory violations”. Under the Chinese pressure, a new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and a new Supplementary Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) were created and cleared the environmental concerns and prescribed compensation of 500 million Sri Lankan Rupees for the affected fisherman. But the public protests did not stop. However, the creation of The Concession Agreement (CA) contains the roles of Project Company and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) is a deal that mentions the PC will be bearing any financial risks and SLPA will be bearing environmental and other risks until the completion of the project. Due to the debt burden, the Sri Lankan government and its regimes could not step back from the project even though they wanted. The lack of domestic support has been significant in the case of

Sri Lanka with relevance to the Colombo port city project (Locked-In to China: The Colombo Port City Project, n.d.).

According to the discussion of Anbarasan Ethirajan, it depicts that although the Port City project boosted the Sri Lankan economy to a greater level, not every person supports the initiative. It is because of having a large tax concession in Sri Lanka which will not provide any acceptable revenue for Sri Lanka. While some officials justified this by saying that the entire area is under Sri Lanka's sovereignty, other officials expressed their opposition by stressing the fact that China has taken over the majority party in Port City. However, considering the current declining economic status of Sri Lanka, the Port City project might be a rising source but the excessive involvement of China in the island can become a consequence in the future in political and economic terms (Ethirajan, 2022).

Moreover, the international response received regarding the creation of the Colombo Port City project has been also a concerning factor. Though the project provides economic development, it can always turn into a national threat. The Port City Commission Bill challenge is a significant initiative taken by the government of Sri Lanka in response to national security. However, the relations between India and Sri Lanka have been backfired due to the permanent Chinese presence in Sri Lanka. For India, China within Sri Lanka is a matter of concern. Similarly, the US-Sri Lanka relations also reached a point where the USA suspects Sri Lanka and China's growing relations. USA believes the rise of China is a hegemonic threat and thus showed their displeasure through the visits of US Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo. Therefore, the matter of national security and international response have been important in the review to understand how the major powers view the pros and

cons of the Port City project towards them and to Sri Lanka itself (Daily FT Sri Lanka, 2021).

Reviewing the beneficial aspect, however, the port city concept is an opportunity to accelerate new and fast-track developments to modernize Sri Lanka to make the country a potential service hub in South Asia. However, Sri Lanka could make the dream possible if only they have prior attention to both internal and external factors related to the development of Port city. Externally the global economic development, global political order, technological advance and internally the internal domestic stability, labor market resources, island-wide infrastructure development, environmental policies, and economic growth should be considered as the basic factors to the success of the completion of the port city. By paying attention to these factors mentioned above and eliminating the bottlenecks, country can achieve its end goal to make the island a world hub through the project (Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies, 2020).

By analysing the economic impact of the Colombo Port City project, it can help the declining status of Sri Lanka to be stable in socio-economic aspects. Providing employment opportunities to the locals in Sri Lanka, Value addition to the GDP, balance of payment through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) exchanges and export-import of goods and the increase in government revenue because the Sri Lankan government had to incur on some infrastructure, and other facilities such as water, electricity, transportation and road access. Thus, it shows that the Port City project also provides some considerable sets of positive impacts to the socio-economic aspect of Sri Lanka (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), 2021).

The rationale behind this literature review is to bring out both positive and negative impact of the ongoing port city project according to different

scholars. Their articles highlight how the projection of the unique port city project will impact Sri Lanka in both positive and negative grounds. In conclusion, this review assisted the background of the study and led to maintaining the flow of the discussion. It also led to discovering relevant fields of the focused area and designing the research methodology.

Methodology

The study focuses on the political and economic impact created by the Colombo Port City project and further highlights the pros and cons of the execution process of this project towards the present situation of Sri Lanka and its succeeding future. This article has based on Qualitative Research type and qualitative methodology has been used as the methodology of the Study. Data was collected by existing informational via online journal articles, websites, newspaper articles, books, magazines and reports. Using secondary data was privileged to meet objectives and findings at the end of this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Colombo Port City Project; a controversy since its inception and a topic that sparked much dialogue within and without Sri Lanka, surely comes with its own pros and cons. The most interesting yet concerning fact about the Colombo Port City Project is that this has gained a lot of international attention thus far. In an international system where it is expected to witness an ‘Asian Century’ in the coming decades, China is undoubtedly in the forefront of the whole process. Thus, Sri Lanka being one of the main targets of China within Asia, has so far being ‘bought into’ a lot of Chinese infrastructure projects carried under the BRI initiative. However, when the Colombo Port City is being considered, there seems to be a lot of advantages and disadvantages equally being pointed out by various parties and commentators of all kinds.

The Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill was passed in the Sri Lankan Parliament on May 20, 2021, with 149 lawmakers voting in favour of it, while 58 remained opposed, even though it was earlier greatly challenged in the Sri Lankan Supreme Court by opposition parties and members of civil society (Dhananjay Tripathi, 2021). This itself showcases the fact that this project is not and was never entirely supported within Sri Lanka either. Anyhow, looking at this mega investment project in an economic point of view, at first glance it is noticeable that for a country like Sri Lanka who is currently struggling to safeguard its economic stability, this is going to be an 'Economic Game changer' as many officials interpret it. The enactment of the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Act, No. 11 of 2021, recognises the Port City as a 'multi-services Special Economic Zone'. Thus, as assumed, some of the major expected outcomes complementing the Sri Lankan economy are under the avenues of 'Increasing Employment Opportunities, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), Value Addition to GDP and Balance of Payment'.

The report generated by PwC Sri Lanka in November 2021 states that skilled and unskilled employment opportunities will be created through the execution of the Colombo Port City project which would improve the gross domestic product (GDP). Also, as per the opinion of many state economists, this would greatly improve the unemployment within the country and sustain the skilled and unskilled labour within the country itself.

Table 01: Predicted summary of the job creation through the execution of the project

Total Employment	Phase 1.0	Phase 1.1	Phase 2.0	100% developed*
Reclamation stage - jobs				6,400
Direct				1,500
Indirect				4,900
Construction stage - jobs	119,000	146,100	157,200	422,300
Direct	96,300	118,200	127,200	341,800
Indirect	22,700	27,900	30,000	80,500
Operational stage - jobs	45,000	126,100	21,400	229,600
Direct	28,800	77,900	14,300	143,400
Indirect	16,200	48,200	7,100	86,200

Source: Economic Impact Assessment of the Port City Colombo, PwC Sri Lanka, 2021

In addition, as per the estimations by the PwC, ‘this could create up to \$ 9 b of economic value addition to GDP and have a significant positive effect of \$ 5.3 b to the Balance of Payments from service exports foreign earnings receipts annually, once the Port City reaches its full potential’ (Lanka, 2021). Thus. Upon these means, this project appears to possess much capability to assist re-write the Sri Lankan economic advancements.

With reference to the previous infrastructure projects carried out by the CHEC Company within Sri Lanka, they are being critically reviewed as, ‘Firstly, Sri Lankan economy is not robust enough to utilise these mega projects properly by itself. Secondly, with such huge financial involvements, China is now the most important ally of Sri Lanka, which would majorly support the carrying out of the Port City Project amidst all the obstructions’ (Daily FT, 2021). Moreover, there also exist negative and unsupportive opinions within the community regarding this Port City project mainly due to the massive estimations which were not met when it comes to the two other major ill-reputed infrastructure projects carried out by the CHEC Company; the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) and the Hambantota Port. Thus, in

looking at the other side of these economic advantages, as this is surely not a charity project undertaken by China in Sri Lankan soil, the payback process appears to be a hectic one, thus this attempt can even be denoted as a 'Chinese debt trap' levied upon Sri Lanka.

In discussion about this matter in a more political aspect, the most obvious political fact which is being availed through the execution of this project is that the bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and China are to be revamped. Not only that, some have even stated that the China influenced Port City project would even improve the position of Sri Lanka in the international arena. Sri Lanka getting to be a part of the Chinese BRI also indicates that Sri Lanka is now a strong economic ally of China, the fastest growing economy in the world and the most potential state to replace the position of USA in the near future. This in a way adds diplomatic value to Sri Lanka, yet this has its cons as well. When the USA factor and the India factor are considered, the excessive bilateral bond fostered between Sri Lanka and China, could negatively affect Sri Lanka's relations with USA and India.

During an interview in August 2021, the then US Ambassador, Alaina B. Teplitz, 'expressed concern that the government should create the best possible business environment to attract investment to Port City and warned against poor practices or even illicit finance like money laundering and corruption (Revi, 2021). This shows that USA is always on the look at the process of this project and the USA seems to be worried about the close friendship Sri Lanka is maintaining with China. Under these circumstances, USA has jumped to that conclusion and suspect Sri Lanka as a threat to its national security which Sri Lanka needs to be examined carefully in order to avoid being caught up in the cross fire between USA and China in the future (Perera, 2021). Then, when it comes to India, India finds the whole of 'String

and Pearls Strategy’ a complete threat to the rising power of India in the world and most specifically in the Asian region. India is concerned about its own national security and the healthy continuity of Sri Lanka – India bilateral relations. The real dilemma for India is as to how to respond to Sri Lanka. ‘Aggressive posturing will reflect on political ties and go in favour of China. Being ignorant is not a choice either. China is making it difficult for India in South Asia’ (Dhananjay Tripathi, 2021).

Further, the CPC Economic Commission Act includes granting ‘registrations, licences, authorisations and other approvals to carry on businesses and other activities in and from such Zone’. This comes to light as the next most burning political factor, concerning the fact that Sri Lanka is losing over its sole right to sovereign authority in this project under the CPC Economic Commission Act. This has massively triggered the opposition and a considerable part of the civil society as this Commission will be like a sovereign agency authorised to take any decision. Thus, securing the sovereignty of a nation and not putting the national security at stake is one significant action that the Sri Lankan authorities should be very serious about and not give in solely for all the visible and estimated benefits.

In addition to all the pros and cons mentioned about, another important point which ought to be highlighted is that the Colombo Port City project has been able to do changes and diversions in the Sri Lankan foreign policy as well. This was most noticeable during the second term of President Mahinda Rajapaksa (2010-2015), as ties between Sri Lanka and China seemed to be skyrocketed with the Port City proposal. However, during the successive term (2015-2019) under the President Maithripala Sirisena regime, the project was briefly halted during 2015-2016 citing environmental concerns over dredging. At present, the Rajapaksa administration under President Gotabaya, is firmly

behind this project, promoting both its purported potential to attract foreign direct investment and prospects for job creation for locals (Observer Research Foundation, 2021). This again leaves the observers with the petty question, whether the Port City project is promoting the national requirements of Sri Lanka or is it yet another project furthering mere party requirements and their own agendas.

Conclusion

Colombo Port City, a gleaming metropolis soaring out of the water along the Sri Lankan capital's waterfront is often referred to as 'an economic game changer' but is it truly an economic changer or rather a junction of Sri-Lanka's journey towards transforming into a Chinese enclave. Evidently the strategic geopolitical location of Port City and the enhanced Chinese presence attached to it could be identified as a security danger to the Indian Ocean region. In a political perspective, building of this mega polis would inevitably affect the Sri-Lankan foreign policy towards other nations. Sri-Lanka's increased dependency on China's monetary funds and amplified presence of the Chinese in the Port city and Hambantota Port directly alters Sri-Lanka's foreign policy. Viewing this mega 'economic change game changer' from an economic perspective undoubtedly it would attach an immense value to Sri Lanka's GDP. The extensive amount of employment opportunities and foreign investments created by the Port city is foreseeable. However, considering that the project is mostly funded by China, paves a void to these economic advantages. Thus, it is certain that the port city project is critical to Sri-Lanka, but the future policies of the nation must be diplomatically handled in a manner it would not influence in a disastrous manner to the nation. The bridge between economy and politics should be combined conscientiously, Policy makers should possess an explicit vision when dealing with future mega

investments like these, bearing in mind that Sri-Lanka individually cannot withstand a massive economic baggage as such, therefore such lucrative investment opportunities should be dealt in a diplomatic manner where the outcomes could be mitigated.

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In the Middle of Washington and Beijing Consensus: The Economic Destiny of the Island Nation

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Abstract

Neoliberalism emerged as a concept in the early 1980s and it quickly wrapped around the entire western hemisphere but not the developing third world. The Washington consensus was introduced as a solution for economically stranded countries in a neoliberal system. Sri Lanka is a developing country with an insignificant economy in South Asia. Establishment of neoliberal concepts negatively affected Sri Lanka and resulted in many economic issues. In 2019 the outbreak of Covid 19 created an alarming situation in the Sri Lankan economy. This research aims to examine the level of neoliberal economic system's impact on the Sri Lankan economy and to examine what is the most suitable set of policies that needs to be followed to regain from the current economic crisis. The research will be a qualitative case study based on secondary data. Based on the findings, the research will identify that the reforms of Washington are important to regain Sri Lankan economy as a strong economy but in practice, they will have negative effects on developing countries like Sri Lanka. Research will also find that China was able to achieve tremendous economic growth avoiding the weaknesses of Washington consensus and the liberal world by using Beijing consensus. Therefore, the research recommends that Sri Lanka needs to find out the most acceptable policy to regain the current economic crisis by using both Washington and Beijing consensus.

Keywords: *Neoliberalism, Washington Consensus, Beijing Consensus, Developing Countries, Sri Lankan Economy*

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Introduction

After the fall of socialism in 1991, liberalism started to conquer the world. Therefore, as a theory, liberalism faced many modifications. Neo-liberalism is the modified version of liberalism which came to common usage in early 1980's. This theory focused more on free marketisation and lesser involvement of the state into trade and services. Following the aftermath of the fall of socialist ideology, neoliberalism got more popular all over the world. But in practice, it didn't work out for each country in the same manner. Neoliberalism has made better outcomes in the economically powerful countries which are mostly located in Western Hemisphere but when it comes to the newly independent or economically small countries in Asian, African, or Latin American regions, this theory got more complicated in practice. The wide implementation of the neoliberal policies led those countries towards trade deficit issues, loans traps, fall of public institutions and bankruptcies. Therefore in 1989, economist John Williamson introduced "Washington Consensus" to address these issues. Washington Consensus can be identified as a list of policies that aim to assist economically stranded, underdeveloped, or developing countries to regain their economies. In 2004 liberalist scholar Joshua Ramo identified "Beijing Consensus" as a counter economic policy for Washington consensus. He introduced this consensus by analysing the rapid economic development of China, which was achieved by avoiding the weaknesses of liberal economic policies.

Sri Lanka is a small power island nation that is located in the South Asian region. Sri Lanka received independence in 1948 after ending the prolonged time of colonisation period under several European countries. In this period Sri Lanka was economically powerful and one of the few wealthiest countries in the entire Asian region. But after independence, Sri Lanka started to deteriorate as an economic power. In the beginning trade deficit was the main

cause of these economic issues but with time many external and internal factors such as the civil war, failed economic policies, bad effects of the welfare system were involved in this situation. In 2009, when the civil war ended, Sri Lankan economy suffered a lot from the negative effect of the civil war on the economy. Even after the end of the Civil War Sri Lankan economic issues continued. Therefore, Sri Lanka borrowed more loans from foreign countries and those loans, and their repayments badly affected the Sri Lankan economy. This situation worsened with the Covid 19 virus outbreak which gradually pulled Sri Lanka towards an economic crisis.

Literature Review

According to David D. Kotz, neoliberalism emerged in the late 1970s as a temporary response to the economic instability of the decade. These neoliberal policies assisted right wing political victories in the United Kingdom (Thatcher) and United States (Reagan). Therefore, neoliberalism gained a more solid position in the world (Kotz, 2002). According to Kalim Siddiqui neoliberalism promotes free market forces and encourages private enterprise, consumer choice, and reward entrepreneurship (Siddiqui, 2012). Rajesh Venugopal stated that “neoliberalism is now widely acknowledged in the literature as a controversial, incoherent and a crisis-ridden term, even by many of its most influential deployers” (Venugopal, 2015).

The “Washington consensus” means a set of economic reforms that are presented by economist John Williamson as a response to the stranded economies in Latin American countries. John Williamson further defined Washington consensus as a “list of policies that I claimed were widely held in Washington to be broadly desirable in Latin America as of the date the list was compiled, namely the second half of 1989.” (Williamson, 2004).

Introducing Beijing Consensus, Joshua Ramo described that, “China is writing its own book now. The book represents a fusion of Chinese thinking with lessons learned from the failure of globalisation culture in other places. The rest of the world has begun to study this book”. According to Ramo, these policies suggested “how to organise the place of a developing country in the world” (Ramo, 2004). According to Qinglian, Beijing consensus not only provides a viable economic model for developing societies, but it also seeks the solutions for ‘political issues, quality of life and balance of power in world politics’ (Qinglian, 2005).

According to K.G.D.D. Dheerasinghe, historically Sri Lanka has had a very reputable economy. In 1948 Sri Lankan GDP (Gross Domestic Production) was US dollars 850 million which is more than 9 billion US dollars from today’s money. Also, Sri Lanka’s per capita at the time which was 120\$ became second only to Japan in Asia (Dheerasinghe, 2010). According to Vagisha Gunasekara, after the independence Sri Lankan economy started to decline for numerous reasons. With the outbreak of the pandemic, Sri Lankan economy gradually developed to a crisis (Gunasekara, 2021).

Methodology

This article is a qualitative case study based on secondary data. As this research refers to an ongoing situation, the secondary data information used for analysis were extracted from books, public speeches by public figures, online news articles, e-books, scholarly articles, and journal articles. This research has been analysed using the content analysis method to construe the arguments of this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Sri Lankan Economic Crisis

Since the Post independence era up to now, Sri Lanka has maintained a very unstable economy. Implementation of disorganised liberal policies, lack of investments due to domestic conflicts, huge debts in the post civil war era and corruption have made the country's economy highly vulnerable. The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic situation exposed this instability. At the time when Covid-19 outbreak erupted, the remittances of migrant workers, apparel, tea, rubber, and other primary agricultural exports as well as tourism was the main source of foreign incomes in the country. Also, nearly 70% of the country's labour force was employed in informal sectors. All these sectors were severely affected from Covid-19. In 2020 Sri Lanka's unemployed population rose by 100,000. By the third quarter of 2020, 1.7 million employees in the private sector were at risk of facing significant wage cuts and layoffs (Gunasekara, 2021). Therefore, this situation created negative GDP growth in the first and second quarters of 2020 Which led to an increase of \$3.20 of poverty rate from 9.2% in 2019 to 11.7% in 2020 (Bank, 2021). Pandemic was not merely the only factor that exacerbated the current economic situation but also the less futuristic decisions by the government heavily contributed to the situation. Government's failed organic farming decision is a good example for that (Srinivasan, 2022).

The most cautious situation that Sri Lanka is facing right now is the lack of foreign reserves. As an import-based country, Sri Lanka's external reserves dropped to \$1.6 billion in November 2021 (Srinivasan, 2022). As of 2021, Sri Lanka had a total foreign debt of 67.29 billion US dollars which accounted for 61.1% of GDP (Gunasekara, 2021). The debt repayments, especially the international sovereign bonds, amount to nearly half of the country's total

foreign debts, worsening this situation. Sri Lanka must repay about 4.5 billion dollars of debts this year. The government plan to start repaying these debts by \$500 million at the end of January 2022 and another \$1 billion repayment coming in the mid of 2022 (Srinivasan, 2022). Sri Lanka needs around 1.5 billion US dollars a year to import food and beverages, while building materials are also 1.5 billion US dollars, machinery and equipment are around 2.0 to 2.5 billion US dollars (BELLWETHER, 2022). Considering the repayments and their deadlines, Sri Lanka might be left with lack of foreign reserves to import essentials food, fuel, or medical supplies. Because of that, the country is now witnessing large shortages of milk powders, LPG cylinders, fuel shortages and shortages of chemical fertilisers for agriculture

Considering this situation, Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's ratings agencies have all downgraded Sri Lanka in their ratings. American credit rating agency "Fitch and Standard" downgraded Sri Lanka to a 'CC, which is the lowest rating prior to default (Jayasinghe, 2022). This will badly affect Sri Lanka's borrowing ability in the international system. With the expert's opinions, the government is making many efforts to ease the situation. In January 2021, during the Chinese foreign minister's visit to Sri Lanka, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa requested from the Chinese foreign minister to reschedule Sri Lankan debts to China (Jayasinghe, 2022). Therefore, one can see Sri Lanka is currently going through the worst period of its economy.

The Importance of Washington Consensus towards Sri Lankan Economy

There are 10 main points in the Washington consensus. These are 1. Fiscal Discipline, 2. Reordering Public Expenditure Priorities, 3. Tax Reform, 4. Liberalizing Interest Rates, 5. Competitive Exchange Rate, 6. Trade Liberalization, 7. Liberalization of Inward Foreign Direct Investment, 8. Privatization, 9. Deregulation, 10. Property Rights (Williamson, 2004). The

basic intention behind these reforms is to strengthen less state control over the economy. When analysing the reforms, it's clear that they are focused on stabilizing, liberalizing, and privatizing the economy. Since 1978, Sri Lanka has implemented neoliberal economic policies but has failed in maintaining consistency in growth over the years. The study will be examining the most important reforms in the Washington consensus that Sri Lanka needs right now.

The first reform is maintenance of a fiscal discipline. Basically, this is meant to reduce the national budget deficits which will lead to the balance of payments crises and high inflation. Since independence, the budget deficit of Sri Lanka has expanded visibly. In 2021 it recorded 11.1% from GDP. However, the country is still struggling to meet a fiscal deficit target of 9.5% of gross domestic product (Jayasinghe, 2021).

Reorder of the public expenditure is another important reform. As a welfare state since prior to independence, Sri Lanka is still maintaining a high level of public expenditures on non-merit subsidies to basic health and education and infrastructure. In 2019 government expenditure including general public services and social services accounted for 2,932,390 million rupees, this was 19.5% from GDP (Statistics, 2019). Some scholars have suggested that if Sri Lanka spends more on promoting growth rather than the welfare services, Sri Lankan people would have achieved higher level of welfare benefits (Osmani, 1994).

Tax reforms is another important area that the Sri Lankan economy needs to be concerned with. In post-Independence, Sri Lanka has maintained a healthy ratio of revenue collection which accounted for 21% from GDP. Anyhow, since 1990, this started to decline and currently, it is at an alarmingly low value of 9.6% of GDP. Especially numerous political administrations granted tax

exemptions for wealthier people, multinational corporations, local businesses, incomes, and assets worsened this situation. As an example, in 2019, the newly elected government took the decision to withdraw the 'Pay as You Earn' tax. This had an immediate negative effect on country's welfare spendings. The government lost over SLR1.5 trillion (S\$10.3 billion) in tax revenues alone and the decline of public sector income resulted in a fiscal deficit of over a trillion rupees during the first seven months of 2021. A combination of tax cuts, high spendings and the spread of the pandemic expanded the budget deficit to LKR 1,014.5 billion (S\$6.78 billion), compared to LKR872.6 billion (S\$5.83 billion) in the same period in 2020 (Gunasekara, 2021).

Privatisation is a very important reform in Washington consensus which will be useful for Sri Lanka. As a welfare state, Sri Lanka is maintaining a wide number of public enterprises. Sri Lanka has 527 state owned enterprises (SOEs). These enterprises are intended to help the public to maintain their livelihoods more easily with free or welfare prices. Anyhow, most of them are subjected to government mismanagement and corruption which affects the maintenance of low performance and quality. Normally private sector enterprises need to make a profit, but many SOEs can survive with losses simply because they can borrow from other state organisations/banks or the government when they require additional funds. As example, Sri Lankan Airlines has marked 316 billion in losses since control was taken from Emirates in 2008. The losses of the 55 strategic SOEs from 2006-20 amounted to Rs. 1.2 trillion (Rodrigo, 2022). Therefore, it's clear that the privatisation of corrupted public enterprises will have a positive impact on the economy.

When analysing these reforms, it's clear that the Washington consensus is really important towards the Sri Lankan economy, to manage and regain from the current crisis.

The Practitioners of Washington Consensus in Developing World

The Washington Consensus was initiated to be implemented in the developing world in the 1990's. First it was introduced to Latin America and then Africa and other developing nations as conditionalities of the IMF and World Bank. As a result of that, the structural adjustment (SAP) and macroeconomic stabilisation programs implemented in those countries made negative impacts on social policies and poverty levels in many developing nations. Specially the public expenditure cuts, introduction of charges for health and education, and reductions in industrial protection led to high unemployment, poverty rise and unequal income distribution in the countries. As an example, the reduction of government spendings in agriculture has made it difficult for African farmers to compete in international markets. Therefore, results increased unemployment and socio-political unrest in several African countries over this period (Belinda Archibong, 2021).

Earlier, the consensus was adopted as an assistance to Latin American nations to achieve more stability, with less frequent instances of balance of payments crises, high or hyperinflation, and unsustainable debt dynamics through the reforms such as trade openness, strong fiscal discipline, and establishment of regulatory and supervisory institutions. But with time, issues erupted all over the region. Currently one can see Latin America faces a larger set of policy challenges, including social, income distribution, education, security, rule of law, and environmental issues. (Ilan Goldfajn, Lorenza Martínez, Rodrigo O. Valdés, 2021). If we get a case like Argentina, in the early 1990's, it rose as an emerging market by implementing Washington consensus under the advice of the IMF. This surging quickly lost its momentum in coming years and the final result was a complete collapse by 2001 (Turin, 2010).

Especially During crisis periods, Washington consensus forces countries to stabilise the exchange rates through public budget cuts, higher taxes and interest rates and other recessive measures, which lead to recession in countries. Also, the sharp increases in interest rates have contributed towards the deepening of the crisis (Lopes, 2012).

When concerning the above factors, it's clear that even though the Washington consensus provides important consensus for a strong liberal economy, there are a great number of weaknesses and loopholes that negatively affect developing economies. Therefore, it must address these weaknesses in order to build up a strong economic policy for Sri Lanka.

The Beijing Consensus as a Solution

40 years ago, China marked the implementation of liberal economic reforms and trade liberalisation. As a developing country China implemented most of the policies of Washington consensus in order to build a strong liberal economy but they didn't only stick to Washington consensus and added their own set of policies for implementing liberal economy, which lead to the creation of Beijing consensus. According to Ramo, the founder of Beijing Consensus, the consensus was not all about economy but a combination of politics, quality of life, and the global balance of power. In Beijing consensus there are three main policies starting from Innovation, equitable and sustainable economic development by avoiding GDP values and the final one is self-determination (Ramo, 2004).

The first policy is "Innovation" which recognizes the conduct of innovative experiments in order to address the challenges introduced by the changing economic and social environment since different strategies are appropriate for different situations. It will find out the best economic policies for the nation and avoid frictional losses of reform. Therefore, this policy encourages

countries to not stick to one specific policy but to try out more innovative policies in order to find the best policy.

The second policy is “Achieving equitable and sustainable economic development by rejecting per capita values”. In here, it is emphasised that sustainability of the economy needs to be measured by focusing on quality of life and individual equity. Also, it emphasises the need to reject per capita GDP values as the measurement. Therefore, the UN Development Program’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) gets a more significant place in Beijing consensus rather than GDP values. This will lead to pursuing multiple goals at the same time. According to Beijing consensus, the increasing GDP doesn’t create other development goals or serious strategies for achieving them and it will not solve those everyday problems that are relevant to the population. According to this policy, China maintains their development according to “five balances”, balancing urban and rural development, balancing development among regions, balancing economic and social development, balancing development between man and nature, and balancing domestic development with opening wider to the outside world”.

The Final and the most important reform in the Beijing consensus is “Self -determination”. In here, it emphasised that developing nations need to maintain an independent nature from outside pressure which will be heavily imposed by the hegemonic powers with their economic relations. This reform derived from China’s traditional hostility against the foreign incursion and prioritized their own interest (Turin, 2010).

When exploring the practical usage of Beijing consensus, the best example is China. With the implementation of Beijing consensus, China was able to reduce their poverty from 84% in 1981 to 16% in 2005, in numerical values it portrays the reduction of poverty of 627 million (Turin, 2010). When it comes

to economic growth, in the last 30 years real GDP has increased at an average annual rate of 9.7%, which surpasses the growth rates of other East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. This rapid growth of China, the reduction in poverty, and China's quick recovery from the global financial crisis are one of the main reasons to be impressed with China's economic model based on Beijing consensus (Baig & Beg, 2018).

These achievements don't mean Beijing consensus does not have any drawbacks. With these reforms, still almost 15% of China's riches possess 85% of the total wealth and the gap between the poor and rich keeps on increasing. Also, there is a huge issue with environmental pollution and worker's rights (Baig & Beg, 2018).

Despite these critics, a study shows that Rwanda and Ethiopia, have been following the Chinese economic growth model and have already experienced success. While the regional economic growth is averaging at 5.4%, Ethiopia's economy shows an average gross domestic product (GDP) of nearly 11% since 2005 making it the fastest growing economy in Africa. Similarly, Rwanda has an average GDP of 8% making it a success story of the Beijing Model (Baig & Beg, 2018).

When considering these factors, it's clear that implementation of Beijing consensus assisted China's liberal economy to avoid and reduce the negative impact of Washington consensus and liberal world. Therefore, the Beijing consensus is really important for developing countries to avoid the weaknesses of the Washington consensus in order to build up a strong economy in liberal world.

Conclusion

The research is intended to study the level of neoliberal economic system's impact on the Sri Lankan economy and to examine what is the most suitable set of policies that need to be followed in order to regain from the current economic crisis.

Neoliberalism promotes more liberalisation in the country's economy and market but some of its practitioners negatively impact the developing third world. Anyhow, the implementation of neoliberal economic policies negatively impacts Sri Lankan economy due to the policy failures, mismanagement and corruption of various governments and government led institutions. Also, the welfare system, domestic conflicts and failed mega infrastructure projects led to borrowing huge amounts of loans from international and it put extra burden on Sri Lankan economy. The outbreak of covid 19 pandemic made substandard outcomes and marked a crisis situation in Sri Lankan economy.

The research found that, Washington consensus reforms such as maintaining fiscal discipline, tax reforms, reorder the public expenditure and privatisation can be recognised as the most important reforms towards Sri Lanka to regain from current economic situation but the findings of the research shows that, there are numerous weaknesses in the practice of implementation and that such reforms which may lead to the multiple currency crises, stagnation, and recession of developing economies. Additionally it can cause income distribution issues and socio – political issues. Considering the practices of Beijing consensus, they have relatively a minimum amount of negative impact over developing economies and over the years those consensus are heavily involved in developing Chinese and other African developing economies as

stronger economies in the world, avoiding weaknesses of Washington consensus and liberal world.

Considering aforementioned factors, the research recommends that Sri Lanka needs to find out the most acceptable policy to regain the current economic crisis by using both Washington and Beijing consensus. This economic policy needs to absorb the positive reforms of both consensus and must address the weaknesses of both consensuses. However, the application and implementation of these policies need to be handled meticulously and in a favour of the national interest of the country, unless it will have bad consequences for Sri Lankan economic, social, and political nature with grave threat to national security.

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The Role of Diplomacy at the Time of COVID Pandemic

K. Anuththara¹

Abstract

The scope of international relations is very broad as it deals with the interaction among states and non-governmental organizations in different fields such as politics, economics, security etc. Similarly, international relations can always be altered based on external and internal determinants. Thus, Covid-19 can also be considered one of the recent transformative determinants of international relations. Covid-19 has resulted in the exertion of internal and external impact on states. At the beginning of Covid-19 outbreak, it seemed like the international system was shut down by the pandemic. Anyway, it was not a surprising outcome as it was a new challenge to states and at the same time it was massively destructive. However, now (2021), it can be identified that the international system is adapting to this prevailing Covid-19 era. In the contemporary international system, states are adapting their policies to achieve their interests amidst Covid-19. Internal policies and external policies of states have been undergoing many changes due to the pandemic and these external policy alterations of states directly influence on changing international order. Therefore, when considering these pandemic years it can be identified that Covid-19 is making a vast impact on the alteration of international relations. This impact can be identified in different perspectives as it had a kaleidoscopic view. Among those points of impact, it is clear that Covid-19 has made a defining impression on diplomatic negotiations. As states were unable to proceed with their traditional diplomatic negotiations, as a remedy for prevailing obstacles, they are moving towards new alternatives in order to continue effective diplomacy. Therefore, here, it is intended to extensively analyse how diplomacy altered with the outbreak of COVID-19.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Diplomacy, Foreign Policy, Digital Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy, Vaccine Diplomacy*

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Introduction

There can be identified different definitions based on diplomacy. Harold Nicholson has defined diplomacy as "The management of international relations by negotiations, the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys, the Business or the art of the diplomat". Also, according to Nicholson, diplomacy is "the need to be informed of the ambitions, weaknesses and resources of those with whom one hopes to deal".

Therefore, diplomacy can simply be defined as the practice of having negotiations between two countries or a group to influence the decisions and policies of other foreign governments. In other word diplomacy means international relations conducted via professional diplomats regarding different issues. This is one of main instruments of foreign policy, in which states decide how to achieve goals and interests within the international system. Thus, the main purpose of diplomacy is to supply an adequate contribution in achieving those interests of states.

On a contemporary basis, it is clear that COVID-19 has resulted in emerging new diplomatic trends in international relations. Many scholars name this new diplomacy as "Covid-19 diplomacy", "Pandemic era diplomacy", "Mask diplomacy". This pandemic situation has resulted in changing the function of diplomacy. Those new functions can be identified under three sectors: offering consular assistance to citizens abroad to secure their protection in this situation, acquiring required equipment from other nations, enhancing international collaboration for developing a joint scientific search for effective methods of preventing the pandemic. Therefore, it is clear that COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in changing the functioning scope of diplomacy. Moreover, as a result of those alterations it can be identified there is a resurgence of many diplomatic trends in this pandemic era diplomacy. Those

are not new types of diplomacy, but they have undergone changes with this pandemic situation. Thus, I intend to analyse alterations that happened in diplomatic negotiations in the international system, in relation to new diplomatic tendencies in the international system during this pandemic situation. Thus, what is intended to analyse is how diplomacy changed with the outbreak of COVID-19.

Literature Review

In order to explore the research problem, a holistic examination of existing literature is required. Firstly, it should be emphasized that as this pandemic situation is still prevailing, there is budding literature on this area. Thus, it is scarce to find literature on the research area. Therefore, literal analysis and contextual survey on diplomatic changes in this period remain locked to journal articles, conference proceedings, academic blogs, and academic commentaries. The literature review is principally based on this body of work.

While some scholars and policy makers argue that COVID-19 would not make any change to the international system, some scholars and policy makers strongly adhere that the pandemic situation would bring a huge change to the international system. Commenting on the international relations during pandemic on a research article Daniel W. Drenzer claimed that "A review of how the novel coronavirus has affected the distribution of power and interest in its six months suggests that COVID-19 will not have a transformative effect on world politics" (Drenzer,2020). However, many scholars believe that COVID-19 has become a transformative determinant in international politics. Yang Jiemian has clearly stated this view in his article, " Following the pandemic, global affairs as well as state-to-state relationships are witnessing major, even qualitative changes" (Jiemian, 2020). Similarly, Hongjian, in his journal article states that "The pandemic will fuel changes that have taken

place before, while also spawning ideas and actions to reshape the landscape." (Hongjian, 2020). By referring to available literature, it is clear that the majority of scholars accept that COVID-19 has become a decisive factor in changing international relations.

Many scholars have accepted and even discussed in their articles that COVID-19 is making alterations to prevailing diplomacy. However, they have not extensively analysed it focusing on novel diplomatic tendencies and changes happening in the field of diplomacy. They have limited their studies to one aspect. Majority has focused on health diplomacy. There can be identified a plethora of studies on health diplomacy while other changes have given a minute attention by scholars. "COVID-19 vaccines are being systematically and implicitly instrumentalized for political gains and this has huge implications for the developing world." (Baruah, 2020)

Similarly, there are few articles based on how diplomacy has changed towards digitalization during the pandemic. This can be identified as a new tendency in diplomacy. It is not a new concept as pre-COVID diplomacy also had this type of diplomacy. "Before the global pandemic very little consideration was given to the role of digital diplomacy. Today digital diplomacy plays a crucial role in pushing for diplomatic agenda" (Sharma et al, 2022). Similarly, according to the Twidiplomacy Report 2020, Laos, North Korea, Sao Tome, Principe and Turkmenistan are the only few countries that are not using Twitter. Thus, this implies that 98% of 193 UN countries are having social media presence. (Sharma et al, 2022)

Moreover, while describing the nature of diplomacy amidst COVID-19, some scholars have identified it as an opportunity for diplomacy to be developed. And according to many, in this era diplomacy is a much-needed entity in the international arena. "Coronavirus pandemic is a test for more and better

diplomacy, just like Sharp once mentioned that more and better diplomacy is needed when there is a need for general improvements." Similarly, by closely observing this situation, some argues that "today's diplomacy is not good enough deal with issues like virus pandemic" (Triwibowo, 2020)

However, by referring to literature available in this area of study, what I perceive is that there is a very scarce number of literature items available in this area. That may be due to the difficulty to analyse impacts of COVID while surviving amidst COVID. Anyway, there is a gap in investigating the role of diplomacy in this era. Few journal articles which are available in this area do not extensively cover the role of diplomacy in different aspects. Thus, in this article I intend to analyse the role of diplomacy and changes that happened to diplomacy during this pandemic era in a more descriptive way.

Methodology

This article is based on qualitative desktop-based data. It mainly relies on the method of documentary analysis. When considering the type of data, this has used both primary and secondary data. As primary data, speeches of famous scholars, video recording and newspaper articles are used. And, as secondary data journal articles, online articles and published papers are used.

Data presentation and Analysis

It is difficult to analyse when diplomacy started as that history goes back to a very ancient period. It is believed that the formation of states and inauguration of diplomacy shares a parallel historic origin. However, when considering the evolutionary process of diplomacy, it can be identified that diplomacy has undergone different changes since the past. Alterations happened in the international system and alterations in interests of states have mainly resulted in these changes. Moreover, in the twenty -first century, several changes

underwent in the field of diplomacy with the globalization and development of technology. Those changes include losing states' monopoly in diplomatic relations, becoming multilateral diplomacy more prominent, directing diplomacy towards more regionalized diplomacy, emerging new types of diplomacy such as digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy etc. thus it is clear that diplomacy is prone to undergo changes in relation to changes happening in the international system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has vastly changed international diplomacy. With the outbreak of the pandemic, nations happened to go on a state of lock down, and this severely threatened the prevailing order of diplomatic negotiations in the international system. This resulted in cancelling or limiting state visits, postponing summits, international events and restricting travels. Thus, diplomatic negotiations are interrupted. However, by closely observing this issue it can be identified that diplomacy is gradually adjusting to the new challenge. Therefore, in this pandemic era there is a resurgence of new diplomatic trends such as health diplomacy, public diplomacy, digital diplomacy etc. Although they are not new types of diplomacy, they have become more prominent in recent diplomatic negotiations as alternatives to the challenging pandemic situation. Here in this analysis, it is intended to discuss these new trends of diplomacy.

- Health diplomacy

This can be defined as the practice by which governments and non-state actors attempt to coordinate global policy solutions to improve global health. As mentioned above this is not a new diplomatic type. However, health diplomacy is not always about health. Here, one state tries to promote its interests (non-health related) by means related to health such as promoting health facilities, giving health aid, sponsoring health programs.

It can be noted that with the outbreak of COVID-19, health diplomacy has become a global trend in international relations as states increased their focus on health. This health diplomacy could be a good opportunity for achieving international cooperation in this era as health promotion has become a burning issue. The World Health Organization has gained a major role in handling Covid-19 health promotion. However, recently it was criticized by many for not being able to manage some aspects. Similarly, this pandemic situation has affected increasing bilateral health diplomacy in a vast range as this dreadful phenomenon challenged the health systems in the world. Mainly, China and the USA are engaged in health diplomacy. Apart from that, some other states such as Russia, India, Turkey, and Canada are engaged in health diplomacy. There is a competition among those states to acquire the highest position in the international arena as global Covid saviour.

Here, I intend to take China as a case study to identify how diplomatic means have changed towards health diplomacy amidst COVID-19. When considering China, it is well-known that before the outbreak of COVID, it was much engaged in infrastructure development projects and supplying loans to foreign countries, but it seems that China has changed its focus in this pandemic era. The pandemic emerged in Wuhan China and it started to spread rapidly all around the world. However, China was able to effectively eradicate the pandemic through a two-month lockdown of Hubei Province and later China started to aid other nations in the world. Now, China's health diplomacy has covered many regions including South Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, African region etc. Recently, it can be identified that China has adapted its Belt and Road Initiative to give priority to health promotion programs. Moreover, there can be identified a resurgence in the Chinese Health Silk Road which was started in 2017. China's aid to foreign nations during this pandemic can be identified in different sectors, for example donating medical supplies,

dispatching medical experts, giving loans to worse threat countries. Therefore, it is clear that China has altered its diplomatic means to adapt to the current situation in the world as it happened to halt BRI projects in many foreign countries due to business restrictions. However, health diplomacy was not a new diplomatic method to China, this can be identified as the continuation of China's old, aged health diplomacy in a larger and a more defined scope.

When considering the United State of America, as the powerful country in the world it is also giving priority to health diplomacy during this pandemic situation. Therefore, it can be identified that foreign relations of states have increased in the aspect of health due to its necessity in this pandemic arena.

- Vaccine Diplomacy

This can also be identified as a part of health diplomacy. However, what I have perceived by closely observing the prevailing pandemic world order is that vaccine diplomacy has occupied a broad aspect in contemporary diplomatic relationships and so it can be taken as an independent bullet under new diplomatic trends in the pandemic era. With the outbreak of COVID, the world realized that there is no alternative rather than finding a vaccine to combat this virus. Thus, as a result of that, powerful states such as China, USA, Russia, Europe, started a competition among each other to develop a vaccine as they knew one who would be the first to develop a vaccine would acquire significant power in the international arena.

Currently, the World Health Organization has approved eight vaccines for emergency and full use. Some of those vaccines and their producers can be identified as follows.

- Moderna- American Biotech Company Moderna
- Oxford AstraZeneca-British University of Oxford

- BioNTech-Pfizer- German biotech firm BioNTech and US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer
- Sputnik V- the state-run Gamaleya Research Institute and the Health Ministry of the Russian Federation
- Sinopharm-China National Pharmaceutical Group
- Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine- Janssen Pharmaceutica (a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson)
- Sinovac- China National Pharmaceutical Group

Considering the above list, it is clear that many countries are engaged in vaccine manufacture and distribution. Thus, diplomatic relations among states are highly affected by COVID vaccine programs and state policies related to covid vaccines.

- Digital Diplomacy

Although, currently the international system has adapted to manage its diplomatic negotiations amidst COVID pandemic, at the beginning it was a new challenge for states. With the rapid spread of covid, countries started to close their borders, and it seemed like countries were seeking a more private atmosphere in the international system trying themselves to be alienated. However, this pandemic situation reshaped the scope of diplomatic relations. Diplomatic Relations started to pay much attention to providing required assistance to citizens abroad, acquiring much needed equipment from other nations, and fostering international collaboration through which scientists can jointly search for vaccines. Thus, states were in a difficult background in which diplomatic relations were much needed, but impossible to be well managed. Many states happened to cancel their diplomatic negotiations. At the same time, many organizations like the United Nation, NATO, and G20 happened to cancel their annual meetings with this pandemic. Thus, in order

to back up these issues, states and some international organizations started to focus more on digital diplomacy.

Organization and some state leaders started to use online meeting platforms to continue their diplomacy relations. For example International Organizations such as G7, G20, International Monetary Fund, World Bank convened teleconferences to replace their in-person gatherings in 2020. Similarly, some regional organizations like European Union, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, African Union conducted their negotiations via video conferences. Moreover, some state leaders, diplomatic agents used online platforms to manage their negotiations.

Moreover, during this pandemic international organizations and states started to utilize digital platforms as a mechanism of managing their image in the international arena. Though states closed their borders, they were in contact with other nations through online platforms. At the beginning of the outbreak, it seemed like states were in a competition with each other to appear themselves as successful states in handling pandemic. Thus, states used digital platforms for this intention also. States used social media platforms to share their nations' successful efforts to combat coronavirus successfully. For example, after successfully managing COVID situation in Wuhan, China started to share their experience with other countries through video conferences while enhancing its national image as the victor of corona.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, the COVID-19 outbreak created a new set of obligations for diplomacy. International organizations like The World Health Organization and Embassies of states have been under an increasing pressure to provide reliable and updated information about the spread of COVID and to protect their citizens in foreign countries. Accordingly, to manage these new responsibilities usage of new digital platforms were

commenced. For example, the World Health Organization launched a dedicated messaging service in collaboration with WhatsApp to give situational reports, travel advice and myth busters. Similarly, some national states like Australia, The United Kingdom, and India too adopted this mechanism.

Therefore, it is clear that with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the role of digital diplomacy became more prominent than prior to the pandemic. COVID pandemic has made it compulsory for states to use digital platforms for diplomatic negotiations. Anyway, some diplomats, scholars criticize this trend as they predict that diplomatic channels would become more insecure when they are transferred into cyberspace. However, it is clearly visible that this digital diplomacy emerged as a new trend amidst COVID as a solution for the sudden issue of diplomatic alienation.

- Public diplomacy (people's diplomacy)

Public diplomacy can be identified as a new diplomatic trend that originated in relevant to the nation branding activities of Western world and Soviet propaganda during the cold war period. Thus, public diplomacy has been a popular term since the cold war. In public diplomacy governments try to communicate with foreign publics directly. This can be identified as a tool used by various governments to convince public foreign public opinion in order to tolerate strategic objectives. Similarly, public diplomacy is directly influenced by statements of national leaders, opposed campaigns conducted by government organizations, purposeful utilization of international media etc.

It is clearly visible that the scope of public diplomacy has been directly influenced by COVID. Some states that were very enthusiastic in implementing public diplomacy seem to have found new aspects in public

diplomacy. The Pandemic situation created opportunities for states to assist other states at varying degrees. This especially happened in the mode of health promoting activities. Thus, Corona diplomacy can be identified as a form of public diplomacy. The effort taken by populist states in the name of corona diplomacy is much oriented towards aid activities. Through these mechanisms some countries like China, India, Qatar, Turkey, The United States, and UK tried to appear themselves as pioneers of corona diplomacy. For example: Cuba sent 52 medical doctors and nurses to Italy as a help to manage the worsening COVID situation in the country which was given extensive coverage and was praised for the good deed. This clearly depicts Cuba's public diplomacy effort to raise its profile in the international system. Therefore, it is clear that because of COVID pandemic, public diplomacy has also altered its scope toward a more pandemic-aid centred one.

Conclusion

The coronavirus pandemic has considerably altered international diplomacy. Most countries around the world happened to change their foreign policies with the outbreak of COVID-19. Thus, diplomacy is also automatically challenged and happens to undergo different aspects of alterations in order to adapt to the prevailing pandemic global arena. Consequently, new diplomatic tendencies have emerged in the global arena such as digital diplomacy, vaccine diplomacy, health diplomacy etc. Moreover, it is believed that post-COVID-19 era would be a hybrid one which will encompass both traditional diplomacy and new diplomatic trends that appeared in the COVID era.

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ISSN : 2420-7314



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