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Nahian Reza Sabriet

COVID-19 AND THE THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Abstract

This article investigates the Covid-19 crisis prevalent all over the world from three dominant theories of international relations: neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism. The policies being taken globally, regionally and internationally by relevant states and other actors have been investigated from each of their perspectives. The study also tries to predict how the future policies can be based on the roles of actors or institutions related to the aforementioned theories. While neorealism looks at the pandemic as a traditional interstate competition under the rules of self-help and anarchy, neoliberal institutionalism emphasises on the roles of different institutional endeavours and governance structures. Social constructivism follows a different approach and brings in the dynamics of intersubjective identities, collective measures and normativity. In order to present a holistic analysis, the paper compares and contrasts the situation with other similar events like the outbreak of the Spanish Influenza in the previous century or other major epidemics.

Keywords: Neorealism, Neoliberal Institutionalism, Constructivism, Pandemic, Global Governance, Collective Action

1. Introduction

“No longer were there individual destinies; only a collective destiny, made of plague and emotions shared by all.”

— Albert Camus, *The Plague*¹

The recent outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most unpredictable and threatening incidents the world has faced in recent times. Having sweeping impacts on 188 countries and causing the death of millions, it has shaken up the pre-existing notion of security, governance and preparedness. It also proves how the Westphalian state-system² has not prepared itself against the threats which do not come from a traditional geopolitical or geostrategic viewpoint leading to a vulnerable and ramshackle reality.

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¹ Published in 1947, *The Plague* is the memoir of an unknown narrator of an epidemic spread in French Algerian city of Oran. Camus constructed his narration based on the cholera epidemic proportion of Oran's in 1899.

² Stanley D. Brunn, “A Treaty of Silicon for the Treaty of Westphalia? New Territorial Dimensions of Modern Statehood”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998, pp. 106-131.

Emerging as an academic discipline in 1919, over the course of history, International Relations (IR) has developed its own theories with defined epistemologies and ontologies. However, the prime focus of these theories evolves around the pre-eminence of state and its obsession with sovereignty. Irrespective of the external or internal dimensions of the sovereignty, this has compelled the IR theorists to create new schools like the English school, the Frankfurt school who are the proponents of alternative theoretical perspectives to create spaces for “individual destinies; or, collective destinies”.³ Nevertheless, it has merely led to any change in reality and a large section of international activities is still centred around the states and interstate relations. The two world wars have been responsible for a greater materialistic and militaristic conceptualization in IR which trapped the actors who are inside the states or are operating beyond the stringent web created by these states. It is the outbreak of this kind of epidemics, or any drastic shift that works as a tip of the iceberg and pushes the debates in academia. The changes are significant: the scope for theoretical analysis has widened over the years, the concept of “security” has gone beyond the security of the states and erstwhile “trivial” perspectives like environmental concerns, gender issues and human security are being included. In practice, the picture gets crumbly when the states face real challenges and not just a page full of criticisms.

Therefore, the question comes: how do the mainstream IR theories explain the outbreak of, and the threats posed by, a global pandemic? To answer to this question, the present article analyzes three dominant theories of IR: neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism. The reason to choose mainstream and problem-solving theories is that they are the most widely accepted theories in both theoretical and practical realms. All of these theories emerged after World War II (WWII) and are able to tackle a number of contemporary debates. The “classical” variants of the theories might seem much outdated and the comparatively newer variants (i.e. regime theory, neoclassical realism, etc.) might seem to be focusing on only limited aspects. The “neo-” variants of realism and liberalism and the social constructivism theories have come out of the limitations of the classical theories and have broader scopes to address distinct levels of analysis (neorealism), certain actors (neoliberal institutionalism), or the dynamics of the relationship of the actors from a “holistic” approach (social constructivism).

The primary objective of the study is to identify the extent to which these theories can address a global pandemic and how they would suggest solutions by assorting responsibilities upon certain actors. This article thus tries to break the commonly addressed criticism of the IR theories that they are only applicable when

³ Camus, *op. cit.*

the question is about states and war. While addressing theoretical beelines, this article also attempts to serve as a theory-backed policy guideline for enthusiast decision-makers who might want to look at this global problem from this particular academic discipline and provide solutions in a scrupulous way.

The article is divided into seven sections. After the introductory section, the second section presents an overview of the theoretical stratifications and different schools under them. The next three sections take into account three respective theories (neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism) and their positions *vis-à-vis* the Covid-19 pandemic. The sixth section provides a comparative analysis of the three. The final section is the concluding remarks of the paper.

2. An Overview of the Theories

This section illustrates the thematic cornerstones upon which the future sections are designed. The primary analytical and philosophical stratifications derive from Robert Cox's⁴ idea of problem-solving theory and critical theory. Later, the section investigates deeper into three different mainstream IR theories taken as major departure points: realism, liberalism and constructivism.

In general, problem-solving theories do not look at the problems as something necessarily inherent in the "structure". Such theories look at particular issues or crisis as events limited within a significant temporal or spacial boundary and address the relationship between actors or institutions so that a change can be brought into the international status-quo (Table 1).⁵ On the other hand, critical theories directly look at those issues as a production of the discrepancies lying within the structures and try to reorient the latent empirical and philosophical cavities underneath the status. Therefore, critical theories associate the problems with the features of natural sciences, behaviouralism, positivism or objectivism while comparing the problem-solving theories. They also question the lack of transformative activity embedded in the features of them.⁶ Hence, realism and liberalism belong to the problem-solving umbrella of theoretical underpinnings. However, there is a debate regarding the standpoint of constructivism as it is often regarded to be situated in a grey area between the two.⁷

⁴ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", *Millennium*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1981, pp. 126-155.

⁵ John S Moolakkattu, "Robert W. Cox and Critical Theory of International Relations", *International Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2009, pp. 439-456.

⁶ Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (eds.), *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, London: Routledge, 2009, p. 19.

⁷ Christian Reus-Smith, *The Constructivist Turn: Critical Theory after the Cold War*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1996.

Table 1: Differences between Problem-solving Theory and Critical Theory

| | Problem-solving Theory | Critical Theory |
|---|--|--|
| International System | Anarchic/Competitive (based on pre-given political and social power distribution) | Subjective understanding of the world order; questions the background and development of the order |
| Position of the Analyst | Political events are external to the analyst | Analyst is not separated from actors or environment |
| Value-laden Judgement | No | Yes |
| Separation of Object and Subject | Yes | No |
| Aim | Dealing effectively with particular sources of crisis and ensuring smooth operation of the institutions; reduction of the negative effect to a minimum | Deconstruction of constructed ideas; bringing changes to the existing structure |

Source: Author’s presentation.

The realist embodiment of security and its eminence derives from the basic assumptions of realism: groupism or state-centrism; illustration of politics as an eternal struggle between different states resonating scarcity (of material and social resources) and uncertainty; power as a fundamental requirement for self-preservation and domination; and, the logic of human rationality - *survival of the fittest*.⁸ Envisioning the world as a perpetual arena of competition, thus, realists envision the paranoia of insecurity with the ubiquity of “anarchy” as well as the uncertainty of rivalry, war and conflict. For the classical realists, *human-nature* (or, the pessimistic view of human-nature, *per se*) becomes the crucial factor that triggers the immediate or long-term concerns of the states, whether it is the case of the political manoeuvres taken by the Greek city-states in the 5th century BC or whether it is the 21st century global politics where is the rivalry between the United States (US) President Donald Trump or his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. One of the prominent classical theorists, Thucydides⁹ has provided an excellent “naturalist” landscape of power dynamics. Attributing Aristotle’s concept of individuals being “political animal”, Thucydides argues, it is the natural course of international politics that states, on the basis of the “reality” of the unequal power, must accept the power

⁸ Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Terry Nardin, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit and Jacqui True, *Theories of International Relations*, London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013, pp. 30-34.

⁹ Steven Forde, “Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 1992, pp. 372-393.

relations and act in accordance with political plea. Hans J. Morgenthau¹⁰, one of the “fathers” of political realism, has pointed out six principles: politics being governed by objective laws rooted in human nature; national interest being defined in terms of power; power being shaped by political and cultural environment; absence of correlation between power and morality; rejection of the idea of moral aspiration of the nation; and, autonomy of the political sphere.

For the neorealists, on the other hand, it is not the human-nature, rather the international political structure constituted of ordering principles (or, “deep structure”, as termed by Ruggie¹¹), differentiated character of the units and distribution of capabilities (or, “surface structure”, as mentioned by Ruggie¹²) that appropriates state-behaviour. Upon the question of power and anarchy, neorealists go further assuming a direct linkage between anarchy and war. Kenneth Waltz sees anarchy as the “permissive cause of war”¹³ explicating that war occurs because there is no authority over the states to prevent the war-efforts. Moreover, similar to the conceptualization of the classical realists, power also becomes a stringent factor of competition since the international platform is mechanized by the relative power gap among the power-producers and the power-receivers which the latter wishes to mitigate through internal and external accumulation. Other variants of realism including the Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) by Krasner¹⁴, the balance of threat theory by Walt¹⁵, neoclassical realism by Rose¹⁶ etc. are different in many aspects; but they bear the common understanding of self-help and the anarchic structure of world order.

Coming from an idealistic viewpoint, liberalism shifts its views not only regarding human nature but also how the nature of these individuals may have an impact on international relations. Thus, ethics and morality are two of the key elements of liberalism. Some variants of liberalism like “republican liberalism” are often criticized due to their imperialist nature.¹⁷ Kantian liberalism and the democratic peace thesis profess a political tone where warlike instincts are mitigated through

¹⁰ Hans Joachim Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948.

¹¹ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets World History”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1996, pp. 403-438.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 407-11.

¹³ Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ Stephen D. Krasner, “State Power and the Structure of International Trade”, *World Politics* Vol. 28, No. 3, 1976, pp. 317-347.

¹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990.

¹⁶ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy”, *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1998, pp. 144-172.

¹⁷ Wendy Larner, “Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality”, *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2000, pp. 5-25.

democratization of states. Or, in other words, proponents of liberalism believe that democracies generally tend to have less warfare among themselves.¹⁸ Neoliberal institutionalism focuses more on the norms and mechanisms set by international institutions, including different regimes and organizations. The doctrine of liberal pacifism intermingles with the capitalist strip of imperialism and form Schumpeterian democracies.¹⁹ When the concept of market-force is attributed to the instrumental aspect of liberalism, the term “market governance” is often used to identify the structure of governance under the realms of “governmentality”.²⁰ Liberal scholars like Adam Smith²¹ have argued in favour of a *laissez-faire* vision where the role of the state has to be confined to the protection of society (from external threats) and the provision of certain public goods while “free-trade” will increase the wealth of all parties. This is why, in light of these theorems, trade regimes, interstate economic relations and global economic norms play a substantiate role in liberal strategies. Liberals, thereby, opt for “international imprudence”²² looking forward to initiating the “perpetual peace” and cleansing the stagnant international environment.

Emerged as a result of the third theoretical debate between the realist and the liberals in the 1980s, constructivism as a theory does not try to instigate radical change in the idea of anarchy or how the world politics operates. Alexander Wendt has pointed out two basic “tenets”²³ of constructivism: (i) the idealist approach that assumes “the structures of human association are determined by shared ideas rather than material forces”, and (ii) the “holistic” approach that implies “the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by shared ideas rather than given by nature”²⁴. Constructivism addresses the abstracted and presumed notions like knowledge and reality, which, according to the constructivists, are socially and culturally constructed. Therefore, constructivism does not take the social actors as constant which do not have any impact on the international order; rather, it investigates the issue of intersubjectivity between two or more actors which can generate communications, the meanings apprehended by those communications, and relations which are further developed. Reus-Smit²⁵ has used a discursive approach

¹⁸ Jo Jakobsen, Tor G. Jakobsen and Eirin Rande Ekeveld, “Democratic Peace and the Norms of the Public: A Multilevel Analysis of the Relationship between Regime Type and Citizens’ Bellicosity, 1981–2008.” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 42, No. 5, 2016, pp. 968-991.

¹⁹ Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4, 1986, pp. 1151-1169.

²⁰ Wendy Larner, “Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality.” *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2000, pp. 5-25.

²¹ Martin Griffiths (ed.), *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2007, p. 25.

²² Michael W. Doyle, op. cit.

²³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 1.

²⁵ Martin Griffiths, Steven C. Roach and M. Scott Solomon, *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations*,

based on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action theory where institutions provide a forum for discussion or deliberation and "they involve ethical and moral claims to truth, or reasons that are compelling enough to persuade others that new rules and norms need to be institutionalized." Constructivism articulates these meanings of interpretation as a result of repetitive interaction which is subject to probable changes if the social environment appropriates it.²⁶

Therefore, it can be said that each of the theories is quite different from one another based on their thematic viewpoints. However, each of the problem-solving theories is determined with its rationality, key actors and their roles which provides a logical option to realize immediate actions regarding a pandemic like Covid-19 crisis and unfold "immediate" and definitive solutions or policies.

3. Neorealism and Covid-19

Neorealism signifies a post-WWII outlook towards the international system based on the militaristic security paradigm. From a simplistic lens, there is hardly any scope to discuss the question of diseases and pandemics; but the theory is not entirely obsolete to justify its position as a feasible theory in the time of this crisis.

3.1 *Waltzian "Images" and Positioning the Pandemic "Problem"*

A deeper focus onto the historical development of the theory would show that Kenneth Waltz's contribution came in two phases. First, in his book *Man, the State, and War* published in 1959, he pointed out three distinct levels of analysis. He named these three levels as "images". The first level focuses on human nature; the second image or the state level takes into account the domestic economic and political system; the third image variable refers to the international political structure.²⁷ However, his next major contribution was noted 25 years later when he published *Theory of International Politics* in 1979. Here, he signified three elements of the international political structure, of which two always remain constant. These two elements are—ordering principle which denotes (i) the anarchic system and the (ii) characteristics of the unit where states are presented as functionally alike units.²⁸ Thus, the other variable or the "distribution of capabilities" becomes the key factor in determining the

London: Routledge, 2008, p. 141.

²⁶ Catherine Twomey Fosnot, *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives, and Practice*, New York: Teachers College Press, 2013.

²⁷ Martin Griffiths et al., op. cit., p. 58.

²⁸ Martin Griffiths (ed.), op. cit., p. 13.

international political structure.²⁹

Assuming the international system as an arrangement where states have to depend on self-help has its own problems. It not only narrows down the school for theoretical development, but also produces complexities in the practical realm. Neorealism definitely has a striking focus on war and interstate relations, but under the broad umbrella of problem-solving theory, the question arises every now and then: what is indeed a “problem” to the neorealists? How does neorealism look forward to tackling a “problem” based on its own understanding?

Pandemics are not very common, and neorealists have a tendency to ignore these kinds of issues as they do not get “global” taglines. However, the Covid-19 outbreak can be seen as an incident which has turned the traditional theorization of epidemics completely upside down. The world had met other critical epidemics over the years, ranging from Ebola to a number of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). However, neorealist scholars would simply blame the international modes of power sharing as the reason behind the lack of capabilities and the weak governing system of some countries to combat those diseases.

Neorealism even has a long-standing notoriety for undermining diseases, environmental crisis, threats stemming from non-state actors as “low-politics”³⁰. Henceforth, anything which cannot be addressed from a strict militaristic viewpoint would be treated as a trivial factor or an incompetent driving force to motivate interstate relationship. Quite often, the critics of neorealism, particularly neoliberal scholars like Joseph Nye³¹ point out its parsimonious nature of negating all the “unease” stemming from its rigid structural interpretation of the international system. Kratochwil³² even goes further and indicates the engagement of neorealism with forms like “anarchy” or “uneven economic growth” and its simultaneous process of substituting actual decision-making processes. According to him, its unhealthy obsession for the cyclic nature of international politics marginalizes the whole reality.

3.2 *Battling the Virus*

Notwithstanding the critical points and focusing on the prevalent scenario of the international political structure may help to comprehend a plausible omnipresent and unequivocal neorealist reality to bring a solution to the persistent coronavirus

²⁹ William M. Hawley, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*: by Kenneth N. Waltz, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 1-3.

³⁰ Robert L Rothstein, “On the Costs of Realism.” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 1972, pp. 347-362.

³¹ Joseph S. Nye, “Neorealism and Neoliberalism” *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 1988, pp. 235-251.

³² Friedrich Kratochwil, “The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-realism as the Science of Realpolitik without Politics”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1993, pp. 63-80.

crisis. Therefore, the analytical viewpoints are illustrated through two different streamlines—how the states are responding to the crisis based on the relative power distribution in the international system; and, how the situation may lead to bipolarity in the world order.

From a general point of view, considering all other elements as constant as neorealism identifies, a predominantly unipolar system should make the US the highest achiever in terms of combating a global crisis which is affecting almost every part of the world in the same way. Since states are supposed to be “like-units”, their internal activities and decision-making processes do not matter at all. The likeness of the units in terms of functionality does support the neorealist thesis. Particularly, all states have forced their citizens to be under lockdown for around two to three months and tried to address the treatment of the pandemic in a similar way. This also reinforces the importance of state-border since almost all countries have closed their borders and limited all kinds of international transportations. When all the states are compelled to act on their own, or the “self-help system”, they have to comply with the rules of serving their own interest and securing their survival. However, Powell³³ has mentioned four avenues of criticism made by neoliberal and constructivist scholars, among which the first one emphasizes on how preferences are given exogenously and the second one focuses on the inseparability of agent and structure. Therefore, neorealism would not consider any contextual undertones or the importance of decision-makers which may lead to different outcomes even though similar policies are taken.

Nevertheless, an investigation into the current statistics will show a different result. Based on the reports provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) until 17 September 2020, among the top 10 countries affected by the pandemic (Table 2), the US outnumbers any other country in terms of the number of total cases and deaths.

³³ Robert Powell, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate”, *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 1994, pp. 313-344.

Table 2: Top 10 Countries Affected by Covid-19 Based on Total Cases³⁴

| Rank | Country | Population | Total Cases | Total Deaths |
|------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | USA | 331,420,450 | 6,874,596 | 202,213 |
| 2 | India | 1,382,900,689 | 5,212,686 | 84,404 |
| 3 | Brazil | 212,883,816 | 4,457,443 | 135,031 |
| 4 | Russia | 145,948,080 | 1,085,281 | 19,061 |
| 5 | Peru | 33,069,039 | 750,098 | 31,146 |
| 6 | Colombia | 50,998,462 | 743,945 | 23,665 |
| 7 | Mexico | 129,221,511 | 684,113 | 72,179 |
| 8 | South Africa | 59,467,369 | 655,572 | 15,772 |
| 9 | Spain | 46,758,719 | 625,651 | 30,405 |
| 10 | Argentina | 45,284,429 | 601,713 | 12,460 |

Until now, all the P5+1 countries had been in the top 10 list.³⁵ Each of these countries is both militarily and economically strong and has maintained stable image in terms of capabilities on the global platform. On the other hand, India and Brazil are also considered economic tycoons and are great powers in their own regions. Albeit neorealism would not consider regional power distribution as a key factor, both of these states have also established significant status in the global milieu.

It is not that neorealism will completely be unable to address a global crisis which does not revolve around anarchy and power distribution; but the way it deals with the problem may seem arrogant and outdated. It is hard to draw any connection between populist governments and their realist outlook towards the international system, but most of the populist leaders are seemingly joining the team of rejoicing de-globalisation and reinforcement of state borders. The President of the US Donald J Trump has directly mentioned that this pandemic has made everyone understand why borders are important.³⁶ Moreover, he has repeatedly identified the Covid-19 as the “China-virus” and referred to it as a “bad gift” from China.³⁷

³⁴ World Health Organization, WHO Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Dashboard, Situation by Country, Territory & Area, available at <https://covid19.who.int/table>, accessed on 18 September 2020.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Trump Administration Plans to Extend Virus Border Restrictions Indefinitely”, *The New York Times*, 13 May 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-border-restrictions.html>, accessed on 30 May 2020.

³⁷ “Donald Trump Tweets Describing Coronavirus As ‘A Very Bad ‘Gift’ From China”, *NDTV.com*, 28 May 2020, available at <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/trump-tweets-describing-coronavirus-as-a-very-bad-gift-from-china-2236813>, accessed on 30 May 2020.

Neorealism will try to look at the problem by taking it as a confrontation between two superpowers and a probable shift in the international system, which is the transformation from unipolarity to bipolarity. Waltz himself has mentioned that bipolarity is more stable than multipolarity.³⁸ However, the context upon which Waltz had created his own theorem reflects on how this problem is going to be dealt as well. Albeit the period of Cold War did not face any direct threat of a global pandemic, the two superpowers- the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) managed to divide the world into two different blocs and provide military and economic support for their own supporters. All the processes starting from the containment theory to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Warsaw Pact reveal, if necessary, the global superpowers can again create intangible blocs and may provide healthcare or other necessary amenities. In the current situation, the call for a US responsibility has been repeatedly referred to as a re-enactment of the Marshall plan³⁹ which definitely has a particular historical connotation. Even during the Ebola breakout in 2015, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf requested a “Marshall Plan for the countries of West Africa” to combat Ebola.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the actual Marshall plan also included a plan for addressing epidemics evident among the cattle in former Taiwan (Formosa) and France.⁴¹

Critics may argue that the application of this theory completely ignores the existence of international organizations, particularly, how WHO had been working as the leading actor coordinating most of the efforts *vis-à-vis* the pandemic. However, it shall be noticed that neorealism simply claims these international organizations as tools of domination by dominant states. Therefore, both the US and China can provide resources to different organizations to leverage their influences. It must also be taken into account how China is now providing assistance to other countries not only in terms of masks, monetary donations and other resources, but also sending the doctors who worked in Wuhan where the virus had its outbreak at first.⁴² Thus, China can continue promoting its own influence via previously existing organizations or can create a newer one, even on an ad-hoc basis.

³⁸ Martin Griffiths et al., op. cit.

³⁹ “A Marshall Plan for Primary Care, Public Health”, available at <https://stateofreform.com/news/texas/2020/05/a-marshall-plan-for-primary-care-public-health/>, accessed on 30 May 2020.

⁴⁰ “Ebola: Liberia’s Johnson Sirleaf urges ‘Marshall Plan’”, *BBC News*, 03 March 2015, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31705594>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

⁴¹ Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

⁴² “China Sends Doctors and Masks Overseas as Domestic Coronavirus Infections Drop”, *The Guardian*, 19 March 2020, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/19/china-positions-itself-as-a-leader-in-tackling-the-coronavirus>, accessed on 30 May 2020.

Based on the aforementioned discussions, it can be seen that the basic focus of the neorealist venture is to look at the probable confrontational situation among the states in the global system. Therefore, the outbreak will be addressed by the competing states to uphold their responsibilities, but the act is going to be motivated by uplifting their national image and extend power sharing in the relative power distribution.

4. Neoliberal Institutionalism and Covid-19

Neoliberalism, to some extent, was a direct or indirect response to the infatuation of power politics imposed by realism and neorealism.⁴³ The changes definitely created a scope for thinking out of the box where the elements do not necessarily involve militaristic and economic power of the state or relative gains. However, neoliberal institutionalism does not totally disapprove the existence of anarchy or the competitiveness existing in the international system; but according to the neoliberal understanding, this competitiveness can be mitigated and the warmongering attitude of the states can be annihilated by international institutions for the betterment of all.⁴⁴

4.1 *Institutions, Regimes and Governance*

Adding a new form of responsible regimes to the common, authoritative paradigm based on states and the international system created an interesting combination of top-down and bottom-up solutions to “common” problems. Therefore, the scope of engagement has expanded both vertically and horizontally which signifies the extended number of issues being taken into account and also discovers multiple dimensions associated with a single problem. However, the initial task is to identify a “common” problem and adhere to a “common” solution.

Stein⁴⁵ has indicated that the competition between the states does not have to be a zero-sum game; rather, it can formulate a kind of “equilibrium selection” where little conflict between interests can be annihilated via institutional solutions which will bypass the risk of coordination failure. Keohane and Nye’s depiction of neoliberal institutionalism also covers the question of governance and associates the

⁴³ James L. Richardson, “The Ethics of Neoliberal Institutionalism”, in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 222-232.

⁴⁴ Robert Jervis, “Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate.” *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1999, pp. 42-63.

⁴⁵ Arthur A. Stein, “Neoliberal Institutionalism”, in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds.), op. cit., pp. 210-221.

idea with the concept of enhancement of human capabilities by Amartya Sen, the Rawlsian idea of justice and the question of democratic legitimacy.⁴⁶

However, resorting to institutional solutions does not mean that the “competitive system” will totally evolve itself into a cooperative society. Neoliberal institutionalism does not also want to go beyond the positivist umbrella at the expense of inviting space for idealism or ethical concerns. However, neoliberal schools also sometimes incorporate non-positivist ideas as depictions of good, desirable, legitimate, obligatory etc.⁴⁷ It creates a balance by focusing on the route of the reciprocity approach rather than simply depending on cooperative nature and value-laden judgement of the states. The comparative analysis between the outbreak of the great influenza pandemic around 1918 to 1920 and the current coronavirus crisis provides a synoptic view regarding the means of combating a pandemic. The Spanish flu attacked around 43 countries of the world and killed around 39 million people worldwide.⁴⁸ The difference between then and now is that, at that moment, there was no concentrated form of global governance system. The League of Nations was a budding organization at its initial stage. The only healthcare-centric organization was the Red Cross. All the states were left to rely upon their own governance system, or in other words, on an “idealistic” structure. Addressing the paradox of public health issues at the time of this crisis, Rosner⁴⁹ has pointed out that the only solution which could be used as a common public health model for all the cities at that time was to close down amusement park and public meeting places. Ironically enough, after a century, the world has hardly prepared to offer in terms of a proper institutional model to combat the public health crisis. However, Rosner has also referred to another key issue which was the severe racial and social stratification in the city of Chicago, which, along with unplanned organization, made the crisis catastrophic.⁵⁰

However, still, the global regime has a lot to offer so far as institutional support is concerned. Spinney⁵¹ has clearly identified that one of the major problems when it comes to the globe or characteristic of the pandemic was the lack of information and the lack of means to acquire information from remote areas. The author has also given an example – a group of researchers from Cape Town in 1998 identified that,

⁴⁶ James L. Richardson, op. cit., p. 232.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Robert J. Barro, José F. Ursúa and Joanna Weng, *The Coronavirus and the Great Influenza Pandemic: Lessons from the “Spanish Flu” for the Coronavirus’s Potential Effects on Mortality and Economic Activity*. NBER Working Paper No. 26866, Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2020.

⁴⁹ David Rosner, “‘Spanish Flu, or Whatever it Is...’: The Paradox of Public Health in a Time of Crisis”, *Public Health Reports*, Vol. 125, No. 3, 2010, pp. 37-47.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Laura Spinney, *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How It Changed the World*, New York: Public Affairs, 2017.

almost no concrete information was available from South America, the Middle East, Russia, South East Asia and the Mainland China regarding the influenza outbreak and its impact.⁵² Thus, while discussing the global institutional reform, it has to be mentioned how the information revolution has created a bigger scope of intervention for state actors, interstate actors and regional organizations. Similarly, the upheaval in the global civil society organizations contributed to the development of the neoliberal institutional system. Adding a different kind of organization was also an important feature of this new form of governance. Rau⁵³ has referred to a number of civil society organizations which helped in mobilizing organized movements against the HIV pandemic. These organizations include religious societies, women’s groups, youth groups, informal sectors business workers, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). The author also mentioned that, quite surprisingly, the two countries which have shown success in combating the epidemic through the civil society are Uganda and Thailand—both with military governments.⁵⁴

4.2 *Institutions and Their Roles in the Present Context*

Neoliberal institutionalism has always been associated with the motifs of capitalism, and a significant part of it is associated with the trade regimes as much as they are linked with global governance. Pieterse⁵⁵ pointed out the intersection between globalization and establishment of a neoliberal empire: defunding the features of social government, i.e. welfare policies, workfare, funding punitive government, and privatization of government function. Therefore, while ensuring a consolidated success of global governance, significant groups might be isolated when domestic monetary establishment and welfare policies are considered. Gabriela and Otero’s⁵⁶ analysis signifies how a neoliberal food regime has created a diversified form of division of labour in the North American region around the neighbouring countries like the US, Canada and Mexico. Refuting the false hopes of success from competitiveness, the construction of this particular regime resulted in creating even more inequalities and extending the existing discrimination prevalent in a society. Given Mexico has been historically struggling as a competitor in comparison to its bigger neighbours, this indeed led to corporate dominations in terms of production and consumption of food.⁵⁷ This information and analysis are not focused on the context of pandemic or a global crisis. But it can be comprehended that a global

⁵² Ibid, p. 15.

⁵³ Bill Rau, “The Politics of Civil Society in Confronting HIV/AIDS”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2, 2006, pp. 285-295.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Neoliberal Empire” *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2004, pp. 119-140.

⁵⁶ Gabriela Pechlaner and Gerardo Otero, “The Neoliberal Food Regime: Neoregulation and the New Division of Labor in North America”, *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 75, No. 2, 2010, pp. 179-208.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 184.

pandemic is less likely going to mitigate the absence of equity in different societies let alone abolish it. It has been estimated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) that the affected countries are going to have an average of 2.4 per cent downfall in growths compared to the unaffected countries.⁵⁸

Parker⁵⁹ has mentioned how the role of World Bank evolved from a development or a provider organization to an organization which also focuses on healthcare and development dedicated to a lingering crisis like the HIV pandemic, *inter alia*, healthcare in general. The roles of these organizations are never out of criticism. Particularly, the World Bank made a donation of US\$1.7 billion in the post-9/11 era along with an additional commitment of US\$744 million to combat HIV and became an active actor in a sphere which had previously been dominated by the WHO.⁶⁰ On 03 March 2020, the World Bank also announced US\$12 million immediate support for the countries of which were struggling to keep up with the initial situation regarding the Covid-19 crisis.⁶¹ It has also extended the support through “emergency health support” starting from an amount of US\$1.9 billion since 12 April 2020 for 25 countries and a commitment of deploying up to US\$160 million for the next 15 months.⁶²

Meanwhile, the WHO has already established itself as a central organization to coordinate, pre-empt and assist all the responses against the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the true essence of neoliberal institutionalism becomes evident in this case as the WHO has responded rapidly in terms of providing guiding principles, conglomeration of global responses and venturing coherence among the policies. The organization has created guidelines for critical preparedness, readiness, responses, community engagement, operational considerations, laboratory testing, establishment of severe acute respiratory infection treatment centre, adjustment of public health and social measures for all the countries in the world.⁶³ The fact that the WHO works as a specialist agency under the UN also promotes a neoliberal global capitalist agenda. However, it is also true that the US is the largest donor of WHO (along with its US\$100 billion health assistance and nearly US\$70 billion

⁵⁸ United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), “Coronavirus: The Economic Impact”, available at <https://www.unido.org/stories/coronavirus-economic-impact>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

⁵⁹ Richard Parker, “The global HIV/AIDS Pandemic, Structural Inequalities, and the Politics of International Health”, *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 92, No. 3, 2002, pp. 343-347.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ World Bank Press Release, “World Bank Group Launches First Operations for Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Emergency Health Support, Strengthening Developing Country Responses”, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/02/world-bank-group-launches-first-operations-for-Covid-19-coronavirus-emergency-health-support-strengthening-developing-country-responses>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

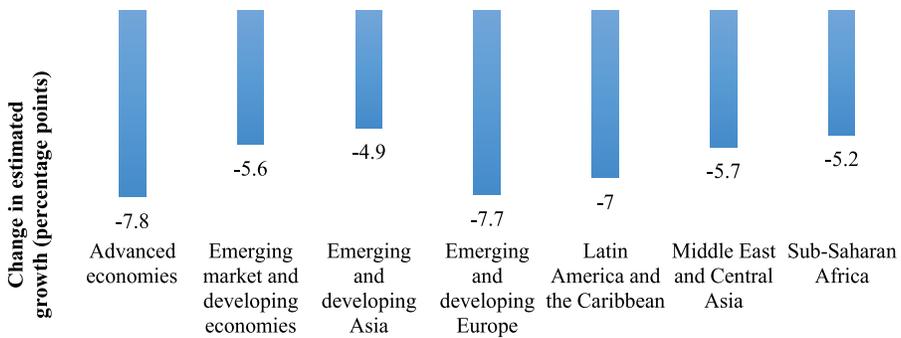
⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ World Health Organization (WHO), “Critical Preparedness, Readiness and Response Actions for Covid-19”, available at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/critical-preparedness-readiness-and-response-actions-for-Covid-19>, accessed on 1 June 2020.

humanitarian assistance to the globe) and the collaboration of this two eventually helped the world fight a number of epidemics which occurred in different regions.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the politicization of the WHO by the US president has led to the cut in its funding as, according to him, the organization was being “China-centric”.⁶⁵

Although most of the regions which are supposedly going to be affected belong to the developed clusters, the UNIDO also shows that the growing small European countries as well as the Latin American and Caribbean regions are going to be affected as much as the high-income countries (Figure 1).⁶⁶ The evidence of unemployment had already putting adverse impacts on different countries. According to the report from Reuters, in the US, around 20.5 million people applied for unemployment benefits in April 2019.⁶⁷ The rates are going to fluctuate depending on the governance system of different states, particularly for the ones which are not welfare-states. The World Trade Organization (WTO) reported that global trade might fall between 30 per cent and 32 per cent in 2020 as a result of the outbreak of the virus.⁶⁸ Neoliberalism puts a higher degree of trust on the global economic regimes to solve an upcoming economic turbulence as well as the global employment crisis. However, it is not just difficult to make common policies for all over the world, rather, a question to what extent states are willing to and are equipped with capabilities to co-opt their existing economic system under a shift in the economic structure, decisions taken by relevant regimes and coherent management strategies.

Figure 1: Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Different Regions⁶⁹



⁶⁴ Jerome Amir Singh, “Covid-19: Science and Global Health Governance Under Attack”, *South African Medical Journal*, Vol. 110, No. 6, 2020, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ UNIDO, op. cit.

⁶⁷ “Explained: How Covid-19 has Affected the Global Economy”, *The Indian Express*, available at <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-has-Covid-19-affected-the-global-economy-6410494/>, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁶⁸ World Trade Organizations Press Release, “Trade Set to Plunge as Covid-19 Pandemic Upends Global Economy”, available at https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁶⁹ UNIDO, op. cit.

The fast-track financing system from the World Bank promises a total of US\$1.9 billion in 25 countries and another \$8 billion via International Finance Corporation (IFC) for private sectors.⁷⁰ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has already granted Bangladesh a total of US\$177.77 million with Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of US\$244 million or 16.67 per cent of quota under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF), and purchase of SDR US\$355.53 million with US\$488 million or US\$33.33 per cent of quota under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI).⁷¹ The IMF also announced that the organization had secured around US\$1 trillion for the deployment addressing the outbreak for the member states along with RCFs and RFIs meeting a US\$100 billion demand.⁷² However, IMF's analysis refers to a necessity of investing more on climate governance for securing a healthy world in the future. Addressing the policymakers, it has been said that -

“The current Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that crisis preparedness and resilience are essential to manage risks from highly uncertain events that can have extreme economic and human costs.

... expanding the availability of insurance and strengthening the sovereign's overall financial strength can lessen the impact of climatic disasters and hence reduce financial stability risks.”⁷³

Regarding the regional organizations, the question of the European Union (EU) comes at first since it not only is an organization which stands as the archetype of supranational authority but also considering how Europe has been greatly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. The organization has reported that it has prepared US\$2.18 trillion for post-pandemic recovery funds.⁷⁴ The European Commission (EC) is also proposing approximate US\$884 billion recovery funds, including approximate US\$590 billion for grants and US\$294 billion for loans.⁷⁵ The EU's annual budget for 2020 has been informed to be doubled up from US\$1.3 trillion to US\$2.36 trillion considering the condition of the European countries. As explained previously, some

⁷⁰ World Bank Press Release, op. cit.

⁷¹ International Monetary Fund (IMF), “IMF Executive Board Approves a US\$732 Million Disbursement to Bangladesh to Address the Covid-19 Pandemic”, IMF Press Release 20/226, available at <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/05/29/pr20226-bangladesh-imf-exec-board-approves-us-732m-disbursement-to-address-the-covid19-pandemic>, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁷² “The IMF's Response to Covid-19”, available at <https://www.imf.org/en/About/FAQ/imf-response-to-covid-19>, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁷³ Felix Suntheim and Jérôme Vandenbussche, “Equity Investors Must Pay More Attention to Climate Change Physical Risk”, International Monetary Fund, 29 May 2020, available at <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/05/29/equity-investors-must-pay-more-attention-to-climate-change-physical-risk/>, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁷⁴ “EU Announces Financial ‘firepower’ of 1.85 Trillion with 750 Billion for COVID Recovery”, available at <https://www.euronews.com/2020/05/27/eu-commission-set-to-unveil-trillion-euro-coronavirus-recovery-plan>, accessed on 29 May 2020.

⁷⁵ Ibid

of the recently developing European economies are going to be hit by the crisis severely, and this support may help them compete with the situation.

Nevertheless, the question is not just about grants but also about mitigating the loopholes in interest and identifying common goals. Thereby, the concern would be: how far has the EU managed to achieve this goal?

An example can be seen by referring to the case of Italy. Italy has been proved to be one of the worst scenarios in the world affected by the Covid-19 situation during the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak (Figure 2). Following the crisis, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte asked for “coronabond” but failed to convince Germany and the Netherlands from ruling out any kind of debt mutualisation.⁷⁶ In the case of other regions, particularly in South Asia, the situation is even worse. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been persistently infamous for being a victim of political drawbacks even in the moment of crisis.⁷⁷ It has not created a change even as a result of this global pandemic. India has been one of the largely affected member countries of SAARC. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi organized a video conference on 14 March 2020 among the SAARC member states which has been criticised as rather ceremonial and imprudent.⁷⁸ Interesting enough, the crisis brought in some complexities in most of the pre-given dimensions of interstate conflicts, particularly in the Asian region. On one hand, China has promised to include the Asian countries as a part of its US\$2 billion worth loans⁷⁹; while its relation with India started decreasing in the border following a number of border clashes.⁸⁰

In brief, neoliberal institutionalism will try to address the issue of global governance through different institutional mechanisms to combat the Covid-19 crisis. Thus, a neoliberal solution will mostly look at the strategies taken by all of these institutions, such as, rapid and extended policies and monetary sanctuaries provided either by grants and loans. Albeit addressing the pandemic might be the most urgent issue to be solved by these regimes, they also have to take into account

⁷⁶ “Coronavirus: Are Italians Losing Faith in the EU?”, *BBC News*, 17 May 2020, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52666870>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

⁷⁷ Rahila Asfa and Mughees Ahmed. “Prospects of Regionalism: Comparative Analysis of SAARC and ASEAN”, *Asia Pacific-Annual Research Journal of Far East & South East Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2015.

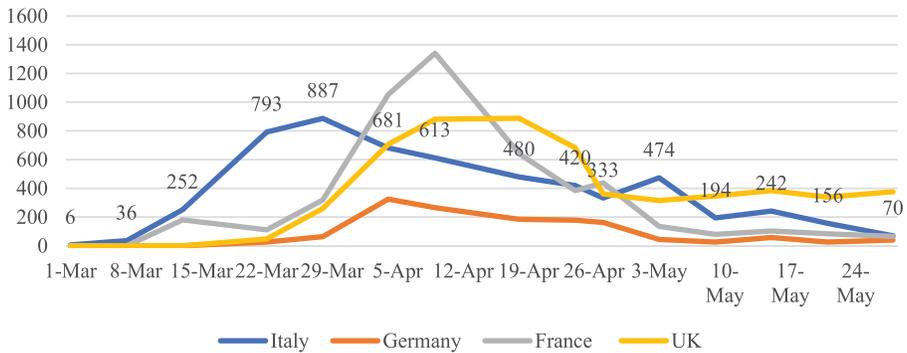
⁷⁸ Partha S. Ghosh, “Playing the Covid-19 Card to Sustain the SAARC Nonsense”, 20 May 2020, available at <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/2020/05/20/playing-the-Covid-19-card-to-sustain-the-saarc-nonsense>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

⁷⁹ ASEAN, “Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19)”, available at <https://asean.org/declaration-special-asean-summit-coronavirus-disease-2019-Covid-19/>, accessed on 29 May 2020

⁸⁰ “China-India border: Why Tensions are Rising between the Neighbours”, *BBC News*, 30 May 2020, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52852509>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

how these loans are going to be paid back, how they are being distributed and correlations between development and governance equilibria.

Figure 2: Number of New (Daily) Covid-19 Cases in the European Countries (March-May)⁸¹



5. Social Constructivism and Covid-19

Often known to be standing in the middle point between the positives and non-positivist theories, constructivism has created a space for bringing in newer avenues of cooperation while exploring the traditional mediums of interstate relations. In other words, constructivists try to build up a sphere which addresses the problems of both self-help oriented global order and also accepts the roles of non-state or inter-state regimes. In this regard, the key focus has been brought to the question of identity and interest and distribution of knowledge.

5.1 Ideas, Interactions and the Question of a Pandemic

Alexander Wendt's⁸² famous work "Anarchy is What States Make of It" forecasts the necessity of subjective understanding under the theoretical outlines of international relations. As Wendt mentions, individuals or states, act on the basis of meanings rather than depending on objective basis. Thus, the question of interstate relations and self-help are not totally out of order, but a constructivist scholar would like to present a different view where states act differently with other states based on their past experiences and interactions.⁸³ The role of institutions is also not ignored. It

⁸¹ WHO Covid-19 Dashboard.

⁸² Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992, pp. 391-425.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

is argued that identities and interests are linked to institutional roles, which has been illustrated with reference to Berger.⁸⁴ However, constructivism relies upon human conscience and creates a differentiation between practical and scientific reasoning.⁸⁵ One of the key areas of constructivism is also the agent-structure debate which the two other theories disregard. Ulbert⁸⁶ points out that, regarding the relations between agent and structure, Wendt himself had given preference to structures rather than actors. He even referred to the agent-centric analysis as “historic”.⁸⁷ The basic premise of the debate mostly depends on the question whether (human) actors are the “purposeful actors” who can influence and direct the social relationships or whether they are the ones being motivated by these relationships and the structures being produced by this relationships.⁸⁸ Therefore, in the first case, human beings are either “reflective and goal-directed subjects” and the structures either complement or constrain their goals. In the second case, they have nothing but to move in between the pre-destined structure and play “the rule of the game”.⁸⁹

Therefore, addressing the global crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic from a constructivist perspective has to be focused on the dynamics of collectively shared meanings and how they constitute the agent-structure issues. A lot of previously attributed complexities in the previous sections thus become evident and comprehensible. Ulbert has presented a simplistic figure depicting how Wendt would understand the interpersonal relationship between actors and environments vis-à-vis the propensity of violence (Figure 3).⁹⁰ Even the constructivist scale becomes narrow to a point where the threat is a third actor which is completely different from the ones which would not constitute the structures in the commonly attributed forms. Hence, it can be argued that even in the situation of competing a pandemic or a global catastrophe, international relations, more or less configures itself around the relations between states, international organizations, or prominent actors who are making the decisions. Therefore, it is neither the actors nor the structures, rather the tools which would be the key elements to be focused on - norms, rules, process of communication, dissemination of ideas and creation of culture.

Ideas signify the necessity of taking different steps as per the perceptions of the actors. Covid-19 has also provided a picture of how the threat of a pandemic is perceived differently by different actors, or, “security actors” in particular.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Martin Griffiths et al., op. cit., p. 127.

⁸⁶ Cornelia Ulbert, “Social Constructivism”, in Scott Burchill et al., op. cit., pp. 30-34.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

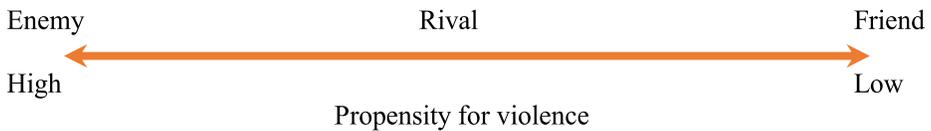
⁸⁸ Alexander Wendt, “The agent-structure problem in international relations theory”, *International Organization* 1987, pp. 335-370.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ulbert, op. cit., p. 253.

Securitization of the state became a vital point and almost in a routine manner, the “war” was declared against a unique enemy with traditional and rather “un-unique” apparatus. Most of the countries had to use their military forces to supervise and control the lockdown. Both the Chinese and the American narratives have also been addressing the question of whether Covid-19 was actually a biological weapon from each other’s end.⁹¹ Manoeuvres depend on the actors’ way of looking at things. Therefore, identification of the problem and dissemination of the knowledge are also key issues. This is why, when the US President looks at it as a traditional war, a war against “a virus coming from China”, the rest of the world looks at it in a different way.

Figure 3: State and Dynamism of Constructivists Interactions⁹²



In the current situation, constructivism can be a theoretical stimulus for collective identities. Zehfuss⁹³ considers the issue of creating collective identity and ensuring stability in two different institutional forms. Hence, he refers to the example of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) during the inter-war period and the NATO during the Cold War where collective identity was created by military institutionalism against a common threat in two different contexts. However, according to Wendt, identities can be volatile. In order to create a concrete form of identity, it is important to find the actors through interactions rather than interest.⁹⁴ In the case of a pandemic, the importance of solidarity and empathy becomes preeminent beyond everything else. The global media in different parts of the world has been reporting that although lockdown has been initiated in almost every part of every country, it is hard to put the idea inside everyone’s mind how the Covid-19 crisis can rapidly spread from one person to another and then circulate from hundreds to thousands.

International organizations and media have already taken this initiative and are trying to use it for fostering global channel of awareness. Social media provides an extent that serves the tool for escalating these ideas of building a new (imagined)

⁹¹ Bob Fredericks, “Chinese Official Blames Coronavirus Outbreak on US Military”, *New York Post*, 12 March 2020, available at <https://nypost.com/2020/03/12/chinese-official-blames-coronavirus-outbreak-on-us-military/>, accessed on 10 April 2020.

⁹² Cornelia Ulbert, op. cit., p. 253.

⁹³ Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

community⁹⁵ when it is occurring at a global scale. Going back to the arguments created in the previous sections, it can be questioned why the economically developed countries are troubled despite their capabilities or governance structure. Constructivism would try to explain it by mentioning that the whole situation depends on how the meaning of the threat is perceived and how the states and the individuals are attributing their identities and responsibilities in comparison with others.

Wendt⁹⁶ himself has focused on the creation of collective identity at the international level in a different article. As per Wendt, the construction of this kind of identity is a continuum from “negative to positive” and also an exploration of the extension of the “self”. When it comes to the identity of the state, he adds that states have their “friends” and “enemies” and a state does not act with a friendly state the way it interacts with another state which is quite “enigmatic”. Hence, the term “enigmatic” has been carefully used rather than an “inimical” state because, in order to think from a constructivist viewpoint, states should not be confined within the pre-determined conceptualization of friendship and hostility. Or, in other words, self-interest or subsequent ideas shall be defined in a way that makes the terms tautological.⁹⁷

5.2 *Towards a Broader Paradigm*

In his works, Wendt tried to explore a different area which can be referred to as “quantum social science” where the state is considered as a “person” and the wave-particle dualism from quantum physics is applied as the body-mind problem of the state.⁹⁸ Wendt has pointed out the issue of “collective consciousness” which indeed leads to the autonomous characteristic of states and the division between facts and ideas.

Therefore, it is definitely understandable why China is not behaving with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the way it is doing with India. The logic goes back to a long history of mutual interactions which did not result in a friendly environment. Just considering the political structure or the regional system of Asia, it can be presented as “anarchic”. However, history will show that India was indeed the first non-communist state to acknowledge China as an independent state on 30 December 1949, just after two months of its proclamation. Starting from the 1962 Sino Indian war, a series of clashes between the two countries had created this

⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Routledge, 2006.

⁹⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2, 1994, pp. 384-396.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 386.

⁹⁸ Cornelia Ulbert, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

uneasy environment over the years. Again, Donald Trump's attitude toward China and his ongoing strife with WHO reflect the legacy of tension between him and the Chinese president Xi Jinping. Thus, actions and self-interests are context-specific and all the actions by different actors in international relations do not follow pre-determined models.

The Covid-19 situation can be used to make the countries forget their age-old skirmishes and inspire them to come together for either "social" or "global" cause. Moreover, social constructivism would suggest there is actually a sense of rapprochement between Taiwan and China based on the former's success in tackling the pandemic. China has been blocking Taiwan's participation in the WHO since 2018. There is a possibility of offering olive branches and letting Taiwan share its success story with only 440 cases and 232 deaths.⁹⁹ The UN, other global and regional organizations and the global civil society can play a pivotal role in this regard.

Some significant variants of social constructivism focus more on cosmopolitan ideologies. Wenner¹⁰⁰ had mentioned three kinds of thinking tools which are: (i) normativity premise; (ii) diversity premise; and, (iii) cultural cosmopolitanism. While the first two link up the establishment of norms and institutional mechanism based on "compliance" or "contestation" of the state, the third one depicts the behaviour of states as cultural practices.¹⁰¹ Cosmopolitanism, in general, is more discussed in critical theories. However, social constructivism opens up a door for the creation of "cultures" as international norms which can lead to cosmopolitanism along with an understanding between states and for collective actions. These newly formed cultures can be prepared to look for optimum solutions against a prolonged Covid-19 pandemic and participate in a minimalist lifestyle. The print, broadcasting and social media, as well as the bloggers and the journalists, can create awareness programmes to address this issue.

According to Guzzini¹⁰², the linking of action and observation has to be implanted to utilize a constructivist framework in case of a global crisis. Although his analysis was based on the context of international relations in the 1980s and the Gulf War, the learning of the theory can still be used in the case of a global pandemic. It also addresses the issue of mutualization including the sources of

⁹⁹ Jo Kim, "The Coronavirus Outbreak Presents an Opportunity for Cross-Strait Rapprochement", 07 February 2020, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/the-coronavirus-outbreak-presents-an-opportunity-for-cross-strait-rapprochement/>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Antje Wiener, *A Theory of Contestation*, Berlin: Springer, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Jonathan Havercroft, "Social Constructivism and International Ethics", in Brent J. Steele and Eric A. Heinze (eds.), *Routledge Handbook on Ethics in International Relation*, London: Routledge, 2017.

¹⁰² Stefano Guzzini, "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2000, pp. 147-182.

capabilities, creating national agent, use of soft power and consanguine moral and legal languages. For example, in the analysis, Guzzini has mentioned, it is important for an action to happen in order to bring responsibility, guilt, agency and change. Moreover, he has seen power as a counter-factual element which can be used as an element of constructing the “possible”.¹⁰³ Creating a special board or agencies dedicated to Covid-19 can be seen as the creation of “national agents”. These agents have to be given a certain degree of powers to have independent operability beyond the national sphere and bring rapid changes. For a country like Bangladesh, a multi-agency regime including the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and WHO can be an example of such organization. Since “legitimization” is a very important aspect of constructivist knowledge and its appropriation¹⁰⁴, these regimes should be equipped with monitoring and evaluation capabilities so that “responsibilities”, “guilt” and “paybacks” can be easily identified and a lineage of transparency is maintained all around.

A constructivist lens will help identify which countries and actors are responsible for which activities and whether the responsibilities are properly maintained. If this “culture” can be constituted ranging from national to global contexts, not only individuals will understand their duty as national and global citizens, but the states can also correlate with one another and look for a mutual and collective end. In this way, both the state actors and the non-state actors can be held accountable.

The importance of frequent interaction is thus unavoidable. Although physical interactions are not possible at this moment, the global media and organizations can set up virtual meetings known as “health diplomacy” for countries to act on a constructivist agenda. The role of influential actors and social media cannot be denied. Globally reputed celebrities or media personnel can come out to encourage people to stay home and utilize the quarantine in proper manner.

In summary, as per constructivism, the power of observation and responsibility must go through a reciprocal all-encompassing approach. The state should be accountable towards the citizens, individuals should be accountable to each other and both the state and individuals should be accountable to one another as part of global actors.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 167-71.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Griffiths et al., op. cit., p. 141.

6. A Comparative Analysis: Can the Theories Complement One Another to Bring a Successful Solution?

The mainstream IR theories do not directly address the question of a pandemic. However, they do carry their own lenses for identifying problems and addressing solutions. The basic elements would lie in between their focus on actors and the way each of the theories sees a global crisis and the sources and how they address the policy implications.

From the discussion, it can be understood that so far as the primary actors are concerned, neorealism will not bestow the responsibility on any particular state or non-state actors; rather, it will try to look at the balance of power in the global scale and the balancing mechanisms which lead to an international status-quo. Therefore, the solution of the pandemic or any other global crisis becomes the subsidiary factor. On the other hand, neoliberal institutionalism is quite focused on putting the responsibility to international institutions which not only focused on the organizations but also on norms, laws and global customs. In other words, it is the structure of governance which is supposed to run the primary force of tackling the pandemic. However, for constructivism, the discussion is centred around interpersonal and interactive relationship as well as the agent-structure debate. Thus, it is the interplay between the actors and the relationships which will decide to what extent the battle against Covid-19 is going to be successful. This is why, as explained, neorealist scholars would suggest that a competitive scenario between the US and China would lead the countries to look for a faster and better solution, and that is how a revolutionary invention in the medical science (i.e., invention of a vaccine) can be achieved. On the other hand, neoliberal institutionalism would bestow this responsibility on the international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. Social constructivism would take an all-inclusive approach and suggest bottom-up solutions like creation of awareness and bringing change in the pattern of relationship among the actors. These patterns can be of varied kinds – among the state and the individuals, among the organizations and the states as well as among the organizations and the individuals.

Discussing the key aspects of these three kinds of theories, it should be kept in mind that there are a number of schools and variants under each of these theories which drift from the primary ideas and explore new areas. On the other hand, the newly emerged hybrid theories refuse to fall under any stereotypical formula. Thies¹⁰⁵ has shed light on the fact that constructivism in particular can be used both as a lens and a theory. From this viewpoint, it can put the juxtaposing theories into a

¹⁰⁵ Cameron G. Thies, “Are Two Theories Better than One? A Constructivist Model of the Neorealist–Neoliberal Debate”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2004, pp. 159-183.

mixing pot without negating any of them. Therefore, constructivism here is rather a lens or a perspective-tool. More importantly, he also mentioned using constructivism as a tool for maximizing the retention of “high-culture” and minimizing the “low-culture” and vice versa. Therefore, the constructivist lens can be used by both the neorealist and the neoliberal institutionalists to design extended portfolios to maintain simultaneous balancing, norm-setting and awareness-building strategies and, at the same time, addressing the Covid-19 crisis.

In order to define the midpoint of realism, liberalism and conservatism, Barkin¹⁰⁶ has mentioned how, in terms of power relation, realism goes along with the courses of constructivism while ideas and utopia intersect within the spheres of constructivism and liberalism. He also addresses that over-emphasis on the material aspect of the realism is mostly from the critics rather than the exponents. Ignoring the scepticism of the other two, constructivism can actually use itself for providing a channel for power-dynamics and extend the dynamism between the countries to achieve balancing points. Therefore, the realist ‘competitiveness’ can actually be fruitful to inspire scientists in the technologically advanced countries so that they can look for a faster solution. Similarly, as per neoliberal institutionalism, the inter-governmental organizations can announce certain sponsorship or support for this kind of research.

On the other hand, both realism and liberalism deal with the competitive power sharing reality in the world. In this regard, realism and liberalism are prepared to use both the state and organization while the predetermination of domination between these two is different for the two theories. Baldwin’s¹⁰⁷ reference to the complexities between intention and capabilities also provides a space. One of the notable realist scholars Stephen Krasner has criticized neoliberals’ focus on intention and interests and ignorance towards capabilities.¹⁰⁸ However, this is the momentum where constructivism can dive in and merge with neoliberal institutionalism. Ideas to bring a solution to a pandemic can be standardized based on international customs if they are regularly revised to create equidistant policies. Therefore, ‘capacity’ enhancement can be a point of convergence for both the neorealists and the neoliberal institutionalists. However, the neorealists would focus on the capacity building of the states and the neoliberal institutionalists would prescribe stronger institutional development, norm-building and capacity building of neoliberal non-state regimes.

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Barkin, “Realist Constructivism”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2003, pp. 325-342.

¹⁰⁷ David A. Baldwin, *Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

¹⁰⁸ Michael C. Webb and Stephen D. Krasner, “Hegemonic Stability Theory: An Empirical Assessment”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1989, pp. 183-198.

Although neoliberals are heavily faithful to their desire of mitigating anarchy through international institutions, for neorealists, the implications cannot be ignored even if they are just portrayed as instrumental elements. When Nye¹⁰⁹ asks “can cooperation be learnt?”, it definitely creates a space for incorporation of constructivism which argues that dissemination of knowledge and direction of power can shift the objectivity of identity attached to any state or institution and make it learn or understand the importance of cooperation. Peck’s¹¹⁰ analysis of the “techniques of regime” also represents the power politics embedded in the realist arguments and the opportunity to construct identities and ideas from a constructivist viewpoint. Thus, states themselves can utilize the international organisations to make better ‘instrumental’ endorsements. For example, with no case of Covid-19 for two weeks, New Zealand has lifted up the restriction on public movement on 08 June 2020.¹¹¹ Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was also being praised for her role. Hence, she can be invited to speak via international platforms, New Zealand’s role can be studied and discussed to identify and apply proper governance patterns and the ‘ideas’ can be shared to make the great powers find out reason of their failure.

In summary, placing these three theories against one another can be very difficult because the way they juxtapose key elements can completely change the way policies are formed. However, it is the fallacy of problem-solving theories that there is no way to manifest discourse-analysis or value judgment of the narratives in order to expose individual voices or the idea of the subalterns. Therefore, when China and the US will be competing for global influence or will be promoting altruistic policies, the international organizations can also play dominant roles by interpolating corollary schemes. And all of this dynamism can be wrapped around the perspectives which would create intersubjective meanings, underlying connotations, creation of communities and enhancement of responsibilities.

7. Concluding Remarks

Going back to the central research question of the article, it can be said that the mainstream IR theories certainly can address the issue of a global pandemic and predict pattern of responses as per their own sets of ideas and principles. Neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism are three of the most popular theories in the realm of IR. Each of them is preoccupied with distinct discursive structures and defined axioms to analyze the present and predict the

¹⁰⁹ Joseph S. Nye, op. cit.

¹¹⁰ Jamie. Peck, “Explaining (with) Neoliberalism”, *Territory, Politics, Governance*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2013, pp. 132-157.

¹¹¹ “New Zealand Lifts all Covid Restrictions, Declaring the Nation Virus-Free”, *BBC News*, 08 June 2020, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52961539>, accessed on 09 June 2020.

future. However, it should also be kept in mind that all of the theories are confined within their respective contexts, epistemological and ontological presuppositions. When addressing a practical event, thus, no theory presents a blueprint for the “ultimate” solution. With the change in reality of the international system, theories also gain or lose significance. Therefore, it should not be the theories which may direct the course of human history, rather it is an interplay between the theories and the practical events.

The outbreak of Covid-19 and its rapid spread around different parts of the world signifies how a small event can bring drastic changes to the predicted global purview within a small amount of time. It can always be argued that the role of positivist, behaviouralist and naturalist theories is to predict a probable threat. In this regard, all of these theories have already failed in suggesting appropriate preparation to combat such a threat. The coronavirus crisis is not just a thrust to global governance or healthcare system, it is at the same time a political, societal and security concern for the states as well as the organizations and the individuals.

Even though each of the theories can make an attempt to address the crisis and suggest solutions, this article has presented how none of the theories are complete in its own way to bring a holistic resolution *vis-à-vis* the crisis. Nevertheless, due to its focus on the problem-solving theories, the article also lacks the perspective of the radical and critical theories which can look forward to reorganizing the structure of the international, regional and social system. However, the theories taken into account provide the opportunity to utilize them as “immediate necessities” and even test them if needed. It is necessary to use the theories as lenses to overcome the shortcomings in the policies and revisit them. Therefore, albeit most of the discussions of this article have been rationalized in terms of practical implications and construction of the policies, it is undoubtedly feasible to continue research and academic analysis to make the theories fit on par with the reality—the present and the future.

Concerning the present situation, there is no option to hold any rigidity if a proper solution is to be convened. Thus, the instruments always must be different, but each of the theories has to be flexible and open to criticism so that all the loopholes can be addressed.

Abul Hasnat Mohammad Mahmud Azam

COMPLEX DETERRENCE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

The 21st century is an era of massive, rapid and all-encompassing global changes. Changes are taking place in almost all spheres of international systems, ranging from international relations to politics and from trade to security. Amid these significant changes around the world, the classical concept of deterrence has experienced a big change and transformation. Once the classical deterrence used to mean that superiority in only military, economic and diplomatic power of nations should determine the deterrence effectiveness. However, the same is not the case today. Because of a host of reasons, in the last seventy years, a steady decline in the ability of stronger actors to effect coercion has taken place in asymmetric conflicts. It has been observed that defeating the weaker actors became difficult whenever they had not fought according to the terms set by the stronger one and had used ingenuity to adopt an indirect and unconventional strategy. In this backdrop, this paper examines the possibilities of achieving credible deterrence by Bangladesh Armed Forces in light of the changing and complex nature of deterrence in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Deterrence, Security of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Armed Forces, Defence, Asymmetric Warfare

1. Introduction

“Do not press a desperate enemy”
—Sun Tzu

Scholars and practitioners alike have already identified the changing nature of deterrence. They have challenged the conventional or mainstream deterrence theory and conducted a good amount of research works in this regard.¹ They have expressed a single idea that deterrence in the 21st century is different and much complex than that of the previous era and its complexity and uncertainty necessitate a reexamination of conventional deterrence framework.² With the end of Cold War,

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¹ Few of the mentionable writers in this regard are Patric M. Morgan, Frank C. Zagare, D. Marc Kilgour, P. K. Huth, Vesna Danilovic, T.V. Paul, Arreguin-Toft and Alex S. Wilner.

² T. V. Paul, Patric M. Morgan and James J. Wirtz (eds.), *Complex Deterrence Strategy in the Global Age*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

the policymakers, scholars, and strategists, who used to be confident about the feasibility and reliability of deterrence as a critical component of peace and security for the international system, got the first shock and with the beginning of 21st century, they experienced the second shock. The 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 at the heart of the United States (US) and succeeding extensive introduction of “War on Terror” made the scholars further sceptical and somewhat confused about the traditional theoretical framework of deterrence.³ Since then, the viability and perpetuity of traditional theory of deterrence have been facing uncertainty and challenges. Confusions arose over few core premises: (1) whether the conventional theory of deterrence is still valid in the absence of superpowers rivalry and nuclear war⁴, (2) whether in reverse order, rogue states/ non-state actors / weak powers are becoming more capable of deterring the stronger power, and (3) whether it is at all possible to deter the non-state actors or not.

Asymmetric conflicts after World War II saw several seemingly paradoxical events where weak actors did not allow strong actors to coerce them with violence or the threat of violence. It seems that today’s weak powers/actors are no more underdogs. Of late, in many cases, they have won over the stronger ones by adopting different unconventional strategies. Adoption of indirect and unconventional strategies made it possible for the weak actors to “put up a better show” while defending them against their stronger adversaries. Therefore, weak actors might find it easier to deter the strong actors from intervening in their affairs even when the disparity in material power is very large.⁵ Thus, the complex and unprecedented security environment of the 21st century suggests that while “compellence” (threatening an adversary to do a certain act) is supposed to be a difficult proposing for a weak actor, achieving “deterrence” (threatens an adversary from doing any unacceptable act) might not be an unrealistic possibility.⁶

The present deterrence ability of the Bangladesh Armed Forces should be studied in light of the new developments in the security environment. Deterrence as a whole is a critical and somewhat complex issue for Bangladesh. Unarguably, the

³ Frank C. Zagare, “Deterrence Is Dead. Long Live Deterrence”, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Peace Science Society, Vol. 23, Issue 2, 2006, pp. 115-120.

⁴ According to Verghese Koithara, “... viewed logically and strategically, nuclear weapons are unusable weapons”. See, Verghese Koithara, “Nuclear Weapons in India’s Defence Policy”, in Harsh V. Pant (ed), *Handbook of Indian Defence Policy*, Routledge, 2016, p. 387. Also see, T. V. Paul, *The Tradition of Non- use of Nuclear Weapons*, California: Stanford University Press, 2009.

⁵ Ivan Arreguin- Toft, *Complex Deterrence Strategy in the Global Age, Unconventional Deterrence*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 204.

⁶ According to Rekasius Mindaugas, “compellence is harder to achieve than deterrence, because, most argue, it is more difficult to get somebody to do, re-do, or stop doing something, than it is to motivate someone not to do that same something”. See, Rekasius Mindaugas, *Unconventional Deterrence Strategy*, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2005, p. 6.

present military posture of Bangladesh is essentially defensive. It though provides some kind of deterrence by denial, yet in all probability, this type of deterrence is not enough for a rising economy like Bangladesh. Because, deterrence by denial does not promise to exact big enough prices from the enemy. Hence, the present deterrence ability of Bangladesh seems not credible enough for the next “Asian Tiger”⁷ and leaves plenty of room for improvement. Recent studies suggest that the rising economy of Bangladesh would make it an economically stronger nation in the foreseeable future. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Bangladesh has the potential to become the world’s 23rd largest economy by 2050, overtaking countries such as the Netherlands, Australia, Spain, Thailand and Malaysia. PwC also predicted that Bangladesh would be the 28th largest economy by 2030.⁸ Sustainable economic rise of a nation calls for an unhindered secured environment, for the realist approaches (that regards world politics as a system of states, in which there is a continual conflict of interest and periodic wars) are still valid even in today’s post-Westphalian era. Even from the time immemorial, there has been security implications of economic development, as economic rise does not come alone; rather, it brings additional security threats to the country along with it. Therefore, Bangladesh, being a potential economic power, needs to pose a credible deterrence so that its economic rise is not hindered by any impending threat.

However, achieving a credible deterrence ability is a complex issue for Bangladesh. In case of the approaches to managing insecurity, Bangladesh can neither fully rely on the liberal policies of collective security and trade liberalization nor the realist policies of so-called “balance of power”. In one hand, (in most of the cases) enhancing military elements of national power usually go hand in hand with the economic development. However, host of factors, such as constitutional provisions and foreign policy of Bangladesh⁹ and its continuous commitment to the causes of ‘The Conference on Disarmament at the Palais des Nations in Geneva’¹⁰ neither allow Bangladesh to go for an arms race nor suggest it adopting a militarily offensive posture. On the other hand, achieving credible deterrence is a necessity for Bangladesh because it only ensures a safe environment for the economic development, but also not guarantees peace with the other actors. As the adage of

⁷ “There Could be a New Asian Tiger, Here is Why”, available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/04/bangladesh-could-be-a-new-asian-tiger-heres-why>, accessed on 09 March 2018.

⁸ “Bangladesh can become 28th Largest Economy by 2030: PwC”, available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/business/bangladesh-can-become-28th-largest-economy-2030-pwc-1358260>, accessed on 07 March 2020.

⁹ Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution on “Promotion of international peace, security and solidarity” states that the state shall ‘strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament.’

¹⁰ “Bangladesh Assumes Presidency of Conference on Disarmament”, available at <http://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/bangladesh-assumes-presidency-of-conference-on-disarmament/55967>, accessed on 27 August 2020.

Hermocrates of Syracuse goes, “when there is mutual fear, men think twice before they make aggressions upon one another”¹¹—deterrence should help ensure peace.

In this backdrop, this paper examines the possibilities of achieving credible deterrence by Bangladesh Armed Forces¹² in light of the changing nature of deterrence in the twenty-first century. To that end, the paper begins with a discussion of the basics of conventional deterrence. It then turns to explore the complex deterrence in the 21st century and the effect of asymmetric warfare on deterrence. Finally, it sketches the future of deterrence of Bangladesh Armed Forces given the complex and changing nature of deterrence in the 21st century.

2. Basics of Deterrence

In practice, deterrence is as old as human civilization. From the ancient era of Alexander the Great or Hannibal Barca or Julius Caesar to Genghis Khan or the Napoleonic era, deterrence shaped the tactics of battlefield and strategy of the security environment. However, as a theory, it is a new concept. Not considering deterrence to be a part of the war, modern military theorists like Clausewitz or Jomini had seldom even bothered to mention it in their works. Perhaps Clausewitz could never even contemplate that someday there would be a kind of (nuclear) weapon whose only rightful function would be to deter war from breaking out. Though deterrence as a tactic or strategy is much associated with the military, the military theorists or academic scholars never mentioned it before the 20th century.¹³ Thus, the time tested, “ancient” and perpetual “deterrence” actually started to appear as a new 20th century concept in the works of political scientists and scholars.

In strategic studies, deterrence is defined as deliberate management of the behaviour of others through conditional threats. Deterrence is about the role of force in international affairs, and in particular threats of force, intended to stop others acting in harmful ways.¹⁴ In other words, it ensures the status quo by manipulating fear of the enemies to prevent unwanted action. Deterrence is successful when a potential attacker decides to abstain from a planned offensive because of the fear

¹¹ Thucydides, translated by Richard Crawley, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book IV, available at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0105%3Abook%3D4%3Achapter%3D1>, accessed on 15 October 2020.

¹² Achieving deterrence is not an exclusive preserve of the Armed Forces of any country. Thereby, a country should employ all of the elements of its national power for deterrence. However, in this regard, Armed Forces traditionally plays the role of the main stakeholder, and thus, this paper focuses on the Bangladesh Armed Forces only.

¹³ F. C. Zagare, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Lawrence Freedman, “Deterrence: A Reply”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, October 2005, pp. 789-801.

of undesirable punishment or denial of victory. It refrains leaders of belligerent states from direct military conflict against other countries. Deterrence has been and will continue to be a human issue. It constitutes a fundamental human relationship that pertains across culture, time and space,¹⁵ and the logic of deterrence always holds true irrespective of the nature of the enemy. Usually, in traditional deterrence relationship, calculations of national power (especially military, economic and diplomatic power) are considered as the main factors of determining the degrees of deterrence effectiveness.

2.1 *Historical Failure of Deterrence*

Despite being elegant, deterrence theories received considerable criticism for their weakness when examined in light of case studies of the actual decision situation.¹⁶ While enjoying the probability of defeat or annihilation, strong states frequently fail to deter weaker adversaries. In many cases, deterrence did not work the way it had been perceived or theorized by the theorists. Defying all deterrence calculations, militarily and economically less powerful states initiated wars against relatively strong states. One scholarly study suggests that in the last century, approximately 30 per cent of conflicts were initiated by the weak with an attack on the strong.¹⁷ Japanese carried out offensive in Russia (in 1904), and they attacked Pearl Harbor (in 1941). The Chinese initiated war in Korea (in 1950) and the Egyptian dared to carry out offensive in the Sinai (in 1973). Even being a nuclear superpower, the United Kingdom (UK) could not deter the Argentine from invading the Falkland Islands (in 1982). Because of a host of reasons, the political or state leaders act contrary to deterrent theories. Regime insecurity and psychological biases, such as wishful thinking, groupthink and misperceptions can upset deterrence calculations as well as outcomes. Highly motivated leaders can challenge deterrent threats even without expecting victory¹⁸. Thereby, lesson learnt is that despite possessing military, economic and material superiority, deterrence will not always work according to the desire of the deterrer.

2.2 *Variants of Deterrence and Deterrence Postures*

Theoreticians have categorized deterrence into many different types. Apart from two widely analyzed types of deterrence, i.e., conventional and nuclear deterrence, there are some more categorizations of deterrence theory. Posture wise,

¹⁵ F. C. Zagare, op. cit., p. 116.

¹⁶ T. V. Paul, et al., op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁷ Adam Lowther, "Framing Deterrence in the Twenty-first Century: Conference Summary", Deterrence in the 21st Century, Proceedings of Conference held on 18-19 May 2009, sponsored by RUSI, King's College.

¹⁸ T. V. Paul, et al., op. cit., p. 3.

deterrence can be of two types—General and Specific. In General deterrence, as the name implies, opponents do not expect imminent threats from each other and thus, maintain their military forces for future contingencies with the implicit understanding of their use in the time of crisis. State’s capability, credibility and reputation to retaliate determine its General deterrence ability. For example, nuclear-armed states can always pose General deterrence against its adversaries. The strategic maxim “don’t invade Russia” pre-dates the nuclear age is another expression of General deterrence, as Russia (with or without nuclear weapons) is a state not to be messed with.¹⁹ Whereas, Specific or Immediate deterrence is scenario-dependent. In this case, a credible retaliatory threat becomes instrumental in preventing war initiation when a crisis arises or the prospects for war are high. It relates to a particular actor and a particular act that one wishes to deter—for example, Syrian use of chemical weapons or an Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands.²⁰ In this case, the threat of retaliation is to be tailored to specific circumstances. Extended deterrence involves the protection of an ally by a stronger state using retaliatory threat. Deterrence by Denial is obtained by convincing an opponent that it would deny politico-military victory, while Deterrence by Punishment is obtained when an enemy forgoes an attack fearing unacceptable punishment.²¹

Apart from these, theoreticians have coined many more variants of deterrence: Tailored Deterrence, Comprehensive Deterrence, Internalized Deterrence, Perfect Deterrence, Unconventional Deterrence, Modern Deterrence, etc. All of these deterrence theories are based on three core premises: (1) successful deterrer should have sufficient capability, (2) its threat should be credible, and (3) it should be able to communicate the threat to its opponent.²² Deterrence strategy is a coercive social logic aimed at dissuading the use of violence. It rests on premises that actors (1) are rational; (2) have common knowledge (of the rules and social logic of the game); (3) engage in tacit and explicit communication (understood as the exchange of information rather than efforts to arrive at collective understandings); (4) accurately assess the risks, costs, and gains of strategic games; (5) can control their emotions; and (6) hold normative assumptions about the appropriateness and proportionality of military actions.²³ According to Glenn Snyder, “essentially deterrence means discouraging the enemy from taking military action by posing for him a cost and risk outweighing his prospective gain.”²⁴

¹⁹ Jeremy Stocker, “Joint Air & Space Power Conference 2017, Deterrence in the 21st Century”, available at <https://www.japcc.org/deterrence-in-the-21st-century/>, accessed on 11 August 2020.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ T. V. Paul (ed.), op. cit., p. 24.

²² Ibid, p. 250.

²³ Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 182.

²⁴ Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, p. 126.

Though compellence and deterrence are both forms of coercion, they are different from each other. While deterrence is all about preserving the status quo, compellence is meant for breaking the status quo. Deterrence threatens an adversary from doing any unacceptable act and compellence threatens an adversary to do a certain act. American economist Thomas C. Schelling first coined the word in his book “Arms and Influence” in 1966. He described compellence as a direct action that persuades an opponent to give up something that is desired. Compellence is all about getting a hostile actor to behave in a preferred way. For example, the prelude to the 1991 Gulf War when the US, the United Nations (UN) and coalition members tried to get Saddam Hussein to change his actions was a compellence strategy. In the same way, the Western alliance’s strategy to compel Serbia to stop abusing the human rights of Kosovar Albanians and to withdraw its military forces from the region was also a compellence strategy. In international relations, compellence is the nation state’s ability to coerce another nation-state into action, usually by posing a threat of punishment. Compellence is more provocative, and thus it is more difficult than materializing the deterrence for any state.

3. Complex Deterrence in the 21st Century

3.1 *Changing Nature of Deterrence*

Deterrence has long been a cornerstone of international relations and a powerful strategic tool of the strongest nation-states around the world. However, with the end of “Cold War” and the beginning of “War on Terror”, the effectiveness of conventional deterrence has come under criticism. The rise of transnational non-state actors, the proliferation of new forms of warfare (such as unrestricted, hybrid, asymmetric, 4th generation warfare, etc.), emergence of post-Westphalian era, 4th industrial revolution, ubiquitous presence of internet-based media platforms, etc., have changed the security landscape of the 21st century. The anarchical apolarity in the 21st century is a competitive system of trans-national nature that is no longer shaped exclusively by territorial integrity and state sovereignty but by a dynamic interaction between state and non-state authority across and beyond the boundaries of states.²⁵ Amid these worldwide phenomenal changes, the traditional concept of “deterrence” has also been changing. Thus, with the change of the security landscape of the world, the characteristics of deterrence have also been transforming continuously. Once the classical deterrence used to mean that military, economic and diplomatic power of nations should determine the deterrence effectiveness. However, the same may not be the case today. The dawn of 21st century saw different

²⁵ Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli, “The Context of Neotrinitarian War”, in *Surrogate Warfare: The Transformation of War in the Twenty First Century*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019, p. 41.

types of threats, such as transnational terrorism, environmental degradation, mass migration of populations, drug, small arms and human trafficking, the proliferation of weapon of mass destruction, etc., that have made the security environment more complex. Thus, the deterrent theories and related policies that were developed in the Cold War nuclear context have started to lose its relevancy in today's complex security environment.

Scholars have already responded to the need to reassess the relevance of deterrence as both theory and policy in light of an increasingly complex global political setting. There is also speculation about the relevancy of deterrence theory in confronting the opponents who are not easily deterrable, such as terrorists, rogue states, fanatical ethnic or religious movements and intensely insecure smaller states.²⁶ There is fear that these opponents will possibly be irrational and difficult to understand. They are likely to take high risks and pay a high price in pursuit of their goals. As a result, deterrence will not work well against them, if at all. On the other hand, another group of scholars seems more confident about applying deterrence theory in counterterrorism scenario by thinking up new ways to expand and apply deterrence theory to the emerging and evolving security environments.²⁷ While describing the relation between rationality and deterrence, some scholars opine that rationality actually depends on an individual's, a group's or a state's underlying assumptions, perceptions, beliefs and values.²⁸ Therefore, these factors are to be considered while directing deterrence posture against potential deteree. The success of asymmetric and hybrid types of warfare inspired another group of scholars to conceive a very new kind of deterrence where weak actors deter the stronger ones.²⁹ This unique phenomenon was coined as Unconventional Deterrence.

Contemporary scholars have been voicing concerns over the feasibility of deterrence in the changed international context. Their huge works on the relation among deterrence, modern-day conflict and changed scenario of international relations are paving the way to carry out future research on deterrence theory and policy. A very important but largely unexplored area is the factor of "rationality" of the non-state, rogue state and terrorist outfits in deterrence discourse. While discussing deterrence, there are scopes to carry out research to examine the extent of irrationality among these actors. Are they really irrational or irrationally rational? When it comes to terrorism, a big unanswered question is whether the terrorists should at all be considered in deterrence discourse or not. Since preserving the

²⁶ Patric M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. xvii.

²⁷ Alex S Wilner, "Contemporary Deterrence Theory and Counterterrorism: A Bridge too Far?", *NYU Journal of International Law and Politics*, 2015, p. 440.

²⁸ Jeremy Stocker, op. cit.

²⁹ Rekasius Mindaugas, "Unconventional Deterrence Strategy", Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, USA, 2005; Ivan Arreguin-Toft, "Unconventional Deterrence", op. cit.

status quo is an objective of the deterrer, “detering terrorism” means state actors are satisfied with the existence of terrorists so long those outfits do not do any harm. So, should terrorists be deterred only or be eliminated fully? This paradoxical situation has so far been inadequately explored.

3.2 *Decoupling of “21st Century Deterrence” from “Nuclear Deterrence”*

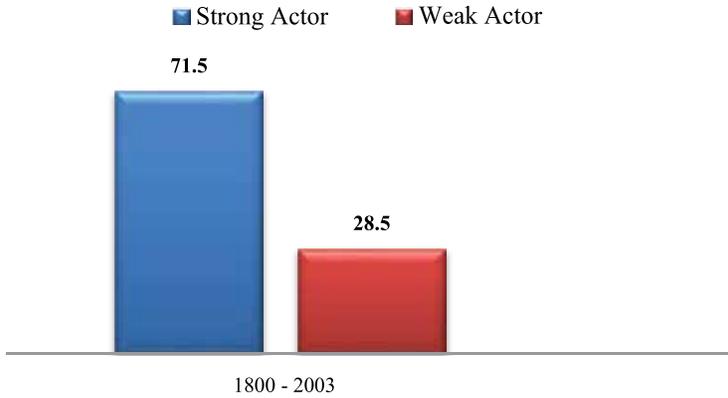
The conventional theory of deterrence used to revolve around superpowers rivalry and nuclear war. There was an amalgamation of deterrence theory with the nuclear doctrine and because of its intertwined relationship with nuclear weapons during the Cold War era, deterrence received prominence as a new concept in the parlance of international relations. Scholars started to correlate it with the nuclear weapon so much so that both (nuclear and deterrence) became almost synonymous to each other. Thus, the broad scope of deterrence was confined inside a narrow and restricted domain of nuclear doctrine. Generally, deterrence used to mean nuclear deterrence only. Deterrence thinking was mingled with the theories of nuclear deterrence to such extent that people used to perceive that absence of nuclear confrontation among great powers meant the demise of the importance of deterrence in international relations. While many initially associate deterrence strategy with nuclear or Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), they are not the same. Significant shifts in the strategic environment (asymmetric and urban warfare for instance) call into question regarding the appropriateness of a solely nuclear-based deterrence posture.³⁰ However, with long non-use of nuclear weapons by any of the nuclear superpowers and more importantly with the demise of the Cold War, the association of nuclear weapon with deterrence waned and the traditional theory of deterrence has lost its elegance.

3.3 *Asymmetric War Phenomenon—Underdogs are Not Always Weak*

Examination of wars of the last two centuries shows a seemingly paradoxical situation where coercing power of the stronger nation-states has increasingly been less effective against the weaker ones. Professor Toft Ivanarreguín, in his book “How the Weak Wins Wars” stated that among all the asymmetric conflicts from 1800 to 2003, the ratio of victories between strong and weak actors is 71.5 : 28.5. That means, in most of the conflicts in the last two hundred years, the stronger actors won against the weaker ones.

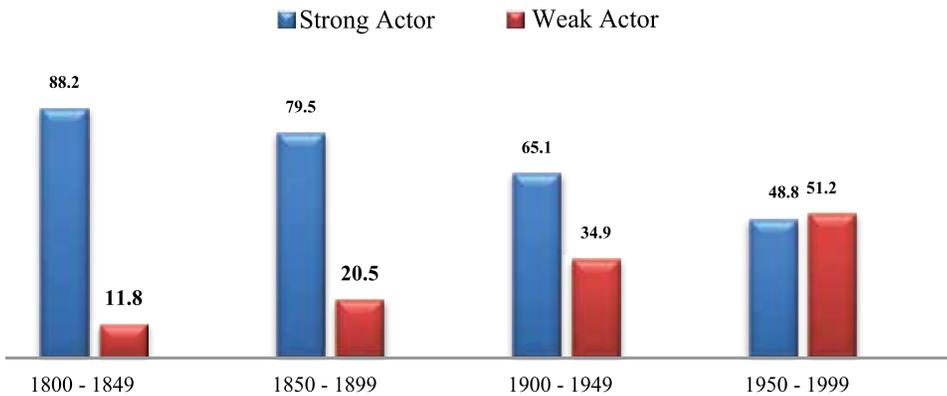
³⁰ Jenna E. Higgins, “Deterrence and Strategy?”, in Nathan K. Finney (ed.), *On Strategy: A Primer*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2020, p. 179.

Figure 1: Victories in Asymmetric Conflict in Last Two Centuries³¹



However, when these two centuries are divided into four sub-periods (fifty-years each), a surprising model emerges: weak powers have been winning more over time. Though from 1800 to 1849 (in the first of the four periods) strong powers won nearly 90 per cent of the time, in the most recent period (from 1950 to 1999), weak powers won a majority of such asymmetric wars (51.2 per cent). Power, as commonly understood, has not correlated with the expected outcomes.³² This simple comparison suggests a powerful message that weaker nations or actors are increasingly becoming less prone to defeat.

Figure 2: Victories in Asymmetric Conflict in Four Fifty-Year Periods³³



³¹ Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars, A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 3.

³² Ibid, p. 4.

³³ Ivan Arreguin-Toft, op.cit., p. 3.

It was not that the failure of military might in achieving victory over the weak actors happened without any logic and rationales. Because of a host of reasons, the steady erosion of the ability of “killing power” of the stronger actor to effect coercion has taken place in asymmetric conflicts. It has been observed that defeating the militarily inferior actors became difficult whenever they had not fought according to “the rule of the game” set by the stronger one and showed the guts to follow indirect and unconventional strategy. The Peninsular War, the Algerian war (1954-62), the Vietnam War (1964-73), the Afghanistan War (1979-89), the Lebanon war (1982-83), the Chechnya War (1994-96), the Second Iraq War of 2003, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, recent War in Syria, etc., bear the testimony to that statement. In all of these cases, despite winning many battles, the stronger sides had to face ultimate defeat because the militarily inferior ones could be able to deny the stronger adversaries’ ability to use their advantages in technology, materiel and numbers to obtain expected political objectives. In asymmetric warfare, they could successfully respond from different platforms and deny the militarily stronger powers from realizing their aim and, thus, ending the war to their terms.

On the other hand, weaker actors lost the war whenever they used a similar strategy and fought according to the term of the stronger ones. In 1914, Belgium tried to give resistance to Germany using known strategy and lost in seventytwo hours. Adopting conventional military strategy, Argentina irrationally captured the Falkland Islands but could not hold it against mighty England. Likewise, Iraq adopted conventional defence against the USA led coalition forces and faced quick defeat.

4. Deterrence for Peace: Bangladesh Perspective

4.1 *Threat Assessment and National Security of Bangladesh*

Before embarking on the argument about the relationship between peace and deterrence in the Bangladesh context, this paper assesses its future threat and analyzes other security concerns to examine its relation with its potential adversaries. While the growing concept related to human security tends to broaden the security discourse and tries to get it beyond the confines of the state-centric national defence, the nation-state will continue to be the prime agency to deliver and ensure security to its citizens in the foreseeable future. Even the Covid-19 crisis has strengthened the Eurosceptic nationalists’ claim by creating emerging conventional wisdom among many citizens of the countries of European Union (EU) that nation-states are still the most viable political entity that can ensure the best possible security

and protection of its citizens.³⁴ Thus, in pursuit of its national interest, the state will not fully refrain from following the unitary principles of nationalism soon. Security dilemma will continue to influence the foreign policies and relations among the states. This is true that few of the very important non-traditional security threats such as transnational terrorism, drug trafficking, climate change etc. will compel nation-states to cooperate in an increasing manner. No nation can solve these problems singlehandedly. However, the traditional threats, such as invasion, proxy war, annexation, etc., will not cease to have a deep influence on the national defence policies and strategies around the world. Ever rising global military expenditure and even the recent annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation bear the testimony to that statement. Thus, ensuring human security and preparation for the national defence are not mutually exclusive goals for the modern nation-states. Modern nation-states will have to ensure both.

Above-mentioned analysis should influence the present and future threat assessment of the Bangladesh Armed Forces. While this paper attaches due importance to different aspects of the non-traditional security issues of Bangladesh, the scope of this paper restricts it to sketch the traditional threat perception only. There is no denying that the security environment of the nation-states in South Asia has not always been characterized by peaceful co-existence since World War II. It is also true that the security of Bangladesh is inextricably mingled with the overall security environment of the South Asian region. In fact, security in South Asia is evolving. Latent irritants and disputes such as water sharing of major rivers in a future global warming context,³⁵ the rise of religious-nationalism, claims and counterclaims of illegal immigrants, dynamic inter-play of the influence of the world superpowers, etc., have the potentials of flaring up. So long these irritants are contained and managed they do not turn into a crisis. However, their turning into violent conflicts may not always be a very distant possibility, because security cannot be taken for granted by any state in the present world.

Bangladesh is neither by size nor by population a small country. By population, Bangladesh ranks 8th in the world³⁶ and contrary to popular belief,

³⁴ Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, "Europe's Pandemic Politics: How the Virus has Changed the Public's Worldview", available at https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/europes_pandemic_politics_how_the_virus_has_changed_the_publics_worldview.pdf, accessed on 27 August 2020.

³⁵ Nick Whigham, "The Wars of the Future will be Fought over Water Not Oil", available at <https://nypost.com/2018/10/19/the-wars-of-the-future-will-be-fought-over-water-not-oil/>, accessed on 27 August 2020. The article states, "often referred to as the water wars thesis, it suggests that growing water scarcity will drive violent conflict as access to water dries up for certain communities. Analysts worry that people, opportunistic politicians and powerful corporations will battle for dwindling water supplies, inflaming tensions."

³⁶ "Top 10 Most Populous Countries", available at <https://www.census.gov/popclock/print.php?component=counter>, accessed on 27 August 2020.

Bangladesh is bigger than many of the developed countries of Western Europe.³⁷ With its skyrocketing economy, geo-strategic location, a substantial percentage of young population and other positive indicators, Bangladesh has the potential to be a strong actor in this region. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many of Bangladesh's South Asian peers and other countries around the world are in negative growth or lower growth than projections, Bangladesh has recorded an impressive 5.24 per cent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the FY2019-20.³⁸ If everything goes right, Bangladesh will be the next Asian Tiger. The rising economy will logically make it a rising power, and that is the point that the paper intends to emphasise while perceiving its future threats. A future Bangladesh that aspires to be an economically developed one should be aware that economic rise has its own security implications. Because more wealth naturally necessitates more arrangements of protection and wealth accumulation only makes sense when it is protected, and its process is unhindered. From a realist point of view, the nation-state can have neither permanent friend nor permanent foe; rather, it is only the national interest on which the country's international relations should revolve. Thus, the above-mentioned arguments suggest the necessity of achieving credible deterrence by Bangladesh Armed Forces.

4.2 *Complementing Peace by Deterrence*

The word “deterrence” has its root in Latin verb “terrere”, which means “to frighten from or away”.³⁹ Though the root meaning is in stark contrast with the word “peace”, yet deterrence has been instrumental for the nation-states around the world in managing and containing conflicts. It has been possible because deterrence can help preserve the status quo. According to Thomas Schelling (American economist and professor of foreign affairs and winner of 2005 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for game-theory analysis of conflict), “deterrence is a win-win situation in which an adversary opts to lose what it can acquire through the application of force and instead gives it all up to avoid any foreseeable damages or risks”.⁴⁰ Deterrence ensures and promotes stability and peace. Thus, deterrence has long been a cornerstone of interaction among states. It encourages a potential attacker to decide to abstain from a planned offensive because of the fear of undesirable punishment

³⁷ Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2017&start=1961>, accessed on 27 August 2020. With an area of 130,170 km² Bangladesh is even almost 3.5 times bigger than Denmark (41,990 km²) or Switzerland (39,516 km²). Yet, it is considered relatively small because of its two giant neighbours – India (29,73,190 km²) and Myanmar (653,080 km²).

³⁸ “Bangladesh Economy to Recover Faster than Others”, available at <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2020/08/16/bangladesh-defies-expectations-posting-a-5-24-gdp-growth>, accessed on 25 August 2020.

³⁹ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 157.

⁴⁰ T. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 131.

or denial of victory. Since time immemorial, deterrence has ensured peace by influencing the human relationship in different societies and civilizations. It has been shaping human behaviour, dictating social interaction and forming international relations. Achieving the power of deterrence ensures maintenance of the status quo by increasing the resistance ability against potential aggressors. Failure of deterrence might be the trigger point of conflict and breach of peace. Thus, peace and deterrence with almost two opposite meanings are complementary to each other.

4.3 *Why should Bangladesh Achieve Deterrence to Ensure Peace?*

Bangladesh is a peace-loving country with economic development being its present topmost priority. Fighting war of any kind and resorting to arms race cannot be its main focus. However, as the ancient adage goes that *Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum* –if you want peace, prepare for war, it expresses an idea at the heart of the concept of deterrence. In one sense, much of strategic thought, theory and practice are counter-intuitive and somewhat paradoxical. Because, put simply, though only arms can fight a war, yet arms are also required to prevent war.⁴¹ This is because of deterrence. The threat perception, as discussed above, posits that given the volatility of geopolitics in this region, Bangladesh cannot take security for granted. Thus, to maintain the most sought after status quo, Bangladesh needs to have adequate national power to deter its potential adversaries. It needs to achieve deterrence to such an extent that it should convince others not to carry out any of their intended actions because of the costs and losses those actions would incur. Thus, the deterrence would promote mutual fear among the belligerents and that mutual fear is good for peace because it restricts aggressions and does not let latent conflict to turn into a violent one.

Bangladesh’s aspiration to become a big economy is a logical sequence of its exponential economic growth. Bangladesh is going to be an economically stronger nation in the foreseeable future. Strategic reality is that its sustainable economic growth necessitates the ability to pose credible deterrence so that no external threat can destabilize and hinder its economic development. Bangladesh, with its aspiration of becoming a developed country, is not supposed to be easy prey for the powerful ones. Singapore is a glaring example in this regard. They say, “whatever you can’t defend doesn’t belong to you”. Words of the seventh president of Singapore Tony Tan Keng Yam must be taken into consideration—“In the economic sphere, if things fall apart, you will still have opportunities to rebuild, and to prosper again. We will not get a second chance if we cannot defend ourselves. A security threat could mean the loss of lives and the end of Singapore.”⁴² The concept of a strong military to achieve

⁴¹ Jeremy Stocker, op. cit.

⁴² “Singapore: National Security Strategy 2000”, available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156809/Singapore-2000.pdf>, accessed on 12 August 2020.

deterrence ability has been ingrained in Singapore since it gained independence from Malaysia in 1965. Singapore has consistently spent significant amounts on its defence (even during the Covid-19 crisis, its defence budget is US\$10.77 billion in 2020) and possesses one of the most capable and modern militaries in the Southeast Asian region.⁴³

By the same token, it can be said that Bangladesh also needs to achieve credible deterrence ability so much so that its steady economic growth is not hampered by any unexpected events in the future. It needs to achieve credible deterrence to ensure enduring peace and stability with other actors in the region. To give “peace a chance”, Bangladesh should be capable to “deter” its potential threats. However, unlike Singapore, achieving conventional deterrence is not an easy option for Bangladesh. Because conventional deterrence calls for acquiring superior military hardware and equipment leading to an arms race with the adversaries that are at odds with the present development strategy of Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh is a potential economic power that needs to have a credible military power, yet it must not fall into the trap of unnecessary arms race. Therefore, point to ponder is that in one hand, Bangladesh needs to have credible deterrence and on the other hand, resorting to the huge military build-up with offensive posture is again not a viable and pragmatic option. Therefore, deterrence, being one of the important pillars of Bangladesh’s defence strategy, should be revisited in light of the changed security situation around the world. Considering this reality, a new kind of deterrence is to be figured out so that Bangladesh can deter its adversaries without resorting to the arms race and thus, not falling unnecessary into the trap of security dilemma.

4.4 *How should Bangladesh Achieve the Desired Deterrence to Ensure Peace?*

Being an all too human endeavour, driven or at least shaped by contingency, war and its strategy cannot be studied scientifically—certain and thoroughly reliable knowledge of war is not obtainable by any methodology.⁴⁴ Though victories by militarily inferior actors are a paradox for realism, yet combat power alone does not always ensure victory in war, and therefore, the balance of military capabilities should not always be an overriding determinant in deterrence. The changing nature of deterrence in the 21st century and the militarily weak states’ increasing ability to successfully denying the stronger powers from realizing their aim or ending the war

⁴³ Prashanth Parameswaran, “What Does Singapore’s New Defense Budget Say About the Country’s Security Thinking?”, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/what-does-singapores-new-defense-budget-say-about-the-countrys-security-thinking/>, accessed on 12 June 2020.

⁴⁴ Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and Defence Planning: Meeting the Challenge of Uncertainty*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 163.

to their terms suggest that it would be possible for Bangladesh to achieve the desired credible deterrence. To that end, the defence policy and strategies of Bangladesh Armed Forces should focus on three key areas.

First, a combination of adoption of unconventional military strategy and tremendous “will to fight for the survival” by the people of Bangladesh would help make the stronger actor’s coercive power less relevant. In case of most of the asymmetric wars (where weak did not allow the stronger to achieve political victory), it was experienced that the Centre of Gravity (COG)⁴⁵ of the weaker forces was never anything physical in nature (like Armed Forces). Those were actually people’s “resolve” and “will to fight” centric moral strategic COGs, which could not be destroyed by kinetic forces. Understandably, these COGs are intangible and difficult to grasp. The importance of Moral COG is so much so that unless it is well identified and undermined wholeheartedly, no amount of physical destruction and subjugation would ensure victory at the strategic level. In the case of the Vietnam War, the US failed to fathom the amount of resolve and will to fight of the people of North Vietnam as to how many casualties they could sustain before giving in. As if no number of deaths could coerce the North into accepting a divided Vietnam. Almost the same was the case in other asymmetric wars also. That means possession of people’s “high resolve” and “will to fight” centric moral strategic COGs by Bangladesh would be instrumental in making stronger forces strength irrelevant. Because one of the important features in all asymmetric conflicts is that while none of the vital interests of the stronger nations remains at stake, in case of the weaker one it becomes a matter of survival where its very existence remains at stake. Thus, this extraordinary situation results in “high resolve” of the weaker actors.

The adoption of indirect and unconventional fighting strategies, “will to fight” for survival and high resolve by Bangladesh Armed Forces would make the tremendous coercive power of the stronger nations less relevant. Though without enjoying superior military capability and adequate economic back up it is very difficult to defeat the stronger nations, yet history is abundant with examples where underdog or weak won over the strong by applying indirect strategies and unorthodox approach. Indirect strategies include implementation of non-linear battlefield environment, unorthodox, unconventional and asymmetric fighting strategy by Bangladesh Armed Forces, which will make it difficult for the stronger sides to achieve any decisive results in the battlefield. This will eventually lead to political defeat for the stronger nation-states against Bangladesh. Even if a stronger

⁴⁵ According to AAP-6, NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions, Edition “V” Version 2, the COG refers to those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight. Popularly it is also known as the hub of all power and movement.

nation-state finds it easier to wage war against militarily weaker (materiel power-wise) Bangladesh, with the adoption of indirect strategy and possession of high resolve to fight until the end, Bangladesh would make it difficult for the stronger one to find a victorious exit from that war. When this credibility of imposing sufficient costs to force strong opponents to reconsider the expected benefits of victory is well communicated to the stronger adversaries, Bangladesh will be able to achieve a credible deterrence by denial. Communicating Bangladesh's capability of adopting unorthodox approach and people's resolve to fight until the end to the stronger nations will refrain the adversaries from breaking the status quo. Consequently, the phenomena of not achieving politico-military victory over Bangladesh would deter the stronger ones. Bangladesh would thus find it easier to deter strong actors from intervening in its affairs even when the large disparity in materiel power exists.

The second one is all about using unrestricted methods⁴⁶ (such as internet-based media, trade, commerce, psychological, cyber, etc.) of waging war. Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, in their famous book *Unrestricted Warfare*, provided many examples of this type of warfare.⁴⁷ The Battlefield Operating Systems (BOS)⁴⁸ in the 21st century are not confined in the conventional military domain only. Today's BOSs include international online financial system, manipulation of big data, outer space, artificial intelligence, epidemic, biotech, info-tech, etc. These necessitate Bangladesh Armed Forces to formulate a new set of Principles of War⁴⁹, which will no longer use "only the kinetic forces to compel the enemy to submit to its will," but rather use "all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept its interests."⁵⁰ If "giving pain" to the enemy is considered to be one of the purposes of war (so that it submits to one's will), then proxy war, information war, trade war, financial war, cyberwar, etc., will not be less destructive than the traditional war. Besides the traditional warfare, Bangladesh Armed Forces will also need to adopt Unrestricted Warfare that would involve several other means and methods to fight an unprecedented non-military type of war. With so many unrestricted means and ways to achieve the ends, Bangladesh will probably play the role of an "irrationally

⁴⁶ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999.

⁴⁷ Examples of Unrestricted Warfare are psychological warfare, smuggling warfare, media warfare, drug warfare, network warfare, technological warfare, fabrication warfare, resources warfare, economic aid warfare, cultural warfare, international law warfare, etc.

⁴⁸ Traditional modern battles are combined arms operations that involve synchronization of various BOS. When meshed together, their combined capabilities produce the battle-winning effect to achieve the decisive result. Example of traditional battlefield operating systems: manoeuvre, fire support, air defence, engineer support, electronic warfare, intelligence, deception, etc.

⁴⁹ Principles of War are broad precepts that influence the conduct of war. They can be termed as the "fundamental truths governing the prosecution of war", application of which ensures success in the battle.

⁵⁰ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

rational” actor, which would not follow any set rule to wage wars. Deterrence is ultimately in the eye of the beholder - the adversary decision-maker and adversary’s perceptions are the focus of all deterrence efforts. Therefore, communicating the ability to wage this type of Unrestricted Warfare to the potential adversaries would allow Bangladesh to achieve a different type of deterrence. Though it is true that this type of warfare will necessitate whole-of-the-government centric holistic effort, Bangladesh Armed Forces should naturally be the main stakeholder in this regard.

The third area is related to the exploitation of critical weaknesses/vulnerabilities of the stronger nations. Every nation-state, be it powerful or weak, big or small, has its critical weaknesses/vulnerabilities. Correct determination of those weaknesses and/or vulnerabilities and then attacking those to neutralize/annihilate/destroy would hurt them the most. Ability to attack these types of critical weaknesses/vulnerability of the potential enemy would enable Bangladesh Armed Forces to achieve the desired credible deterrence. For example, one of such critical weaknesses/vulnerabilities of the stronger nation-states in the 21st century is that most of their citizens have become tremendously casualty sensitive. Aversion to suffering high casualties is a critical vulnerability of the stronger nations now, which might be exploited by the Bangladesh Armed Forces. Today’s generations of stronger nation-states are very much sensitive to the fear of violent death and comfortable self-preservation. They make big warships, awe-inspiring modern fighter planes, state of the art battle tanks and many more military arsenals only to ensure their most sought after “comfortable self-preservation”. Thus, they do not accept casualty of any sorts, not even the casualty of their soldiers in the battlefields. For example, casualties of the battles in World War I or World War II were counted in millions. Only the first day of the Battle of Somme on 01 July 1916 saw 19,000 British soldiers killed and another 40,000 wounded.⁵¹ However, having experienced only a casualty of around 4,500 members of the US armed forces in Iraq War that started in 2003, a study in 2013 found that the majority of the Americans had considered sending troops to fight in Iraq to be a mistake.⁵² The emerging phenomenon of “Surrogate Warfare”⁵³ in 21st century conflict bears the testimony to that fact. The notion of minimizing the casualty of not only the civilian citizens but also the soldiers has led the powerful nation-states to go for externalization of the burden of warfare. To that end, they opt for the excessive use of airpower and drones, artificial intelligence powered lethal autonomous weapons, local armed non-state actors, proxies, etc. The citizens of stronger nations do not tolerate any small casualty of their soldiers during

⁵¹ Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2018, p. 160.

⁵² “Number of U.S. Soldiers killed in the Iraq War from 2003 to 2020”, available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263798/american-soldiers-killed-in-iraq/>, accessed on 08 October 2020.

⁵³ Andreas Krieg and Jean Rickli, “Surrogate Warfare: the Art of War in the 21st century?”, *Defence Studies Journal*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, 2018.

any conflict against weak nation-states. For example, the US faced this problem in Vietnam in the 1960s and Somalia in 1993. Somalian clan leader Mohamed Farah Aideed did not have to carry out big military operations to neutralize the US military might. Only by televising the scene of the dragging of few captured US soldiers on the streets of Somalia, he could exploit the critical vulnerability of the US - an aversion to suffering high casualties. That paid him off tremendously because the US had to change its entire campaign plan after this incident. Thus, “No Boots on the Ground” by the superior nations has become a common strategy in the conflicts of the recent past. This is one of the unorthodox dimension of deterrence for which the present-day US and Israel, though being such enormous military and economic powers, were deterred from engaging in a land war in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon respectively. “Body Bag Effect” has been shaping up the public opinion in an increased manner and has not only outweigh the stronger actor’s power to destroy and coerce but also is providing space for the weak actors to deter their stronger opponents. Bangladesh Armed Forces would achieve credible deterrence ability by embedding the destruction of this critical vulnerability/weakness (i.e., casualty sensitiveness) of the stronger states in its defence policy and strategy.

The key areas posited above are neither all-inclusive nor necessarily mutually exclusive nor provide a specific prescription to achieve credible deterrence by the Bangladesh Armed Forces. These are only three broad options that would be useful for Bangladesh Armed Forces in formulating future defence policies and strategies and encourage future research in this regard.

5. Conclusion

Deterrence has long been a cornerstone of international relations and a powerful strategic tool of the nation-states around the world. With the integration of nuclear weapons by the superpowers in their arsenal after World War II, the idea of deterrence as a full-fledged concept and theory saw an increased rise. It had become one of the leading theoretical and policy frameworks upon which the theory of international relations and military strategy started to revolve. In 1985, philosopher Anthony Kenny could confidently assert that deterrence was “the key concept for the understanding of the strategy and diplomacy of the age.”⁵⁴ However, since then much has transpired in almost all spheres of global politics, economics, science, technology and international relations. Since the turn of the new century, the global political setting has been getting complex at a continually increasing rate. The 21st century is being considered as an era of massive, rapid and all-encompassing global changes. Changes are taking place in all most all spheres of international systems ranging from international relations to

⁵⁴ Frank C. Zagare, op. cit. p. 1.

politics and from trade to technology. Amid these significant changes around the world, the classical concept of deterrence has experienced a big change, and its characteristics have also been transforming continuously.

The so-called elegant and parsimonious deterrence theory has received considerable criticism on many occasions. In several cases, it did not work and defying all deterrence calculations, militarily and economically less powerful states initiated a war against relatively strong states. As Keith Payne puts it, deterrence is an “uncertain art, not a precise science”.⁵⁵ Thus, the deterrent theories and related policies that were developed in the Cold War nuclear context have appeared to be less relevant in today’s complex security environment. Today’s international environment hold out a wide variety of contexts and opposing leadership against which deterrence policies may be called on to operate. In this context, the effective functioning of deterrence cannot be assumed.⁵⁶ Once the classical deterrence used to mean that military, economic and diplomatic power of nations should determine the deterrence effectiveness. However, the same is not the case today. Because of a host of reasons, in the last seventy years, steady erosion of the “killing power” of the stronger actor to effect coercion has taken place in asymmetric conflicts. It has been observed that defeating the weaker actors became difficult whenever the weak actors had not fought by the terms set by the stronger one and used ingenuity to adopt indirect and unconventional strategies. The successes of asymmetric and hybrid types of warfare by the weak states inspired the scholars to conceive a new kind of deterrence where weak actors can deter the stronger ones.

Complexity, uncertainty and volatility characterize the perceived security environment of the South Asian region. Issues such as dispute over water sharing of major rivers, claim and counter-claim of illegal immigration among the neighbouring countries, growing influence of big international rivals (i.e. China and the US), political unrest, rise of ultra-nationalism, trans-national terrorism etc. will continue to portray the security climate of South Asia in the near future. Security of Bangladesh will continue to be inextricably mingled with the overall security situation of South Asia. Amidst this security situation, interestingly, the reports of prominent international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) like World Economic Forum or networks of firms like PricewaterhouseCoopers suggest that Bangladesh’s exponential economic growth will logically turn it to an economically developed nation-state in the foreseeable future. The rising economy will understandably make it a rising power. Though the idea that power transitions

⁵⁵ Jeremy Stocker, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Keith B. Payne and Dale Walton, “Deterrence in the Post Cold War”, in John Baylis, James Wirtz, Eliot Cohen and Colin S. Gray (eds.), *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 179.

could result in conflict with others is not always valid, yet power shifts or transitions are very important elements in a brew that endangers peace.⁵⁷ Even if the post-Westphalian world order manages to gain ground in the future, the realist approach of Morgenthau, Thucydides, Augustine and Hobbes (that characterizes international politics as a struggle for power) will continue to be valid. The world might see a lot of changes in the mode, domain, method, dimension and conduct of war and conflict in the future but the absence of these will never happen so long human being continue to survive. Thus, the realists suggest that a politically and militarily weak country can be easy prey for the powerful ones. Therefore, the strategic reality is that sustainable economic growth of Bangladesh demands the ability to pose credible deterrence so that no external threat can hinder its economic development. Since time immemorial, deterrence has been instrumental in ensuring peace by influencing the human relationship in different societies and civilizations. Because it has the potential to ensure and promote international stability and peace by maintaining the status quo. It stimulates mutual fear among belligerents, which is good for peace because it restricts aggressions and does not let latent conflict to turn into a violent one. Thus, it is logical to deduce that deterrence ability of Bangladesh would refrain a potential attacker from a planned offensive manner because of the fear of undesirable punishment or denial of victory. Because deterrence and peace though have opposing meanings, yet they are complementary to each other.

However, achieving conventional deterrence calls for acquiring superior military hardware, equipment, etc., and it leads to an arms race with the adversaries. Because of the present economic development strategy of Bangladesh, its constitutional provisions and continuous commitment to the causes of The Conference on Disarmament, economic and political reality, the engaging in an unnecessary arms race is not a viable option for Bangladesh. That means, on the one hand, Bangladesh needs to have credible deterrence and on the other hand, resorting to huge military built up with offensive military posture is again not a feasible option. Therefore, the strategy to achieve deterrence should be revisited in light of the changed security environment around the world. In this regard, the defence policies and strategies of Bangladesh should focus on three key areas.

First, is all about making the stronger actor's coercive power less relevant. History suggests that in several times weaker side won whenever they showed the guts not to follow the "rule of the game" set by the stronger side and embraced unconventional strategies. In these cases, despite winning many battles, the stronger sides had to face ultimate defeat because the weaker ones could deny the stronger adversaries' ability to use their advantages in technology, materiel and numbers to

⁵⁷ Steve Chan, "Thucydides' Trap: Caveat Emptor", S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, available at <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CO19168.pdf>, accessed on 29 August 2020.

obtain expected political objectives. Thus, the adoption of indirect and unconventional fighting strategies, high resolve and will to fight until the end by the Bangladesh Armed Forces would make the coercive power of the stronger nations less relevant. In this regard, the indirect strategies include implementation of non-linear battlefield environment and adoption of unorthodox, unconventional and asymmetric fighting strategy by the Bangladesh Armed Forces. These will eventually lead to political defeat for the stronger nation-states against Bangladesh. Correct communication of this unconventional strategy and capability to the potential adversaries will help Bangladesh achieve a credible deterrence of denial.

Using unrestricted methods (such as internet-based media, trade, commerce, psychological, cyber, etc.) of waging war is the second area of interest. Bangladesh Armed Forces need to be capable of exploiting new types of BOS such as international online financial system, manipulation of big data, cyberspace, artificial intelligence, biotech, info-tech, etc. Though it will necessitate whole-of-the-government centric holistic effort, Bangladesh Armed Forces should naturally be the main stakeholder in this regard. To that end, Bangladesh Armed Forces need to formulate a new set of Principles of War that not only applying the kinetic forces to compel the enemy to submit to its will but also uses all possible means to wage the Unrestricted Warfare. Communicating the ability to wage this type of Unrestricted Warfare to the potential adversaries would allow Bangladesh Armed Forces to achieve a different type of deterrence.

Third is related to the exploitation and attacking of few of the critical vulnerabilities/weaknesses of the modern-day stronger states, such as aversion to suffering high casualties, the fear of violent death and the desire for comfortable self-preservation. Bangladesh Armed Forces would gain credible deterrence advantage if it can leverage its asymmetric ability to neutralize these types of critical vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the stronger nation-states. This unorthodox dimension of deterrence would discourage strong military and economic powers from engaging in conflict against Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Armed Forces neither aspire nor need to achieve compellence (threatens an adversary to do a certain act). Achieving credible deterrence (threatens an adversary from doing any unacceptable act) is the aim here. The suggested three broad options (which are neither all-inclusive nor necessarily mutually exclusive) would be instrumental in achieving the desired credible deterrence.

*Segufta Hossain***GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: BANGLADESH'S LEADERSHIP IN THE CLIMATE VULNERABLE FORUM****Abstract**

Climate change is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with heterogeneous global effects. At the global level, the key vulnerabilities are water, food, health, land, environment, infrastructure and the increase in extreme weather events. Though climate vulnerable countries like Bangladesh have minuscule contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, they have become the greatest victims. Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries of the world, and it suffers from losses of human resources and material resources due to these catastrophes every year. The country has achieved remarkable success in managing natural disasters for over a decade, especially on the grounds of disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The Government of Bangladesh has taken different programmes for preparedness and response activities. The country gives importance to remain engaged in the global negotiations on climate change. Bangladesh is the founding member of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Bangladesh acted as the third chair of the CVF from 2011 to 2013 and now chairs the CVF for the second time and the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group of Ministers of Finance. Bangladesh, as a role model in disaster management, can share its experience in disaster management with the CVF countries to make them enable to manage disaster in their respective countries. Against this background, the present paper will highlight how Bangladesh can play an important role as the Chair of the CVF for the next two years.

Keywords: Global Warming, Climate Change, UNFCCC, The Kyoto Protocol, Climate Vulnerable Forum, V20

1. Introduction

“The impact of climate change on the developing countries, particularly on low-income countries like Bangladesh, is compounded by high population density, low resource base, high incidence of natural disasters, salinity intrusion and submergence of land due to sea level rise. The situation would become disastrous with even a meter rise of sea level due to global warming, as it would inundate a fifth of Bangladesh, displacing nearly thirty million people and leading to mass movement of people”

— Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh¹

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¹“Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s Remarks on Climate Change”, available at <https://asiasociety.org/new-york/bangladeshi-prime-minister-sheikh-hasinas-remarks-climate-change>, accessed on 05 June 2020.

Climate change, a serious issue with heterogeneous global effects, is not a new phenomenon. As climate change is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, its impacts are also multi-dimensional and harder than the effects of any other challenge. At the global level, the key vulnerabilities are water, food, health, land, environment, infrastructure and the increase in extreme weather events. Mentioning climate change as “the greatest economic challenge of the 21st century”, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2013 pointed out that unless action on climate change is not taken, future generations will be roasted, toasted, fried and grilled.²

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has defined climate change as a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.³ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”⁴ Climate change is one of the greatest challenges that the world is facing. Climate change is taking place due to human activities and will have significant social, economic and environmental consequences. Mostly the developing countries are impacted by the devastating effects of global warming and climate change. Climate change threatens not only economic growth, but also it will act as a poverty multiplier by increasing the number of poor people and by making poor people even poorer. Developing nations seem to be more vulnerable to climate change due to their economy relying heavily on climate-reliant activities, in particular, farming. Climate change and extreme events threaten food availability, hence food security both at the global and regional levels by reducing crop yields, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture.

The key conclusions from the 5th Assessment Report (AR5) by the IPCC released in September 2013 also highlighted that “the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased.”⁵ Greenhouse gas emission is the main cause of global warming and climate change. The industrialized and rapidly industrializing countries, the European Union (EU), Japan, Brazil, Russia, India, China

² World Economic Forum, “Top Ten Quotes of the Day from Davos”, 23 January 2013, available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2013/01/top-ten-quotes-of-the-day-from-davos/>, accessed on 12 February 2020.

³ IPCC, “Glossary, Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C”, available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/>, accessed on 01 June 2020.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Human Influence on Climate Clear; IPCC Report Says*, IPCC Press Release 2013/20/PR, Stockholm: IPCC, 27 September 2013.

and the United States (US) together account for 75 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ According to Dora Marinova, the arrogance and stupidity of the developed countries are the main reasons behind the global warming and climate change.⁷

Climate vulnerable countries like Bangladesh emit greenhouse gas insignificantly,⁸ but they are the worst victims of climate change. Bangladesh is recognized as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the impacts of climate change as almost the entire areas of Bangladesh are vulnerable to different natural hazards posed by climate change. Experts in Bangladesh believe that “climate change is expected to have major physical impacts on agriculture, industry, infrastructure, health and energy and consequently on people’s livelihood.”⁹

The UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty with the objective to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”.¹⁰ The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) consists of 48 vulnerable developing countries from all different groups of vulnerable countries under the UNFCCC. While addressing the negative effects of global warming as a result of heightened socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities, this forum actively seeks a firm and urgent resolution to the current intensification of climate change both domestically and internationally.¹¹ Bangladesh will be the Chair of the CVF for the second time from June 2020 for the next two years.

Against this background, the present paper will highlight how Bangladesh can play an important role as the Chair of CVF for the next two years. The paper is divided into five sections. Following the introduction, the second section focusses on the politics and coalitions in global climate change negotiations. Third section of the paper will discuss on formation and activities of the CVF. The fourth section of the paper will deal with Bangladesh, the CVF and the way ahead, and fifth section concludes the paper.

⁶ George E. Pataki and Thomas J. Vilsack, *Confronting Climate Change: A Strategy for US Foreign Policy*, Independent Task Force Report No.61, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2008, p. 42.

⁷ Dora Marinova, “Climate Change and Developing Countries”, paper presented in the International Seminar on *Climate Change and its Policy Implications for Developing Countries*, organized by Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation at BISS Auditorium, Dhaka on 11 February 2020.

⁸ Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009*, BCCSAP 2009, Strategic Plan, Dhaka: MOEF, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2009.

⁹ Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), Dhaka: MOEF, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, November 2005.

¹⁰ United Nations, “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”, 1992, available at https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf, accessed on 20 February 2020.

¹¹ “Climate Vulnerable Forum Declaration Adopted”, available at <https://daraint.org/2011/11/14/2748/climate-vulnerable-forum-declaration-adopted/>, accessed on 23 February 2020.

2. Politics and Coalitions in Global Climate Change Negotiations

Global warming mostly takes place due to the increase of atmospheric Greenhouse Gas (GHG) concentrations caused by human activities, and these anthropogenic emissions have increased by 70 per cent between 1970 and 2004.¹² By mid-1980s, scientist began warning about the occurring of human-induced global warming and the increase of anthropogenic emissions of GHGs. In 1985, an international conference titled, “Assessment of the Role of Carbon Dioxide and of Other Greenhouse Gases in Climate Variations and Associated Impacts” took place at Villach, Austria and scientists called on politicians to collaborate in the exploration of policies to mitigate human-induced climate change. In the scientific journal *Nature* on 16 May 1985, Joe Farman, Brian Gardiner and Jonathan Shanklin from the British Antarctic Survey announced their detection of abnormally low levels of ozone¹³ over the South Pole commonly known as the Ozone Hole. Since the 1970s, scientists had pushed for the regulation of chlorofluorocarbons, chemicals found in everyday items like air conditioners and aerosol sprays, due to their adverse effects on this layer.¹⁴ Concerns increased about the ozone layer depletion among the international community through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1985, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer formalized international cooperation on this issue which resulted in the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the Montreal Protocol) in 1987. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the IPCC as a scientific intergovernmental body in 1988 to assess climate change and to provide decision makers with an assessment of the latest research and its policy implications for mitigation and adaptation.

There are three positions on global warming that: (1) global warming is not occurring and neither is climate change; (2) global warming and climate change are occurring, but these are natural, cyclic events unrelated to human activity, and (3) global warming is occurring as a result primarily of human activity and so climate change is also the result of human activity.¹⁵

As the responsibilities of the production of greenhouse gases lie with the developed industrialized countries and the worst impacts of climate change are faced

¹² Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”, United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, United Nations, 2008.

¹³ The ozone layer contains high levels of trioxxygen, which effectively blocks much of the sun’s most harmful ultraviolet radiation from reaching the planet’s surface.

¹⁴ “Discovery of Ozone Hole Announced”, available at <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/discovery-of-antarctic-ozone-hole-announced>, accessed on 02 June 2020.

¹⁵ “Climate Change Primer”, available at https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMlzd3wiYDg6QIVBKyWCh1ItgBoEAAYASAAEgK_N_D_BwE, accessed on 01 June 2020.

by the developing ones, climate change will affect more than just traditional security concerns and can create new tensions. As a result of this discrepancy, there is a potential to worsen existing tensions and to raise new disputes between developed industrialized and developing poorer nations. Among all the major environmental threats, global climatic change may most likely affect international politics because of its wide scope and magnitude. Climatic changes may cause shortage of a resource (water or food) or the degradation of natural resources (common or exclusive). Thus, environmental stresses are both a cause and a consequence of political tensions and international disputes.¹⁶ Many factors including inappropriate development policies, resource constraints, population pressures and economic inequity affect the connections between environmental stress, poverty and security.

Developing countries felt that their concerns were not properly addressed by the scientifically focused IPCC process and rejected the proposal of a negotiating committee that would work under the auspices of WMO and UNEP.¹⁷ Thus, an International Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC) was established under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 45/212 of 21 December 1990), with the mandate “to negotiate a framework convention, containing appropriate commitments, and any related legal instruments as might be agreed upon”, which was open to all member states of the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies.¹⁸ 140 states took less than seventeen months in the negotiation process, the committee fulfilled its mandate and the UNFCCC was open for signature at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro from 04 to 14 June 1992 and thereafter at UN Headquarters in New York until 19 June 1993. As of 2018, UNFCCC has 198 parties.¹⁹ The international climate change negotiations in the UNFCCC are based on coalitions or alliances.

The particular division of the UNFCCC negotiations in a North-South divide, also referred to as “the firewall”, can be seen as representing a narrative division of the world into those with greater historical responsibility and capability to combat global climate change and those with relatively less (or no) such responsibility and capability.²⁰ It was found that at that time it was primarily a scientific and environmental issue for the North, while the South emphasized on poverty and

¹⁶ Peter H. Gleick, “Climate Change and International Politics: Problems Facing Developing Countries”, *AMBIO*, Vol. 18, No. 6, 1989.

¹⁷ Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, *op. cit.*

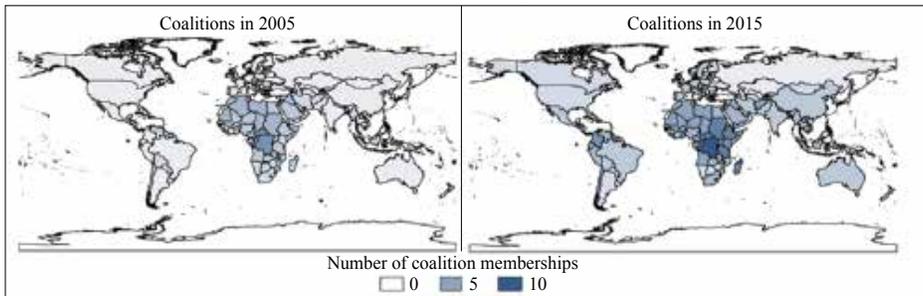
¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “United Nations Climate Change”, available at <https://unfccc.int/process/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties-convention-and-observer-states>, accessed on 02 June 2020.

²⁰ Farhan Yamin and Joanna Depledge, *The International Climate Change Regime: A Guide to Rules, Institutions and Procedures*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

development. This divergent position was based on the underlying interests. In the first group, the majority of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries favoured the adoption of an agreement that would reduce global GHG emissions. On the other hand, the second group was united in the argument that the new legal instrument must not obstruct their economic development.²¹ The Small Island States and States with low-lying coastal areas created an alliance to protect themselves from the threat of rising oceans.

Figure 1: Evolution of Coalition Memberships Over Time²²



The global climate regime is built on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, meaning that those countries who bear historical responsibilities should shoulder a more significant share of the burden and recognize the asymmetries of the international system, especially the differential levels of technological, financial, economic and human capacities between industrialized/developed and developing countries in international environmental negotiations.²³ Despite these asymmetries, every nation has an obligation to participate in the joint efforts to tackle shared global environmental problems according to each nation’s capacity and level of development.²⁴ The UNFCCC mentions in Article 3(1) that “the Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change

²¹ Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, op. cit.

²² Paula Castro, “Relational Data between Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change” cited in Carola Klöck and Paula Castro, “Coalitions in Global Climate Change Negotiations”, *INOGOV Policy Brief*, N. 5, August 2018.

²³ Sander Happaerts, “Rising Powers in Global Climate Governance: Negotiating Inside and Outside the UNFCCC”, in Dries Lesage and Thijs Van de Graaf (eds.), *Rising Powers and Multilateral Institutions*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 238–257; Obijiofor Aginam, “Climate Change Diplomacy and Small Island Developing States”, United Nations University, 08 December 2011, available at <https://unu.edu/publications/articles/climate-change-diplomacy-and-small-island-developing-states.html>, accessed on 01 September 2020.

²⁴ Obijiofor Aginam, *ibid.*

and the adverse effects thereof.”²⁵ The UNFCCC is the main forum to debate on global climate change issue, but due to the stalemates in the process of solution and decision making, vulnerable countries have become more interested in forming new coalitions. While the international climate change negotiations have always been based on coalitions, the number of negotiating groups has increased dramatically since 2005 with most developing countries participating in several coalitions.²⁶ A large number of new coalitions were formed after the Kyoto Protocol came into force. Since 2007 the global climate regime has been focussed on reaching a new universal agreement to mitigate climate change after the Kyoto Protocol with the main challenge to include all major emitters including the US and the rising powers like China, India, Brazil, etc. While five coalitions were active at the very first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995, 19 different coalitions intervened in the negotiations at the 2015 Paris Climate Summit (COP23).²⁷

Among the coalitions, most are formed with developing countries’ group. Developing country Parties generally work through the Group of 77 to establish common negotiating positions.²⁸ It is seen from Figure 1 that the number of coalitions is increasing, where the developed countries are confined to one or two coalitions. On the other hand, the developing countries have a tendency of joining more coalitions in climate change negotiations which they think could make their voice strong.

Based on the tradition of the UN, Parties are organized into five regional groups, mainly for the purposes of electing the Bureau. These regional groups include African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and the Caribbean States and the Western European and Other States²⁹ which are not usually used to present the substantive interests of Parties and several other groupings are more important for climate negotiations.³⁰ Lots of coalitions are representing the vulnerable countries in the global climate negotiations. The African Group of Negotiators (African Group), comprised of 54 parties was established at COP1 in Berlin, Germany in 1995, as an alliance of African member states that represents the interests of the region in the international climate change negotiations, with a common and unified voice. The African Group is active and supportive to all aspects of the climate change negotiating process, for instance, regarding vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The 48 Parties defined

²⁵ United Nations, “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”, 1992.

²⁶ Carola Klöck and Paula Castro, *op. cit.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ “Party Groupings”, available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties/party-groupings>, accessed on 07 September 2020.

²⁹ The “Other States” include Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the US, but not Japan, which is in the Asian Group.

³⁰ Party Groupings, *op. cit.*

as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by the UN regularly work together in the wider UN system have become increasingly active in the climate change process, often working together to defend their particular interests, for example with regard to vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. Small vulnerable countries are also forming coalitions to raise their voices. Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), an intergovernmental organization of 44 low-lying coastal and small island countries formed in 1990, with the main purpose to consolidate the voices of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to address global warming.³¹ AOSIS has been playing a very active role from the very beginning. In 1994 the organization first put forward the first draft text in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations. AOSIS also pushed for the establishment of an international mechanism on loss and damage at the 2013 Warsaw climate change conference. Although the increased number of coalitions may make the decision-making process harder to reach any agreements, as the coalitions are more regionally and thematically focused, more countries are involved nowadays since they have found an appropriate forum to support each other. Several other groups also work together in the climate change process, including countries from the Arab States³², the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)³³, the European Union (EU)³⁴, the Umbrella Group³⁵, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova (CACAM), the Cartagena Dialogue, the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), the BASIC Group (Brazil, South Africa, China India), the Like Minded Group, the Coalition for Rainforest Nations and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA in Spanish).³⁶ The CVF is such an initiative of the developing countries to exert additional pressure for action to tackle the climate change challenges.

3. CVF: Formation, Activities and Achievement

The CVF, which serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to act together to deal with global climate change, is an international partnership of countries who are highly vulnerable to global

³¹ "AOSIS", available at <https://www.aosis.org/about/>, accessed on 07 September 2020.

³² The Arab States is comprised of 22 member states namely Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

³³ The Environmental Integrity Group (EIG), formed in 2000, comprises Mexico, Liechtenstein, Monaco, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Georgia.

³⁴ The 28 members of the European Union meet in private to agree on common negotiating positions. However, it does not have a separate vote from its members.

³⁵ The Umbrella Group is a coalition of Parties which formed following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. The Group is made up of Australia, Belarus, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the US.

³⁶ Party Groupings, *op. cit.*

warming and climate change. In 2009, the CVF was formed by the then president of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed in the run up to the COP15 held in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Since its inception, the forum is active in building cooperation, knowledge and awareness on climate change issues. The CVF was formed with the aim to increase the accountability of industrialized nations for the consequences of global climate change and to exert additional pressure for action to tackle the challenge. 48 countries are the member of the CVF among which 11 countries³⁷ are founding members and 32 countries are additional members. 23 countries³⁸ and the EU have the observer status of the CVF. In September 2012, the CVF established a trust fund administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN agencies to collaborate in implementing activities linked to the CVF with the UNDP.³⁹

The CVF first met near Malé, Maldives in November 2009 where Heads of States, Ministers and other government leaders represented countries threatened by climate change from around the world. President Nasheed wanted to create a cross-cutting group of leaders that joined all the vulnerable countries together at the leadership level, not for detailed negotiations but rather for high level advocacy on behalf of all groups.⁴⁰ For this, he invited 20 key heads of nations from the four groups of vulnerable countries—the LDCs Group, the AOSIS, the African Group and the Latin America Group to strategize on one or two high-level advocacy demands on behalf of all the vulnerable developing countries. The Forum first met just ahead of COP15, where 11 nations participated and adopted the first declaration that expressed alarm at the pace of change witnessed to the earth as a result of human-induced changes to the climate.⁴¹ They also decided to focus on a single high-level advocacy message, i.e., to change the global long-term temperature goal from 2°C to 1.5°C, unfortunately, President Nasheed failed to bring the developed and big developing countries in agreement to press for this demand. But he managed to insert a small paragraph at the end of the Copenhagen Agreement mentioning that there would be a review of the long-term temperature goal between 2013 and 2015. The UNFCCC Secretariat set up a scientific group to examine the difference between 2°C warming

³⁷ Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Maldives, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam adopted the first declaration, “Declaration of the Climate Vulnerable Forum”, available at <http://daraint.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Declaration-of-the-CVF-FINAL2.pdf>, accessed on 26 February 2020.

³⁸ Australia, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the US.

³⁹ “Climate Vulnerable Forum Trust Fund”, available at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/CVF00>, accessed on 26 February 2020

⁴⁰ Saleemul Huq, “Bangladesh has an Opportunity to be a World Leader in Climate Change”, *The Daily Star*, 02 June 2020.

⁴¹ Climate Vulnerable Forum, “Brief History of the CVF”, available at <https://thecvf.org/web/climate-vulnerable-forum/brief-history-of-the-cvf/>, accessed on 24 February 2020.

and 1.5°C. In 2015 the scientific group published their report mentioning that while 2°C is good enough to protect most of the countries and people of the world, but still it would affect millions of people living in the poorest countries. For this, 1.5°C is essential if the global leaders wish to protect all the people of the world.⁴² This report allowed the CVF to make the global leaders understand the necessity of reducing the long-term temperature goal to 1.5°C from 2°C.

At COP21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015, Parties to the UNFCCC reached to the landmark Paris Agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. The central aim of the Paris Agreement is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise of this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. Additionally, the agreement aims to increase the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change and at making finance flows consistent with low GHG emissions and climate-resilient pathway. To reach these ambitious goals, appropriate mobilization and provision of financial resources, a new technology framework and enhanced capacity-building are to be put in place to support action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries in line with their respective national objectives. The Agreement also provides for an enhanced transparency framework for action and support.⁴³ It was the biggest achievement of the CVF.

The uncertainty of the global commitments to address climate change which are agreed, approved and adopted at the UNFCCC has instigated the emergence of the Vulnerable Twenty (V20)⁴⁴. The V20 Group of Ministers of Finance of the CVF is a dedicated cooperation initiative of economies systemically vulnerable to climate change and the V20 works through dialogue and action to tackle global climate change.⁴⁵ Although global warming and climate change are posing a serious threat to the V20 countries, their financial allocation for adaptation and resilience is insufficient. The call to create the V20 originated from the CVF's Costa Rica Action Plan (2013-2015)

⁴² United Nations Climate Change, "IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C", available at <https://unfccc.int/topics/science/workstreams/cooperation-with-the-ipcc/ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-15-degc#eq-4>, accessed on 26 February 2020.

⁴³ United Nations Climate Change, "What is the Paris Agreement?", available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>, accessed on 26 February 2020.

⁴⁴ V20 Members: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Fiji, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen.

⁴⁵ "V20", available at <https://www.v-20.org/about/>, accessed on 28 March 2020.

in a major effort to strengthen economic and financial responses to climate change. It foresaw a high-level policy dialogue pertaining to action on climate change and the promotion of climate resilient and low emission development with full competence for addressing economic and financial issues beyond the remit of any one organization.⁴⁶

The last Climate Vulnerable Summit, took place on 22 November 2018, called on governments around the world to raise the ambition of their climate targets by 2020 to keep global warming to the 1.5°C limit and save vulnerable nations.⁴⁷ It was the first inter-governmental Summit to take place entirely online, which demonstrates their determination to reduce emissions through the creative application of readily available means and to increase inclusivity and transparency while conserving scarce resources. The Communique stated the Forum’s five-point vision of surviving and thriving in a world, by 2030 to 2050 at the latest: 1) climate change dangers are kept to an absolute minimum; 2) maximum advantage is taken of the benefits of climate action; 3) maximum resilience is achieved for people, indigenous groups, livelihoods, infrastructure, cultures and ecosystems; 4) the SDGs and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) targets are achieved and, where possible, exceeded or accomplished ahead of schedule, and 5) LDCs and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) emerge as wealthy nations through strong economic growth.⁴⁸

4. Bangladesh and the CVF: Way Ahead

As mentioned above, Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The physical, social and economic conditions of the country have also aggravated the vulnerability of the country.

4.1 *Climate Change Impacts and Bangladesh’s Disaster Preparedness*

Natural disasters are a common phenomenon due to the geographical location of Bangladesh. The country is vulnerable to various natural calamities, and the vulnerability is increasing with the gradual change of extreme climate events due to global warming and climate change. The vulnerability to the natural calamities includes changes in average temperature, changed nature of precipitation, changed characteristics in the hydrological cycle due the melting of glaciers in source areas of the rivers of Bangladesh, increased salinity in the rivers in the southern part of

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Catherine Benson Wahlén, “Leaders Call for Increased Ambition at Climate Vulnerable Summit”, available at <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/leaders-call-for-increased-ambition-at-climate-vulnerable-summit/>, accessed on 27 February 2020.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

the country, more powerful cyclones, tornados and storm surges. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020, Bangladesh is seventh among 10 countries most affected by climate change impacts in a 20-year period from 1999 to 2018.⁴⁹ According to a World Bank report titled “South Asia’s Hotspots: The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards”, “Bangladesh’s average annual temperature is expected to rise by 1.0°C to 1.5°C by 2050 even if preventive measures are taken along the lines of those recommended by the Paris Climate Change Agreement of 2015, and if no measures are taken, then the country’s average temperatures are predicted to increase by 1.0°C to 2.5°C”.⁵⁰ The increasing temperature could cost Bangladesh 6.7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and depress the living standards of more than three-quarters of country’s population by 2050.⁵¹ There is a significant change in the rainfall pattern of the country. The rainy season has become shorter and heavy rainfall occurs within a short period. There is an increase of 3.4 per cent in country-wide rainfall during the pre-monsoon summer season and a 1.7 per cent decrease in monsoon rainfall.⁵² The IPCC report has predicted that, in Bangladesh, population at risk to sea level rise will increase to 27 million by 2050.⁵³ Sea level rise is also another reason that leads to an increase in soil salinity. The increased temperature has accelerated the rate of glacial melt of the Himalayan region. Himalayan glaciers have reduced by 21 per cent (in area) since the 1980s⁵⁴ and have lost about 174 giga tonnes of water between 2003 and 2009, which contributed to catastrophic floods in these basins⁵⁵. Bangladesh has a relatively insignificant carbon footprint. Bangladesh produces about 0.44 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person, much lower than the US’s 16.4 tonnes, Australia’s 16.3 tonnes and Qatar’s whopping 40.5 tonnes, according to World Bank figures.⁵⁶ In spite of having a tiny carbon footprint, the country is suffering from the worst

⁴⁹ “Climate Change: Bangladesh 7th Most Affected Nation Over 20 Years”, *The Business Standard*, 05 December 2019.

⁵⁰ The World Bank, “Bangladesh: Rising Temperature Affects Living Standards of 134 Million People”, Press Release, 26 September 2018, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/09/26/bangladesh-rising-temperature-affects-living-standards-of-134-million-people>, accessed on 23 June 2020.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² A. Karmalkar, C. McSweeney, M. New and G. Lizcano, “UNDP Climate Change Country Profiles: Bangladesh”, 2012, available at http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/projects/undp-cp/UNDP_reports/Bangladesh/Bangladesh.hires.report.pdf, accessed on 23 June 2020.

⁵³ Helena Wright, “What does the IPCC Report Say about Climate Change in Bangladesh”, *Dhaka Tribune*, 16 February 2015.

⁵⁴ World Water Assessment Programme, “Water in a Changing World”, UN World Water Development Report 3, 2009, available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001819/181993e.pdf>, accessed on 24 June 2020.

⁵⁵ Javid R. Laghari, “Climate Change: Melting Glaciers Bring Energy Uncertainty”, *Nature*, Vol. 502, Issue 7473, 2013, pp. 617-618.

⁵⁶ Syful Islam, “Climate Threatened Bangladesh to Impose Carbon Tax in June”, *Reuters*, 23 May 2017, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-climatechange-carbontax/climate-threatened-bangladesh-to-impose-carbon-tax-in-june-idUSKBN18J00V#:~:text=Bangladesh%20produces%20about%200.44%20tonnes,according%20to%20World%20Bank%20figures,> accessed on 16 June 2020.

impacts of global warming and climate change.

Bangladesh has a global reputation for its remarkable progress in the climate resilient initiatives. The country is often considered as a climate change adaptation champion and the government also has a strong commitment to the cause. The country has taken several initiatives to facilitate climate resilient development, and at the ground level, it has achieved tremendous success in the area of disaster management. Bangladesh has been able to develop some skills and capabilities in its scientific community to address the problems of assessing vulnerability to climate change and developing appropriate strategic responses.⁵⁷ Bangladesh has developed some capacity to deal with the negative impacts of climate change at the national level. Policy response options have been mobilized for vulnerability reduction to environmental variability in general and to climate change in particular. In addition, Bangladesh has, for some time, been recognized as a particularly vulnerable country by the international community and has received disaster management and adaptation support in several sectors.

To address the impact of climate change, the government of Bangladesh has adopted a number of policy and institutional initiatives including preparation of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) in 2005 and Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2009, establishment of the Climate Change Unit, creation of the Climate Trust Fund and some high level committees with specific functions to facilitate the adaptation actions.⁵⁸ Among the countries of the LDCs, Bangladesh was one of the first to complete a NAPA in 2005. The NAPA was the beginning of a long journey to address adverse impacts of climate stimuli, including variability and extreme events and to promote sustainable development of the country.⁵⁹ Following NAPA, the Ministry of Environment and Forest in 2009 formulated BCCSAP as an integral part of the overall national development policies, plans and programmes of the country. The strategy is based on six pillars: (1) food security, social protection and health, (2) comprehensive disaster management, (3) infrastructure development, (4) research and knowledge management, (5) mitigation and low-carbon development and (6) capacity building and institutional development.⁶⁰

In the context of Bangladesh, climate finance basically refers to the flow

⁵⁷ Saleemul Huq, "Climate Change and Bangladesh", *Science*, Vol. 294, 23 November 2001, p. 1617.

⁵⁸ Saleemul Huq and Golam Rabbani, "Climate Change and Bangladesh: Policy and Institutional Development to Reduce Vulnerability", *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. 13, 2011, pp 1-10.

⁵⁹ Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)*, op. cit., p. ii.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009*, op. cit., p. 3.

of funds to programmes on adaptation and to a limited extent on mitigation.⁶¹ Government has established Climate Change Trust to redress the adverse impact of climate change on Bangladesh with the aim (i) to take necessary action plan for capacity building for adjustment of the people or groups of people of the affected and risky areas resulting from climate change, upgrading their life and livelihood and facing the long term risk, and to take measures for implementation thereof and (ii) to take measures for adaptation, mitigation, technology development and transfer, capacity building and funds for facing adverse effect of climate change on man, biodiversity and nature.⁶² The government has demonstrated its commitment to undertake both adaptation and mitigation efforts as part of its agenda for sustainable development which is evidenced by the fact that every year the government channels a lot of resources for significant investment in projects/programmes for ensuring climate resilience. It currently spends US\$1 billion a year, around 6 to 7 per cent of its annual budget, on climate change adaptation.⁶³ Three-quarters of the money spent on climate change in the country comes directly from the government, while the rest comes from international development partners.⁶⁴ At the COP15 of the UNFCCC in 2009, developed countries committed to mobilize jointly US\$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation.⁶⁵ But the developed countries have not fulfilled their pledge yet. Being one of the most vulnerable countries, Bangladesh was one of the earliest countries to prepare and submit their ‘Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)’ to UNFCCC back in 2015 putting more emphasis on “adaptation” than “mitigation”. Proposing several activities for climate change adaptation, the Seventh Five Year Plan (FY 2016 – FY 2020) mentioned that an integrated approach to climate proofing of Bangladesh development strategy is the way to move forward.⁶⁶ Bangladesh government has approved Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, which is the combination of long-term strategies and subsequent interventions for ensuring long term water and food

⁶¹ Climate Fiscal Framework 2014, cited in Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, *Climate Financing for Sustainable Development*, Budget Report 2019-20”, Dhaka: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June 2019, pp.7-8.

⁶² Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, “The Climate Change Trust Act”, 2010 ACT NO. LVII OF 2010, Bangladesh Gazette, 04 April 2016, available at http://www.dpp.gov.bd/upload_file/gazettes/15741_60576.pdf, accessed on 30 June 2020.

⁶³ Finance Division, op. cit., pp.7-8.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ UNFCCC, 2009 cited in OECD, “2020 Projections of Climate Finance towards the USD 100 Billion Goal: Technical Note”, OECD Publishing, 2016, available at <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/Projecting%20Climate%20Change%202020%20WEB.pdf>, accessed on 30 June 2020.

⁶⁶ General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, *Seventh Five Year Plan FY 2016 – FY 2020: Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens*, Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, November 2015, p. 22.

security, economic growth and environmental sustainability while effectively reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and building resilience to climate change and other delta challenges through robust, adaptive and integrated strategies and equitable water governance, on 04 September 2018 with the aspiration of achieving “safe, climate resilient and prosperous Delta” by 2100.⁶⁷

4.2 *Bangladesh in Global Climate Negotiations*

Bangladesh has given importance to remain engaged in the global negotiations on global warming and climate change. No country negotiates in the UNFCCC as a single country. Bangladesh negotiates as a member of the LDCs group and was once the chair of the group and now remains in the senior group of LDCs negotiators.⁶⁸ Bangladesh has also been selected to a number of important bodies set up by the UNFCCC over the years, such as the Adaptation Fund Board, the Green Climate Fund Board and the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage.⁶⁹ Bangladesh has received appreciation for its remarkable development in climate resilient initiatives and the country’s leadership in community based adaptation.

At the international level, under the UNFCCC and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Bangladesh plays a significant role in negotiating within the G-77 or China group.⁷⁰ Bangladesh has already taken up the chairmanship of the CVF from June 2020. The process of establishing regional Climate Change Adaptation Centre in Bangladesh under Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) is underway. Climate change, as a development challenge and a security concern, remains as one of the most discussed topics in the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQs) in New York. The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh is engaged in climate change and environment issues, and highlights its vulnerabilities to the climate change. This is one of the priority areas of the Secretary General who had convened a Climate Action Summit on 23 September 2019.⁷¹ Bangladesh was a partner country in the Summit’s Coalition on Adaptation and Resilience, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched a multi-party initiative called Risk-Informed Early Action Plan (REAP) during the

⁶⁷ Shamsul Alam, “Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100: Implementation Challenges and Way Forward”, *The Financial Express*, 23 March 2019.

⁶⁸ Saleemul Huq, “Bangladesh’s Role in the Climate Change Negotiations”, *The Daily Star*, 17 November 2016.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Saleemul Huq, “Climate Change and Bangladesh: The Way Forward”, available at <http://tiempo.sei-international.org/portal/archive/issue47/t47a4.htm>, accessed on 02 July 2020.

⁷¹ Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations, “Climate Change”, available at <https://bdun.org/bangladesh-priorities-at-the-un/climate-change/>, accessed on 07 July 2020.

Climate Action Summit.⁷² The country is committed to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other existing environmental agreements, and for this, it is now finalizing the National Implementation Plan for implementing NDCs.

4.3 *Bangladesh and the CVF*

Bangladesh is the founding member of the CVF.⁷³ Bangladesh acted as the third chair of the CVF from 2011 to 2013, and the government hosted a ministerial meeting of the forum on 13–14 November 2011 in Dhaka. The meeting adopted a 14-point declaration of the CVF on 14 November 2011⁷⁴, which was supported by 19 climate vulnerable countries. The declaration called to ensure securing of a second term of the Kyoto protocol without a gap between the first and the second and a legally-binding agreement on greenhouse gas emission cuts. It also included committing the group of vulnerable countries to low carbon development and called for a new global Climate Vulnerability Monitor on low-carbon development.⁷⁵ The Dhaka Declaration also reaffirms the commitment by climate vulnerable countries to focus on adaptation, particularly in the short term in order to minimize immediate danger and calls on developed countries to support the implementation of schemes. Similarly, the declaration recognizes an urgent need for technology transfer from the international community as a means of ensuring fuller and more pragmatic technological developments.⁷⁶ Bangladesh established the first Trust Fund of the CVF.

In Madrid, at the opening day of COP25, the current Chair of the CVF Hilda Heine, President of the Marshall Islands, proposed the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to take over the charge of the CVF. The Prime Minister accepted the proposal and she will be the chair of the CVF for the next two years from June 2020.

Bangladesh now chairs the CVF and the V20 Group of Ministers of Finance of the 48 states that constitute the international body for climate-threatened nations. The country assumed the presidency through an online event on 09 June 2020. Bangladesh took over the presidency from Marshall Islands at a time when the

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See, the Malé Declaration, at available at <https://daraint.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Declaration-of-the-CVF-FINAL2.pdf>, accessed on 12 October 2020.

⁷⁴ Climate Vulnerable Forum, op. cit.

⁷⁵ “Dhaka Ministerial Declaration of the Climate Vulnerable Forum”, available at <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:wxVOHCzUYEcJ:https://thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Annex-1-Dhaka-Ministerial-Declaration-of-the-CVF.pdf+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=bd>, accessed on 27 February 2020.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

world is facing an unprecedented crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Bangladesh indicated that it would use its presidency of the CVF to act as a champion for the urgent strengthening of climate action by all, especially to keep the increase of global temperature within 1.5°C and to implement the commitments made at Paris.⁷⁷ Under Bangladesh’s leadership, the CVF indicated that it would continue to call for delivery of strengthened contributions to the Paris Agreement, or NDCs, in 2020, seen as a “deadline for survival” to ensure the agreement’s 1.5°C goal remained achievable and progress towards the SDGs is well secure.

Bangladesh also highlighted to advance the following key priority areas under its forthcoming presidency:⁷⁸

- Promoting international solidarity for a successful 2021 climate summit (UNFCCC COP26)
- Strengthening efforts to adapt to changes in the climate, accelerating adaptation action
- Enhancing protection of human rights threatened due to climate issues
- Scaling-up efforts to address loss and damage and to support people displaced by climate threats and establish international responsibility for compensation for displacement
- Contributing to increased public awareness and expanding scientific knowledge
- Promoting progress towards the CVF vision on renewable energy production and access
- Further strengthening partnerships, outreach and the institutional capabilities of the CVF and V20
- Creation of a new CVF and V20 Fund
- Possibility of having a new special rapporteur on climate change
- Appointing CVF’s thematic envoys and special envoys for climate change
- Publishing of the third edition of the “Climate Vulnerability Monitor”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ “CVF Presidency Special Envoy Appointed”, Press Release, 15 June 2020, available at <https://www.v-20.org/category/pressmedia/>, accessed on 04 July 2020.

⁷⁸ “Bangladesh: Chair of Vulnerable Twenty Group”, Press Release, 13 June 2020, available at <https://www.v-20.org/category/pressmedia/>, accessed on 04 July 2020.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Bangladesh indicated that its work within the V20 would continue to aim at mobilizing the economy and financial resources to fight climate change, engage major economies and ensure international financial institutions who are better positioned to respond to climate threats and provide the right support to those most vulnerable.⁸⁰

4.4 *Way Ahead*

Global warming is the consequence of the stock of greenhouse gas emissions, mainly CO₂, which has accumulated in the earth's atmosphere as a result of fossil fuel based industrial activity in the industrialized countries of the world. There is a difference between the emission of the developing countries and the developed countries. The emissions of the developing countries are mainly related with their survival and the emissions of the developed countries are related to their lifestyle. Developed nations must take responsibility for their emissions and contribute in funding and transferring of technologies to the developing countries to help avoid the dangerous impacts of climate change. If developed countries do not make significant and absolute reductions in their emissions, there will be a smaller carbon space available to accommodate the development needs of the developing countries. Unfortunately, the developed countries, which emit greenhouse gas the most, are doing just the opposite. G20 members account for about two-thirds of the world's population, 85 per cent of the gross world product and 75 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions.⁸¹ More than four-fifths or 82 per cent of G20 nations' energy supply still comes from fossil fuel which means these industrialized countries are far from being on course to ensure that their CO₂ reductions would help to keep global warming within a manageable 1.5°C rise. Unless G20 nations manage to halve their emissions by 2030, global temperatures are expected to rise by 3.2°C, more than double of the set target of 1.5°C. But unfortunately, only six G20 countries have official long-term plans for reducing emissions.⁸² In 2016, the US joined the Paris Agreement, marking a significant contribution towards the early entry into force of the agreement. For the last two years, President Donald Trump has talked about pulling the US out of the Paris climate agreement. The US has told the UN that it has begun the process of pulling off the 2015 Paris Agreement and submitted a formal

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Hayden Higgins, "5 Ways the G20 Can Support Climate Action and Sustainable Development", World Resources Institute, available at <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/11/5-ways-g20-can-support-climate-action-and-sustainable-development>, accessed on 23 February 2020.

⁸² Katherine Ross, "Only 6 G20 Countries Have Official Long-term Plans for Reducing Emissions. Here are 4 Reasons They Need Them", World Resources Institute, 22 October 2018, available at <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/only-6-g20-countries-have-official-long-term-plans-reducing-emissions>, accessed on 18 February 2020.

notice to the UN.⁸³

The purpose of the CVF is to channel input from the most vulnerable groups, creating new policies and promoting effective actions on climate change as it evolves. The forum is recognized as a voice on international climate change issues. The members of the CVF also belong to their own well-established negotiating blocs such as the LDCs group, the AOSIS, the Africa group, etc. The CVF should not be seen as a substitute or even a new “negotiating bloc” in the UNFCCC process, rather, the individual countries should remain in their established negotiating groups and continue to work within those groups.⁸⁴

As Bangladesh is going to take the responsibility of the CVF for the next two years, there are some issues which should be taken care of. A two-year programme should be chalked out. It is important that the Head of the Government remains involved with the process. The whole process should be brought under the direct command of the Prime Minister’s office in accordance with other relevant ministries like environment, foreign affairs, finance and planning, etc. The Prime Minister, together with Ban Ki-Moon, Chair of the Global Center on Adaptation, appointed Abul Kalam Azad as the special envoy of the Climate Vulnerable Forum Presidency.⁸⁵ After assuming the leadership of the CVF and V20 Group of Finance Ministers, Bangladesh decided to engage six thematic ambassadors to help to strengthen its networking and engagements with key actors throughout the world in six identified core areas - ambition, culture, finance, parliaments, renewable energy and vulnerability.⁸⁶ As CVF Thematic Ambassadors, they will create global public campaign and mobilize stakeholders, groups and voices to raise global awareness on climate vulnerabilities and pursue countries to keep the Paris Agreement Goal of 1.5°C alive and advocate on behalf of the CVF countries and coordinate international cooperation to fight against the adverse impacts of climate change.⁸⁷ Among the six Thematic Ambassadors, four Ambassadors have been nominated for their outstanding and prolonged expertise and dedication in their respective field of works. The four Thematic Ambassadors are: Saima Wazed Hossain, Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Neurodevelopment Disorder and Autism of Bangladesh, Mohammed Nasheed, Speaker and former president of Maldives, Loren Legarda, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Philippines and Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, lead climate change specialist of DR Congo. The four Ambassadors will

⁸³ Seth Borenstein, “US Officials Tells United Nations It is Pulling out of Paris Climate Deal”, *Anchorage Daily News*, 04 November 2019, available at <https://www.adn.com/nation-world/2019/11/04/us-officials-tells-united-nations-it-is-pulling-out-of-paris-climate-deal/>, accessed on 02 March 2020.

⁸⁴ Saleemul Huq, “Climate Vulnerable Forum: What next?”, *The Daily Star*, 16 November 2011.

⁸⁵ “CVF Presidency Special Envoy Appointed”, op. cit.

⁸⁶ “Saima Wazed Chosen as Ambassador to Climate Vulnerable Forum”, *The Daily Star*, 23 July 2020.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

work on vulnerability, ambition, parliament and renewable energy respectively and two more Thematic Ambassadors for culture and finance will also be nominated from the Marshall Islands and Costa Rica. With the Thematic Ambassadors, an expert advisory committee could also be established to support the Ambassadors to deal with the issues. The CVF President and former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon while in a conversation with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed that the next conference of the CVF will be held in 2021 commemorating the “Mujib Borsho”.

Bangladesh, as the leader of the vulnerable countries’ forum, needs to plan to push the carbon emitting countries to make faster and deeper emission cuts to limit the rise in global average temperatures to 1.5°C. Climate crisis will worsen if the pollution is left unchecked. There is a growing public support for climate action in the developed nations. Pressure from citizens will eventually lead governments “to succumb to the causes of the people”.⁸⁸ Bangladesh vowed to put pressure on nations fuelling global warming to cut emissions and help address the plight of people displaced by climate change. Bangladesh needs to become the spokesperson of all the vulnerable countries instead of just focusing on its individual vulnerability and raise voice in various global climate forums continuously. It is necessary to focus on raising awareness campaigns as Bangladesh is unable to take actions against the top emitters. Bangladesh can raise its voice for a legal binding agreement in the UNFCCC, as the CVF can be a good platform to raise a unanimous voice of all the vulnerable countries, so that the developed countries cannot withdraw from the climate negotiations or show unwillingness for the reduction of carbon emission.

In COP25, the CVF leaders highlighted that climate crisis represented the most serious human rights issue the world has ever faced and called for the creation of a UN Special Rapporteur on climate change, pledging US\$50,000 to support such a mandate of the Human Rights Council from a new CVF and V20 Trust Fund announced at the event to be backed by financial contributions of the vulnerable nations and partner donors.⁸⁹ Bangladesh, as the new chair of CVF, needs to plan how to make the best use of the CVF and V20 trust fund to help its vulnerable members tackling climate change. It is also necessary to lobby for international progress on responding to rising “loss and damage” from climate extremes, such as floods, droughts, storms or rising seas.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Megan Rowling, “Bangladesh Leads Climate-threatened Nations in Push for Global Action”, *Reuters*, 09 June 2020, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-politics-bangladesh-tr/bangladesh-leads-climate-threatened-nations-in-push-for-global-action-idUSKBN23G2NB>, accessed on 07 July 2020.

⁸⁹ Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, “Vulnerable Leaders Call: COP25 Must Secure 2020 Action for Survival of Nations”, 02 December 2019, available at <https://icsc.ngo/vulnerable-leaders-callcop25-must-secure-2020-action-for-survival-of-nations/>, accessed on 07 July 2020.

⁹⁰ Megan Rowling, *op. cit.*

Bangladesh is recognized as one of the most disaster-prone countries of the world, and the country suffers from losses of human resources and material resources due to various kinds of disasters every year. The country has achieved remarkable success in managing natural disasters for over a decade, especially on the grounds of disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The country has successfully dealt with several disasters in the first two decades of the 21st century. The government has taken different programmes, such as improvement in the early warning system, dissemination of information, establishment of cyclone shelters and active engagement of dedicated Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers for preparedness and response activities. Under the SDGs, Bangladesh is advancing towards achieving national resilience against natural disasters. All these have made Bangladesh a role model in disaster management. Bangladesh can share its experience in disaster management with the CVF countries to enable them to manage disaster in their respective countries.

5. Concluding Remarks

Climate change will increasingly affect basic elements of life for people around the world, i.e. water availability, food production, health and the environment. According to IPCC, if left unchecked, climate change could cause significant economic and ecological disruption, especially for already vulnerable populations, including women and children.⁹¹ Poor people and poor countries will mainly bear the brunt of climate change. This is because developing countries and notably the LDCs, rely heavily on climate-sensitive sectors and have high levels of poverty, low levels of education and limited human, institutional, economic, technical and financial capacity.⁹²

As a threat to human and the survival system of the all living being, global warming and climate change are widely discussed issues of the recent time. The perception of climate change differs widely depending on whether it is assumed that global warming will be a continuous process, without major changes in the climate variability or whether global warming causes a higher frequency of extreme weather events. The existing evidence and climate models suggest that climate change will and already is in fact a mixture of both, though there is potentially a difference in the timing. The negative effects of extreme events are likely to occur in higher number much sooner, while the temperature is expected to increase relatively slowly and hence negative impacts will be felt in the future. Climate change is not a

⁹¹ Eckhard Deutscher, “Climate Change: Helping Poor Countries to Adapt”, Development Co-operation Report 2010, OECD, available at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/development-co-operation-report-2010/climate-change_dcr-2010-8-en, accessed on 19 February 2020.

⁹² Ibid.

challenge for any specific country. It is a global challenge and it should be handled globally. Sustainable development and climate action will not be the most effective until the world's biggest economies and polluters are fully mobilized for sustainable development and climate action.

Bangladesh is recognized globally for its achievements in addressing climate change and often considered as a climate change adaptation champion. The CVF is an important group of almost fifty states who are mainly developing and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Bangladesh, as the new chair of the group, could represent the group in attracting the global attention about the negative impacts of climate change and use the CVF platform to raise voice for the wellbeing of the developing climate vulnerable states around the globe.

Md. Mamunur Rashid

CHALLENGES OF PEACE IN MALI

Abstract

Mali faced a great challenge when Islamic extremists linked to al-Qaeda took control of the desert north in early 2012, exploiting a Tuareg separatist uprising defeating Mali Armed Forces (FAMA). Malian Government asked help from France to save Mali from catastrophic defeat. French Forces landed Mali in 2013 and within three and half months they recaptured all important provinces of northern and eastern regions. United Nations (UN) Troops were deployed in 2013 for bringing peace in Mali. The Mali government signed a peace deal with the main rebel coalition keeping transnational and local Terrorist Armed Groups (TAGs) out of peace agreement. The rebels, signatory to the peace agreement, were not sincere in the peace process. TAGs are taking this opportunity. They are also motivating tribes to fight each other. As the French Forces attack and kill TAGs to eradicate terrorism from this region, the TAGs are also aiming French and UN Forces in weak deployed cantonments to take revenge. Though French Forces could eradicate TAGs major deployment from northern and eastern part of Mali but they could not wipe them out totally. TAGs are taking shelter in bordering states and continuing attacking French and UN Forces sporadically making peace process more difficult to implement. Absence of political, legal institutions, good communication network, administrative infrastructure, law and order situation control and monitoring system including securing of borders in northern and eastern part of Mali is aggravating the crisis in Mali. Difference between north, east with south may be reduced so that people living in the north and east do not feel neglected by the Government operating from the South.

Keywords: Peace, TAG, Peacekeepers, French Forces, UN

1. Introduction.

Mali, a land-locked country of Sahara Desert, has experienced the most devastating consequences since independence (in 1960) when transnational and local Terrorist Armed Groups (TAGs) led by Islamic Militants and Tuareg¹ rebels defeated Malian Armed Forces in northern Mali region in January 2012. The crisis

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¹ Tuareg are the nomads of Barber people and Arab descents wandering in the desert of Sahara. They live in northern Mali, Niger, Algeria and Mauritania.

in the northern part of Mali led 137,975 Malian to take shelter in neighbouring states of Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger as refugees, and 99,039 people within Mali was internally displaced.² The situation got worsened when a group of Malian army committed a military coup in the capital Bamako led by Captain Amadou Sanogo in March 2012 and ousted the President Amadou Toumani Toure from power. Meanwhile, Tuareg rebels declared independent “Azawad” state in April 2012. At the same time, Tuareg rebels started fighting with other religious militant armed rebels who wanted to implement “Sharia Law” in Mali which made the situation worse.³ Map 1 shows the location of Mali in the African Continent, Mali with neighbouring states and the Sahel region of Africa.

Map 1: Location of Mali in African Continent⁴



After the fall of President Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, Tuaregs, ethnic relatives of Gaddafi, left Libya and took shelter in the northern region of Mali with money, weapons and ammunitions. They had the political will to change the status quo in the country.⁵ When the TAG started moving towards the capital to gain control of the lost territory, especially the whole northern region, interim President of Mali, Dioncounda Traore requested France to help, and without any delay French Armed Forces were deployed in Mali on 10 January 2013.⁶ French Forces conducted “Operation Serval” to regain the lost territory in the north and to deport Islamic militants from there, who had begun a push into the centre of Mali. French troops and Mali Forces could successfully recapture Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal, Tessalit (including Adrar des Ifoghas) the lost territories of Mali.⁷

² Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/malisituation>, accessed on 02 January 2019.

³ Kathleen M. Baker and Andrew Clark, “Mali”, available at <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali/2012-coup-and-warfare-in-the-north>, accessed on 05 March 2019.

⁴ Available at <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/mali>, (Fig-1), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali> (Fig-2), <https://theconversation.com/sahel-region-africa-72569> (Fig-3), accessed on 02 January 2019.

⁵ Dario Cristiani and Riccardo Fabiani, “From Dysfunctionality to Disagreement and Back? The Malian Crisis, Local Players and European Interests”, *Institute Affari Internazionali (IAI)*, Working Paper, 08 March 2013, pp. 4-5.

⁶ Freedom C. Onuoha and Alex Thurston, *Franco-African Military Intervention in the Mali Crisis and Evolving Security Concern*, NDC, Nigeria (Abuja): Aljazeera Center for Studies, 19 February 2013, p. 5.

⁷ Michael Shurkin, “France’s War in Mali, Lessons for an Expeditionary Army”, USA: RAND Corporation,

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) formed the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) in the name of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on 25 April 2013. MINUSMA officially started their mission on 01 July 2013, and it has become the most dangerous UNPKO of the world where 219 peacekeepers died out of 15,451 troops as of now in the hand of TAG.⁸ Map 2 shows that the area of operations for peacekeepers in Mali was limited to scarce road networks (as of 01 March 2013).

Map 2: Area of Operations in Mali for Peacekeepers Limited to Scarce Road Networks⁹



Though French Forces defeated TAG in important cities of Mali, but they could not eradicate them completely. TAGs had been conducting asymmetric war through clandestine and insurgent operations against the UN and French Forces and hid themselves inside the civil population, and in some cases, to bordering states. The UN and French Forces are conducting operation separately in most of the important cities and regions of Mali. French Forces are conducting counter insurgency operation to eliminate terrorist activities in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad commonly known as G-5 Sahel. This operation of French Forces is known as “Operation Barkhane” started on 01 August 2014 with 4,500 troops after “Operation Serval”.¹⁰ Though the UN and French Forces have different mandates and their operations and purpose are different, both forces are equally targeted by TAG which has become a great concern for all. The success of the UN and French Forces is very important to bring peace and stability in the Sahel region. To protect innocent civilians from militants and to bring back normalcy in the life of people living in the northern region of Mali, there is no alternate other than route out TAG from Sahel region.

2014, pp.16-21, available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR770.html, accessed on 06 April 2019.

⁸ Available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma>, accessed on 07 April 2019.

⁹ “Dutch Deploy to Mali as French Plan to Withdraw”, 10 January 2014, available at <https://codebookafrica.wordpress.com/tag/operation-serval/>, accessed on 25 January 2019.

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.thedefensepost.com/tag/operation-barkhane/>, accessed on 06 May 2019,

The objective of this research is to find out the reasons of Malian crisis which has destabilized the Sahel region and give plausible solution to bring sustainable peace in Mali in particular and in the Sahel region in general. The research questions are: what challenges do Mali face in order to ensure effective and sustainable peace in the country? How can those challenges be resolved to make the UNPKO most effective in bringing sustainable peace in Mali and Sahel region?

This research paper will contribute to find out the challenges that Mali is facing in bringing peace in the country. As Mali is facing asymmetric war, where the UN, French and Malian Forces are fighting against unconventional forces, the findings of this paper would help UN to deploy forces in the similar environments what the UN did not experience before. The Sahel region, Burkina Faso and Niger are also having peripheral effect of Malian crisis, as such measures suggested by the researcher would help in resolving those challenges in bringing viable peace in Mali and Sahel region.

The paper is organized in chronological order where the researcher covered methodology, theoretical framework, background of conflict and peace process in Mali, operations of French Forces and operation by the UN. Findings of the MINUSMA activities were covered in challenges of MINUSMA and solution for peace. Finally, based on the previous discussions conclusion was made followed by recommendations.

2. Methodology

As the research topic is participatory and interpretive, it needs a subjective approach and multi-method focus on the subject for finding out the problems and solutions. For that, qualitative method worked out well. The researcher conducted qualitative study on the subject in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to the subject through interviews and secondary sources. The researcher tried to find out the facts and explain those facts. Interviewing 24 important appointment holders involved with UNPKO in Mali and Bangladesh helped the researcher unearth true information on the challenges for peace in Mali and Sahel region.

As the northern region of Mali is a hot-spot of conflict, the researcher took interview of the head of office, Kidal Region who is the senior most UN Civil Staff working for the whole northern region of Mali. The researcher also took interview of Brigadier General Zakaria Ngobongue, who worked as the Sector Commander of Sector North in 2018-2019 and also contributed by participating as a member of Chad Army during Operation Serval. He conducted a land operation in Kidal, Gao and Tessalit region with French Forces to regain control of those areas in 2013.

The researcher took interview of Colonel Pierre Santoni, Deputy Sector Commander of Sector North from France who coordinates with French Forces for all kind of operations to know the role and task including anti-terrorism activities of French Forces deployed in northern region in particular and Mali in general. Information was also collected from peacekeepers including Ex-Contingent Commanders, experts, planners and organizers of the UNPKOs in Bangladesh. The researcher used logical and systematic search for new and useful information on contemporary UNPKO conducted in Africa. Secondary sources such as books, journals and relevant online materials were studied in search of new knowledge. Secondary documents were consulted to critically and objectively review published and printed facts, opinions and observations. This helped in formulating an idea regarding the answers of the questions regarding challenges for bringing sustainable peace and probable solution for bringing peace in Mali.

3. Theoretical Framework

UNPKO in Mali is different than traditional peacekeeping missions. The theory of peacekeeping started with first-generation peace operation commonly known as traditional peacekeeping organized during Cold War, and few of them are continuing till now. Those missions were deployed under Chapter VI of the UN charter to observe land border disputes between states. After the end of Cold War, second-generation peace operations started with more civilian tasks, such as to conduct Disarmament, Demobilize and Reintegration (DDR), organize election, deliver humanitarian aid, promote human right, assist refugee, control law and order with increased number of police forces and governments, and develop capability on administration and political institutions. Third-generation peace operation focused on peace enforcement under Chapter VII in Somalia, Rwanda, Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. Fourth-generation peace operation deals with peacebuilding where peacekeepers got involved in robust peacebuilding operations. The fifth-generation hybrid mission started when the world began to experience the asymmetric warfare where unconventional forces and non-state actors started destabilizing countries with a weak government. In hybrid mission, peacekeepers experienced mixed command with other forces operating in the same Area of Responsibility (AOR) under Chapter VIII.

The objective of peacebuilding is to reduce the risk of conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management. Peacebuilding lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. It is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. Peacebuilding measures enhance the capacity of the state to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions. The aim of peacekeeping is to support the implementation of a ceasefire or peace agreement. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations involve the

political process, protect civilians, assist in the DDR of former combatants, support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law. UN peacekeeping operations may use force for self-defence, their mandate, and civilians, particularly in situations where the state is unable to provide security and maintain public order.¹¹ From the aim and objective of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, it is well understood that the UN is conducting peacekeeping mission in Mali, not peacebuilding.

Theory of peacekeeping has changed dramatically when peacekeepers were deployed for robust peacebuilding in hybrid missions. The success of UNPKO in Mali is very important for the UN to deploy its forces in the asymmetric environment of other countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, because military alliances, like NATO are withdrawing their forces from those countries gradually. Success and failure of a robust peacebuilding will depend on establishing enduring peace in Mali where the UN Forces work with French Forces in the same AOR with a separate mandate from the UNSC.

The Responsibility to Protect, known as R2P, is an international norm that seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to halt the mass atrocity crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The R2P is a global political commitment which was endorsed by all member states of the UN at the 2005 World Summit in order to address its four key concerns: to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.¹² R2P stipulates three pillars of responsibility:

- a. Pillar One: Every state has the responsibility to protect its populations from four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.
- b. Pillar Two: The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility.
- c. Pillar Three: If a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter.¹³

¹¹ Available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology>, accessed on 15 September 2020.

¹² Sheri P. Rosenberg, "Responsibility to Protect: A Framework for Prevention", *Global Responsibility to Protect*, Vol. 1, 2009, p. 443.

¹³ Mahfujur Rahman and Saifullah Md. Akon, "The Responsibility to Protect Doctrine: Expectations and Reality", *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, April 2020, p. 197.

“Sustaining peace” is aimed to take adequate measures in preventing the outbreak of conflict and stop escalation, continuation and repetition of it. To do that, all stakeholders including the government have to take responsibility in finding out the root cause of conflict and take necessary measures to end the hostilities forever by assisting all parties involved in the conflict. The UN’s involvement is paramount for bringing the issue forward, engaging at all stages of conflict and providing all kind of support for conflict resolution.¹⁴ For sustaining peace firstly a clear and cautious policy is needed no matter whether the state is involved in violent conflict or not. Secondly, sustainable peace must be supported by organizations which include bodies, rules, assertiveness and ability of all segments of population, and those organizations must be developed to meet the changing environment. Thirdly, resilient wide-ranging national leadership is required for the peace process to sustain without interference from external sources. Finally, sustaining peace has many directions and fields which need more developed policy and serious consideration at the highest levels of the national government.¹⁵ Sustainable peace is a prerequisite for development. For achieving sustainable peace, civil society needs to find out the main reason of conflict, develop democracy through maximum participation, responsible, fair and impartial governance, the rule of law, regards for human rights, and fair and equal distribution of resources. If any country fails to ensure any or all of these factors, the consequence will be instability within states which will lead to violence and the absence of sustainable peace.¹⁶

4. Background of the Conflict and Peace Process in Mali

4.1 History of Mali

Caravan routes in West African Region connecting states located in the west and east have passed through Mali since 300 AD. Map 3 shows the rise of Trans-regional Trading Route Network in Sahara desert area. The Malinke Empire reigned areas of Mali from 12th to 16th century. The Songhai Empire governed over the Timbuktu-Gao region in the 15th century. Morocco occupied Timbuktu in 1591 and governed over it for two centuries. The land became a colony of France in 1904 (named French Sudan in 1920) and it became part of the French Union in 1946. On 20 June 1960, Mali became independent in the name of Sudanese Republic and

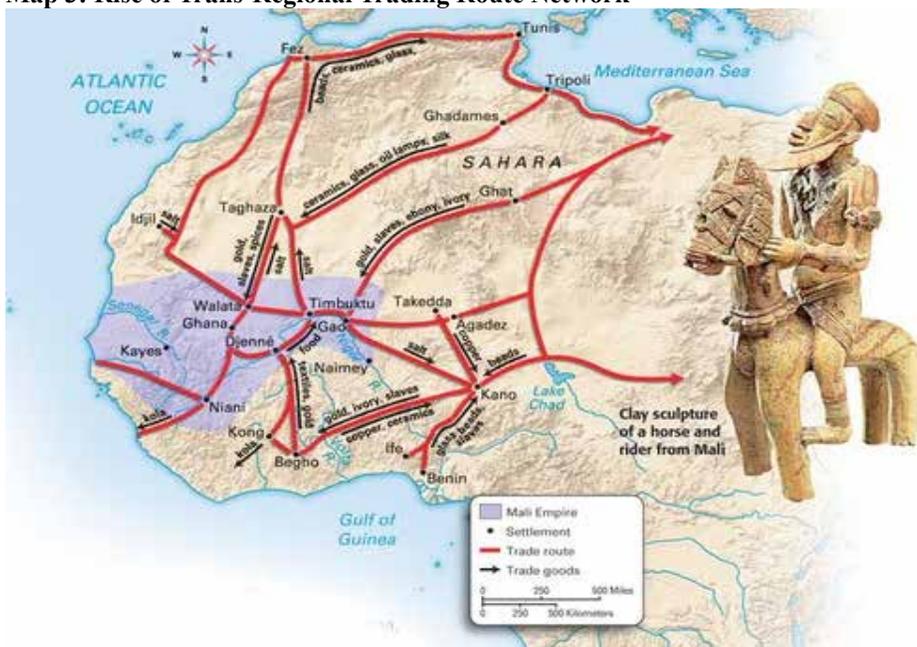
¹⁴ Rosenthal Gert, “Reflections on the Meaning of Sustaining Peace”, USA: International Peace Institute, 17 July 2017, p. 1, available at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/07/sustaining-peace-peacebuilding-architecture-united-nations/>, accessed on 30 May 2019.

¹⁵ International Peace Institute, “Sustaining Peace: What Does It Mean in Practice”, available at https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/1704_Sustaining-Peace-final.pdf, accessed on 03 June 2019.

¹⁶ Otiye Igbuzor, “Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor for Sustainable Peace and National Development”, *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2011, pp. 4-5.

Mali Federation was formed with Republic of Senegal. Senegal separated from the federation on 20 August 1960 and the Sudanese Republic then changed its name to the Republic of Mali on 22 September 1960.¹⁷

Map 3: Rise of Trans-Regional Trading Route Network¹⁸



The name Mali is taken from the name of the Mali Empire. The name was originally derived from the Mandinka or Bambara word *mali*, meaning “hippopotamus”, but it eventually came to mean “the place where the king lives”. The word carries the connotation of strength.¹⁹ After the French colonization, the Western powers established borders without regards to the ethnic groups. The newly drawn borders are the reason for many conflicts all over Africa because they fragmented the tribes and ethnic groups.²⁰ Tuaregs inhabit in the northern desert region in Mali and have little in common with other ethnic groups. Modibo Keita was the first president of Mali who imposed communism in Mali. He was in power until 1968. He was ousted in a bloodless coup organized by a group of young army officers led by Lieutenant Moussa Traore. Traore ruled Mali from 1969 to 1979 through an appointed Military Committee of National Liberation. In 1979, elections were organized and Traore was

¹⁷ Kathleen M. Baker and Andrew Clark, op. cit.

¹⁸ Available at <https://quizlet.com/256593869/94-rise-of-trans-regional-trade-networks-flash-cards/>, accessed on 01 February 2019.

¹⁹ Available at <https://glosbe.com/en/bm/Mali>, accessed on 07 June 2019.

²⁰ Available at <https://www.pri.org/stories/2011-10-29/tuaregs-5-things-you-need-know>, accessed on 10 June 2019.

elected as a president and was re-elected in 1985. Traore tried to diversify the economy and maintained a non-aligned position in international affairs. But he was toppled after pro-democracy riots in 1991. He was sentenced to death in 1993 for his handling of 106 people killed in that demonstration.²¹ In 1991, there was an internal conflict with the Tuareg in the north of the country. In 1994 peace agreements were signed with some of the Tuareg rebel groups and the dispute mostly resolved by 1996. Former fighters of the various Tuareg Liberation Movements were absorbed into Mali's regular army. In 2002, Amadou Toumani Toure, a retired general, was elected as the president who had been the leader of the military aspect of the 1991 democratic uprising. During this democratic period, Mali was regarded as one of the most politically and socially stable countries in Africa.

Map 4: Northern Mali Conflict, Fullest Extent of Rebel Territory, January 2013²²



A group of Malian Army committed a military coup in the capital Bamako led by Captain Amadou Sanogo in March 2012 and ousted President Amadou Toumani Toure from power. Tuareg rebels declared independent “Azawad” state in April 2012. At the same time, Tuareg rebels started fighting with other religious militant armed rebels who wanted to implement “Sharia Law” in Mali which made the situation worse. Religious militant armed rebels along with TAGs captured main cities of North and East from the Government Forces and started proceeding towards Bamako. Former Malian Transition President Dioncounda Traoré requested France to stop advance of TAGs towards Bamako. French troops were deployed in Mali in January 2013. Mali and French Forces fought against Tuareg rebels resulting in an exodus of approximately 412,000 persons who fled their homes and became internally displaced or refugee to the camps of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania

²¹ Pascal James Imperato and Gavin H. Imperato, *Historical Dictionary of Mali*, 4th Edition, USA: Scarecrow Press, 2008, p. 310.

²² “Tuareg, their History and their Harsh Saharan Environment”, available at <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat55/sub394/entry-5933.html>, accessed on 11 February 2019.

and Niger.²³ French Force along with Malian Army and few Western African countries combined defeated TAGs in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal within three and half months with the assistance of few European countries and the United States of America (USA). MINUSMA officially deployed on 01 July 2013. President election was held in 2013 and Ibrahim Boubacar Keita became the president of Mali. Peace agreements were signed between Malian government and Compliant Armed Group (CMA) and Platform in Bamako and Algeria in 2015. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was re-elected again in 2018 national election.²⁴ On 18 August 2020, Colonel Assimi Goiti organized a military coup and removed President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita for corruption, mismanagement of the economy and disrupted legislative election. The African Union (AU) and ECOWAS did not accept the military coup. France and Germany condemned the coup and wanted the quickest possible transition to civilian rule. Assimi Goiti, the leader of the new military junta, which is calling itself the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), is going to set in place a transitional council, with a transitional president who is going to be either military or civilian to run the country.²⁵

4.2 *Background of Conflict*

Mali was the most democratic country in Africa in the past 20 years.²⁶ But the country faced the greatest crisis when Tuareg dominated northern region declared independent Azawad state in 2012. There are many reasons involved in the crisis in Mali. However, the most significant ones are given below:

- a. Mali has experienced crisis inside the country four times after independence when secessionist rebel Tuareg and Arab Groups in the sparsely populated north, rebelled against the government attempting to gain autonomy in 1963-1964, 1990-1996 and 2006-2009, and finally to gain independence of their northern region they declared independent Azawad state in 2012-2013.²⁷ The north dominated by Tuareg people considered them being abandoned by the Malian Government located in the south since independence. There was limited development in the northern regions in compared to the south. Economic inequality between north and south was an important issue. Divide and rule

²³ John Karlsrud, "Mali", in Alex J. Bellamy and Tim Dunne (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 1.

²⁴ Available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881978?ocid=socialflow_twitter, accessed on 11 June 2019.

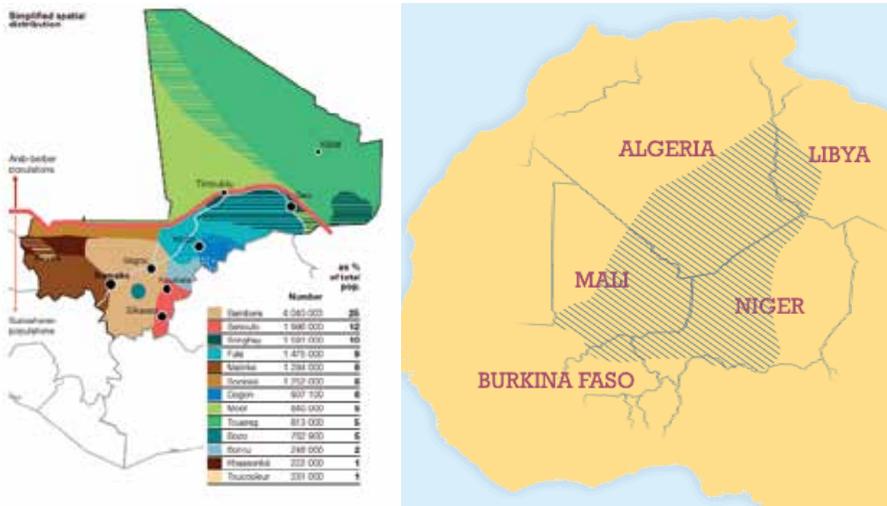
²⁵ Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53854372>, accessed on 15 June 2019.

²⁶ Ritter Noemi, "Mali: A New Challenge for Peacekeeping", *AARMS*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2014, pp. 103–111.

²⁷ Janos Besenyo, "Thoughts on the Crisis in Mali", pp. 415-419, available at https://www.academia.edu/12199988/Thoughts_on_the_Crisis_in_Mali, accessed on 20 June 2019.

strategy of the government was also a reason. Favouritism and patronage in government mechanism became bone of contention between Mali government and Tuareg dominated areas of the north, especially Kidal, Tessalit, Aguelhok, Timbuktu, etc. The primacy of military means to enforce national unity was a wrong strategy played by the Malian government in the northern region of Mali.²⁸

Map 5: Ethnic Groups in Mali and Tuareg Area in Western Sahara Desert²⁹



- b. Rivalry between ethnic groups has weakened the peace and stability in the northern and eastern region of Mali. Four ethnic groups are predominant in Mali. They are, the Bambara (Bamana) ethnic group (language predominate) commonly known as Mande People, the Fulani (Fulbe), Dogon, and Tuareg.
- c. There was a political and constitutional crisis occurred by the military coup to overthrow the democratically elected government by the army. The political problem is directly linked to the close regional impacts with the Sahel region, providing a huge ungovernable space for organized crime among state and non-state actors. The smuggling of human, drugs, weapon, cars, golds and cigarettes prospers as much as kidnapping.³⁰

²⁸ Gregory Chauzal and Thibault Van Damme, “The Root of Mali’s Conflict, Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis”, The Netherlands (Clingendael): CRU Report, Institute of International Relations, March 2015, pp. 17-26.

²⁹ “Atlas Jeune Afrique 2010”, in L. Bossard, *OECD, Sahel and West Africa Club*, 2015, p. 191 (Fig-1), accessed on 16 February 2019; “Tuareg, their history and their harsh Saharan environment”, available at <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat55/sub394/entry-5933.html> (Fig-2), accessed on 20 February 2019.

³⁰ Nadja Frerksen, “Foreign Interventionism, the Case of Mali, Counterinsurgency or Neo-Colonial Invasion?”

- d. The conflict was also an attempt by Islamist Jihadists to take over Mali and to establish a terrorist state based on Sharia Law.³¹
- e. Religion-influenced northern region, especially Timbuktu and Kidal area have bypassed the Malian State especially in case of foreign aid received from Libya, Algeria and Middle East countries by the rebels. That was also taken very seriously by the Malian government.³²
- f. The progressive decline in the power and affluence of the Tuareg people, the marginalization of northern Mali based on economic inequality and unequal political representation between the north and the west and poverty of northern Mali which include other ethnic communities are root causes of the conflict.³³
- g. The rules of good governance including transparency in the management of public affairs, absence of local governance and decentralization, national reconciliation, absence of social cohesion in peaceful coexistence, respect for human rights, justice and fight against impunity are the other causes of conflict in the northern region.³⁴ Fragile democratic transition and weak state institution contributed equally to the crisis.³⁵
- h. The Libyan war triggered a geopolitical chain reaction and created a complex and divided domestic environment in Mali. The Libyan revolution had a direct impact on the Saharan/Sahelian regional security environment.

University of Southern Denmark, Sonderborg, 20 May 2015, p. 19.

³¹ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

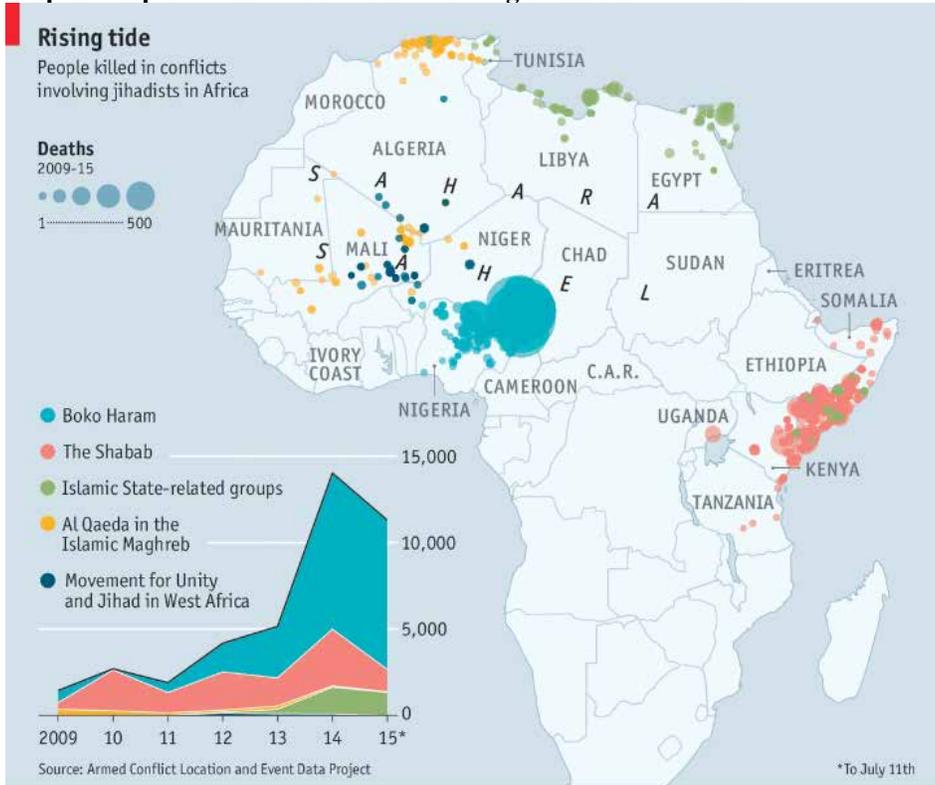
³² Gregory Chauzal and Thibault Van Damme, op. cit., pp. 22-24.

³³ Elisabeth Skons, "The Implementation of the Peace Process in Mali: a Complex Case of Peacebuilding", in *SIPRI Yearbook 2016: Armament, Disarmament and International Security*, Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2016, p. 9,

³⁴ Ibid, p. 23.

³⁵ Abiodun Joseph Oluwandare, "The African Union and the Conflict in Mali: Extra-Regional Influence and the Limitation of a Regional Actor", Nigeria: National Open University, pp. 7-8, available at <https://www.lindenwood.edu/files/resources/106-120.pdf>, accessed on 10 July 2019.

Map 6: People Killed in Conflicts Involving Jihadists in Africa³⁶



Fall of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi led Tuaregs to fall back to northern region of Mali with a good number of arms and ammunitions, resulted in the declaration of independence of the Azawad followed by the “narco-Jihadism”.³⁷

- i. International Islamic TAGs want to establish “Sharia Law” in Mali and fulfil their international TAGs agenda which other rebel groups do not agree. Trade of weapon, ammunition, natural resources, vehicles, human and drugs in the bordering areas are the organized crime committed by TAG.³⁸ Map 7 shows Islamist militant groups and their areas of influence in Africa.

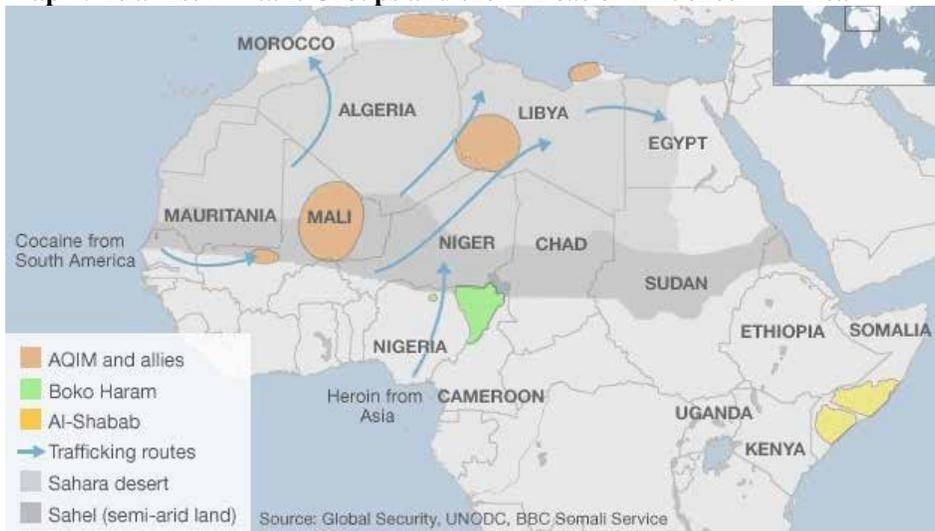
³⁶ “Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project”, *The Economist*, 23 July 2015, available at <https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/post/124828319165/people-killed-in-conflicts-involving-jihadists-in>, accessed on 24 August 2019.

³⁷ Dario Cristiani and Riccardo Fabiani, “From Disfunctionality to Disagreement and Back? The Malian Crisis, Local Players and European Interests”, *Institute Affari Internazionali (IAI) Working Paper*, 08 March 2013, pp. 2-3 .

³⁸ Janos Besenyo, op. cit.

- j. In social and economic aspect, north and west show huge differences, north has limited access to education and healthcare.³⁹ Poor education systems, poverty in northern region are predominant. There is no good communication system developed as of now in the northern region. Due to very limited job, young people are unemployed, and they got involved in crime such as smuggling or abducting foreigners, etc.⁴⁰
- k. Mali has experienced a number of military coups since liberation. These military coups have hindered the democratic process and development of democratic institutions. It had a ripple effect in Mali and increased poverty and terrorism. Though military coups were supported by common people due to the corrupt government and power monger former presidents, but in the long run, Mali failed to get the fruit of democracy due to that.

Map 7: Islamist Militant Groups and their Areas of Influence in Africa



4.3 *Peace Accord Signed to Resolve Crisis in Mali*

- a. **The Tamanrasset Accords, 1991:** During uprising in 1990, President Traore understood that a negotiated settlement would be more preferable because a swift military victory was impossible. He focused on traditional chief close to his government, but it was evident that

³⁹ Nadja Frercksen, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Christophe Sivillon, Head of Office, MINUSMA, Sector North, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 19 March 2019.

the revolt was not only against the military regime but also against the traditional domination of the Tuareg aristocracy. The army continued to suffer a series of humiliating defeat and the insurgents could negotiate from a position of military advantage. President Traore entered into direct negotiations with the Movement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA) and the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA) with Algeria's assistance. On 06 January 1991, agreement on the cessation of hostilities was signed between the Government of the Republic of Mali on the one hand and the MPA and the FIAA on the other at Tamanrasset, Algeria. There were 13 clauses in the accord. The agreement satisfied the core demand of the movements, including a very high percentage of development funds allocated to the north, integration of nomads into the army, other uniform services in all levels of the administration, and greater regional autonomy for managing local affairs according to cultural customs. Songhoy communities had not been represented at the Tamanrasset negotiations and many worried that the agreement would install Tuareg dominance in the north, thus fuelling suspicions and tensions within the region. The Tamanrasset accord granted the north special status, with more political and administrative power given to local populations. It also provided for a lesser presence of the army in the north; the demilitarization of administration; the dismantling of several military posts; military withdrawal from grazing areas, as well as densely populated areas; and the granting of close to 50 per cent of an upcoming development program to northern regions.⁴¹

- b. **The National Pact, 1992:** On 11 April 1992, National Pact was signed in Bamako between the transitional Government of the Republic of Mali and the Unified Azawad Movements and Fronts (MFUA) dedicating the special status of northern Mali. The agreement was based on four key points: peace and security in the north, national reconciliation, special initiatives to promote socio-economic development in the north, and according to the north a special status within the framework of the unitary state of Mali. The 1992 National Pact resulted in the integration of close to 2,500 former combatants and the provision of financial subsidies to 9,500 more into the army and administration. These numbers were, however, perceived as too small in the north and too large, favouring the troublemakers, in the south. Disarmament was relatively unsuccessful in spite of the well-publicized Flame of Peace monument in Timbuktu that commemorates the burning of close to

⁴¹ Stephanie Pezard and Michael Shurkin, *Achieving Peace in Northern Mali, Pat Agreements, Local Conflicts, and the Prospects for a Durable Settlement*, USA: RAND Corporation Publications, 2015, p. 13 .

3,000 weapons. Decentralization efforts were more successful; the number of communes (administrative units) increased from 19 to 703, and the first communal elections were held in 1998. A third region was created in northern Mali around Kidal. A series of meetings in Algiers concluded in the National Pact, but key stakeholders were left out, and implementation proved difficult.

- c. The Algiers Accord, 2006:** The Algiers Accords were negotiated between the Government of the Republic of Mali and Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) on 23 May under the mediation of Algeria which granted northern Mali further political autonomy and more development funds. Algiers Accords was signed on 04 June 2006, focused on the restoration of peace, security and development in the region of Kidal. As in the 1990s, only a few of the accords' provisions were implemented. ADC took over control of Kidal and Menaka on May 2006 after the withdrawal of the Malian Armed Forces. Algeria came forward and Algiers Accord was signed on 04 July 2006 which gave northern Mali more political autonomy and development fund. The Algiers Accord was not accepted by few political parties of Mali because they consider the peace agreement to be fragile and not suitable for a political solution to a security issue. Even Tuareg leaders from non-Ifoghas clans did not agree with the peace deal because they consider this deal to be advantageous to the Ifoghas community led by Iyad Ag Ghali. In this agreement, the Ifoghas at Kidal was overrepresented and clans like Idnan and Taghat Mellet were excluded. 48.6 million euro was committed for the development of northern population but ultimately the money was spent in unequal proportion by building army camps. It was said by some analysts that this is the reason for National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) to take up arms in January 2012.⁴²
- d. The Ouagadougou Agreement, 2012:** The Ouagadougou Accord was signed on 18 June 2013 among the Government of the Republic of Mali, MNL and Haut conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) at Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The Ouagadougou Accord is different than any other peace agreement of Mali because it was signed to establish a cease-fire, prepare for presidential election and return of public service in the north.⁴³

⁴² Arthur Boutellis and Marie-Joel Zahar, "A Process in Search of Peace: Lessons from the Inter-Malian Agreement", New York: International Peace Institute, IPI Publication, June 2017, p. 6.

⁴³ Stephanie Pezard and Michael Shurkin, op. cit., p. 5.

e. **The Algiers Peace Accord and the Bamako Agreement, 2015:** The Mali government, the self-defence group and movement called Platform, a coalition of pro-government armed groups had signed the peace deal in May 2015. On 20 June 2015, the principal rebel coalition in northern Mali, Coordination of Movement for Azawad (CMA) signed the peace agreement in Bamako.⁴⁴ The reasons for the failure of peace agreements are given below:

- i. Signatories failed to fulfil the commitments of the peace accord
- ii. Failure to monitor, evaluate and implement terms and conditions of peace agreement by all stakeholders
- iii. Information and communication gap among those organizations responsible for implementing the peace process
- iv. Complying with legal, political and institutional reforms those were not acceptable by the people of Mali
- v. TAGs, spoilers and media propaganda in spreading rumours on peace process.⁴⁵

The challenges of Algiers Peace Accord and the Bamako Agreement, 2015 are as follows:

- i. Lack of coordination among security forces in the northern and eastern region in conducting joint patrols, especially in all northern regions
- ii. Establish local authority in the northern region and re-establish utility and social services to people affected in the conflict
- iii. Malian government failed in economic recovery and development under the agreement held in Paris on 22 October 2015
- iv. There are many rebels from east (from Fulani and Dogan tribes) who did not sign peace accord. They are highly involved in armed conflict and ethnic cleansing in those areas. They may be included in peace agreement gradually so that armed conflict in those areas could be stopped through DDR 46.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 19-21.

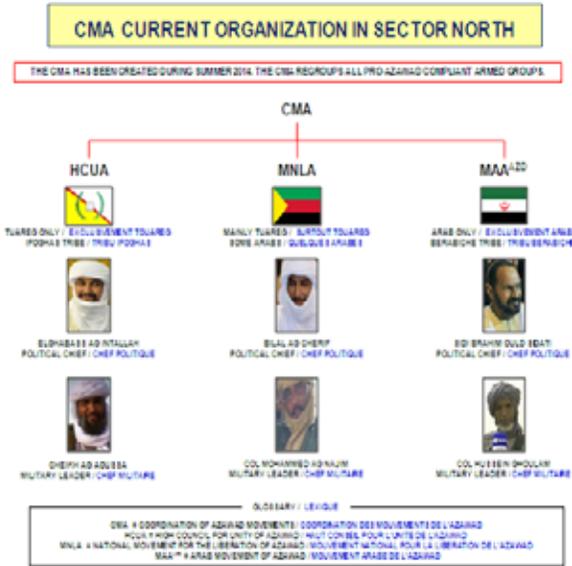
⁴⁵ Naffet Keita, "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali Resulting from the Algiers Process. Between Euphoric and Scepticism: Traces of Peace", Mali: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Publishers, 2018, p. 18 .

⁴⁶ Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jul/01/mali-peace-deal-a-welcome>

The aspects for fruitful implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali are given below:

- i. Making an atmosphere that would help in implementing the peace agreement with the help of Joint force of Sahel countries in fighting against terrorism, drug trafficking and insecurity
- ii. Quick deployment and execution of Joint Patrol in Kidal and Timbuktu region in fast building of Cantonment and DDR process considering the point of concern of young people of Gao and the central regions of the country
- iii. Establish local government in northern regions especially the state of Kidal that can effectively function and improve utility services and basic social services for the people living in the northern region
- iv. Strengthening the truce signed between the signatory (the CMA and the Platform) time to time by stopping all kind of antagonism between two movements
- v. Accomplishment of institutional reforms and amendment of the constitution which transfer the terms and condition of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali
- vi. Government's utilization of the fund guaranteed under the peace agreement and proficiency required to implement the assurances
- vii. Execution of all recommendations of all the high-level meeting of the agreement, monitoring committee and conducting these meetings on regular intervals
- viii. Application of the new mandate of MINUSMA pursuant to UNSC resolution 2364 adopted on 29 June 2017 and take necessary measures against those responsible for hindering the implementation of the peace accord
- ix. Inquiry all crimes and other serious violations of international law and human rights, in accordance with the guidance of UNPKO
- x. Enabling the Carter Center, appointed as an independent observer for evaluating the execution of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali according to the Algiers process.

Figure 1: CMA’s Current Organization in Sector North⁴⁷



The crisis in Mali has erupted time to time and destabilized the country sporadically since independence. In Mali, there is a risk of downfall if international interest shifts to other conflict areas. Malian people understand that there is no military solution to the critical situation in the north and peace accord is still the best solution to stabilize that part of the country.⁴⁸

5. Operation Serval

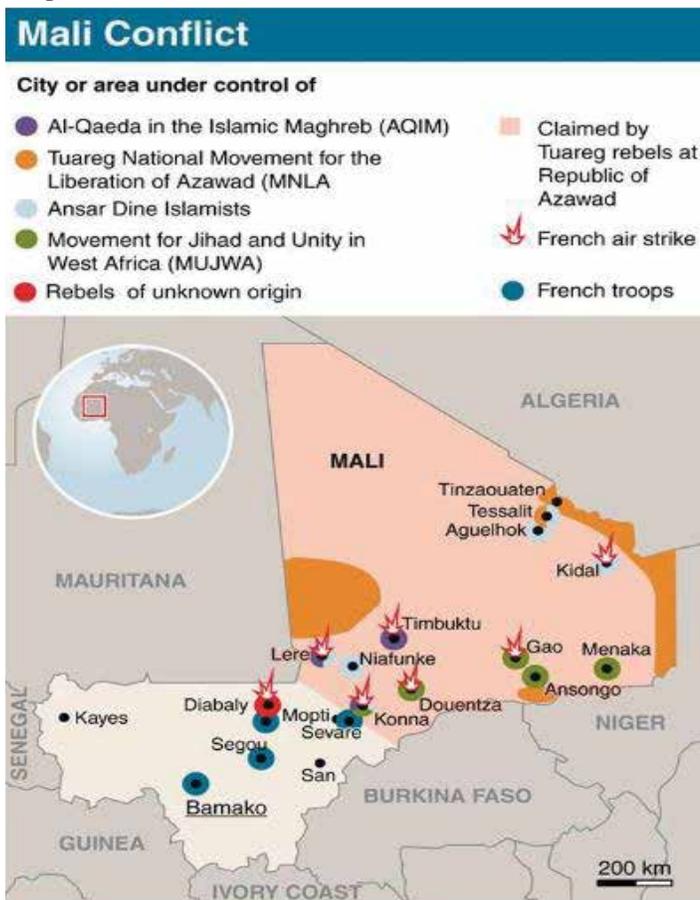
Operation Serval was an operation conducted by the French and Malian Armed Forces combinedly with friendly forces of Europe, the USA and few states of West Africa. This operation was important for stopping humiliating defeat of Malian Forces against TAGs in all major cities in the north. It also brought security and stability in the country and stopped the political government to fail completely in running the country. If French Forces would not be deployed, the whole country could come under TAGs control, and Mali would be the breeding place for terrorists. Operation Serval helped Mali in particular and the Sahel region in general from terrorists thus helped to bring peace. France has economic and security interest in

⁴⁷ Justine O. Obare, “History of Mali Conflict and Current Situation”, paper presented in the Orientation Training of Bangladesh Airfield Services and Management Unit (BANASMU)-5, at Kidal, Mali on January 2019.

⁴⁸ Available at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/06/mali-bamako-agreement-agiers-process-minusma/>, accessed on 22 June 2019.

Mali. The country’s eastern neighbour Niger is the world’s fourth largest uranium exporter. The mines at Arlit and Akoka, near the border with Mali, are exploited by French Uranium Exploration Company Areva. Niger’s uranium provides 20 per cent of the fuel for France’s 58 nuclear reactors, which are responsible for generating nearly 75 per cent of France’s electricity. France wants to secure collection of its energy raw material from Niger. If political and security problem exists in Mali, France might face difficulties in collecting uranium from Niger. This has guided France to be involved in the operation with Mali.⁴⁹

Map 8: Mali Conflict⁵⁰



⁵⁵ Sergei Boeke and Bart Schuurman, “Operation Serval: A Strategic Analysis of the French Intervention in Mali, 2013-2014”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue 6, 2015, pp. 801-825.

⁵⁰ “Mali, Conduct of Hostilities”, available at <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/mali-conduct-hostilities>, accessed on 24 March 2019.

With the request of the interim government of Mali, France deployed Armed Force to recapture the lost territories of north and eastern provinces occupied by rebel forces to stop growing a terrorist state at the doorstep of France and Europe. Following the UNSC Resolution 2085 of 20 December 2012, “Operation Serval” was named after the desert wild cat species Serval. The operation started from 11 January 2013 and ended in August 2014 with an aim to overthrow the Islamic militants from the north, east and south of Mali who had begun a push into the centre of the country.⁵¹

In the north, Chadian Forces and a small part of the Malian Forces were also involved. French paratroopers and French mechanized infantry went very quickly to the north taking the Chadian Army with them. TAG could not believe that French Forces would be able to fight in the Adrar des Ifoghas Mountains in such a hot weather condition in March 2013. So, they were totally surprised when they were surrounded by the French brigade.⁵²

5.1 *Result of the Operation*

At the end of the operation, French and Malians Forces achieved victory and took over control of all major cities and towns those were lost in 2012. Ten French soldiers were killed during the operation. French Forces lost one Gazelle Helicopter. From Mali Armed Forces 82 soldiers were killed, from Chad 38 soldiers were killed and from MNLA 17 soldiers were killed and 60 other wounded. From Togo, Nigeria and Senegal 2 soldiers were killed from each country and from Burkina Faso, one soldier was killed during the operation. On the other hand, from TAG, 625 killed, 109-300 militants captured, 50 vehicles destroyed, 150 tons of ammunition and 200 weapons were seized and 60 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) were defused.⁵³

6. **Operation Barkhane**

Operation Barkhane started on 01 August 2014 and continues till today. The operation is named after a crescent-shaped dune in the Sahara Desert.⁵⁴ The objective of this operation is to stop insurgency in the Maghreb and fight against terrorism. French

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

⁵² Colonel Pierre Santoni (FA), Deputy Sector Commander, Sector North, MINUSMA, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 22 April 2019.

⁵³ Sergei Boeke and Bart Schunrman, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Carmen Cuesta Roca, “From Operation Serval to Barkhane Understanding France’s Increased Involvement in Africa in the Context of Francafrigue and Post-colonialism”, available at <http://jpinyu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/3-Hollande.pdf>, accessed on 25 April 2019.

President François Hollande, has said that the French Force will have a rapid and efficient intervention in the event of a crisis in the region. The operation has been conducted in support of the armed forces of France’s partners in the Sahel to counter armed terrorist groups and to prevent the reconstruction of terrorist sanctuaries in the region.⁵⁵ The mission is a matter of “cutting the lawn”, that is containing the terrorist threat that cannot be totally eradicated and always come back. This operation also has a military aspect of the European strategy to manage the flow of illegal immigrants and illicit trafficking (drugs, narcotics, weapons, etc.) coming from the Sahel which could destabilize Europe.⁵⁶ The operation is aimed to become the French pillar of counterterrorism in the Sahel region. The aim is to prevent all forms of jihadist activities between Libya and the Atlantic Ocean which would lead to serious consequences for the security of the region.⁵⁷

Map 9: The Deployment of French Forces in Operation Barkhane



⁵⁵ Dan E. Stigall, “The French Military Intervention in Mali, Counter-Terrorism, and the Law of Armed Conflict”, *Military Law Review*, Vol. 223, Issue 1, January 2015, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁶ Bruno Charbonneau, “The Dilemmas of International Intervention in Mali”, A Stabilizing Mali Project Report, Centre Franco Paix, Canada, October 2017, p. 18.

⁵⁷ Maxime H. A. Larive, “Welcome to France’s New War on Terror in Africa: Operation Barkhane”, *The National Interest*, 07 August 2014, available at <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/welcome-frances-new-war-terror-africa-operation-barkhane-11029>, accessed on 15 August 2019.

6.1 Deployment

The assets deployment of French Forces for Operation Barkhane is shown in Map 9. Operation Barkhane is conducted with 4700 French soldiers, 21 helicopters, 360 logistics vehicles, 210 light armoured vehicles, 260 heavy armoured vehicles, 6-10 strategic and tactical transport aircrafts, seven fighter aircrafts and three drones, all deployed over two permanent bases in Gao and N’Djamena (Chad). Operation Barkhane’s logistics support is organized in three permanent support bases (N’Djamena/Chad, Gao/Mali, and Niamey/Niger) including two logistics and air support platforms in Niamey and N’Djamena; six temporary forward bases (Kidal, Tessalit, Aguelal, Madama, Faya, and Abéché of Mali); three maritime support bases in Dakar/Senegal, Abidjan/Ivory Coast and Douala/Cameroon. Barkhane’s air capacities are stationed on two main operational air bases: Niamey, Niger and N’Djamena, Chad. Fighter aircraft and drones conduct coordinated action in support of operations on the ground or in complete autonomy, if necessary. The drone detachment deployed in Sahel region is now equipped with three Reaper drones. Their discretion and endurance make them key assets for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions, and more broadly for operational performance and results assessment. Under Operation Barkhane, in 2019, French Forces conducted 105 combat operations in their fight against terrorism. Map 10 shows French Military Assets in Mali.

Map 10: French Military Assets in Mali⁵⁸



⁵⁸ Available at <http://world-news-research.com/18jan2013.html>, accessed on 25 April 2019.

7.1 ***Mandate***

The resolution was unique, as it gave MINUSMA a rare “peace enforcement” role, authorizing peacekeepers to use “all necessary means” to enforce its mandate, which includes the protection of civilians and the promotion and protection of human rights. Under Resolution 2100, MINUSMA is responsible for the protection of civilians “under imminent threat of physical violence”; with “specific protection for women and children” and addressing “the needs of victims of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict”; must monitor, investigate and report to the SC on any violations of human rights of international humanitarian law.⁶⁵

7.2 ***Security and Protection***

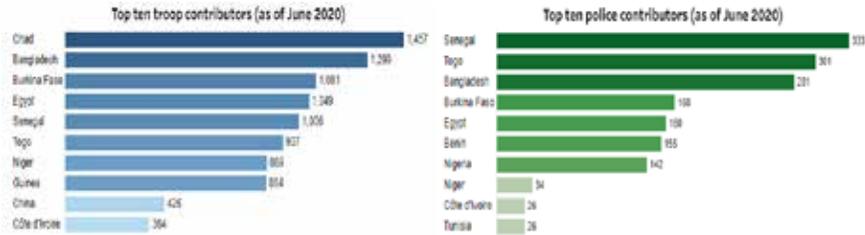
From 01 July 2013 to 28 February 2019, MINUSMA military and police conducted 183,769 and 72,755 patrols respectively. 341 tons of obsolete and non-usable weapons and ammunitions were confiscated and destroyed by Armed Forces of Mali (FAMa) with support from MINUSMA. 4,655 members of the Malian Security Forces were trained in counter IED measures including 130 women. 34,553 members of the Malian Security Forces were trained by UN Police which includes 3,638 women.

7.3 ***Deployment***

As of 28 February 2019, the UN deployed 13,010 military personnel and 1,759 police personnel in 14 locations of Mali. In Sector North, UN troops are deployed in Kidal, Tessalit and Aguelhoc. In Sector East, the UN troops are deployed in Gao, Menaka and Ansongo. In Sector West, UN troops are deployed in Tombouctou, Ber, Diabaly and Goundam. In Sector Center, the UN troops are deployed in Doenza, Bankas, Madhugo, Mopti and Sevare. Sector South, is in the capital Bamako with Force Headquarters (FHQ) and few deployments around FHQ close to Senou International Airport. The SC authorized 13,289 military personnel and 1,920 police personnel for MINUSMA until 30 June 2019.

⁶⁵ Available at <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-mali>, accessed on 10 August 2020.

Figure 2: Top 10 Military and Police Contributing Country in MINUSMA



7.4 Operation of MINUSMA

MINUSMA conducts operations firstly to ensure that peace agreement is being complied by all signatory rebel groups. MINUSMA Force also conducts routine patrols to ensure the security of the area of operation, protect civil population from TAG attacks, control key points of the terrain and support DDR actions, search and detect IED and neutralize those, support Stabilization and Recovery (S & R) team action and enlarge the force area of influence, escort and support civilian pillars of the UN in infrastructure, local government and political development and show presence of force. MINUSMA Force acts proactively, stay vigilant and shows robust posture against TAG.⁶⁶ Impact points of mortar attack on Kidal Camp is shown below.

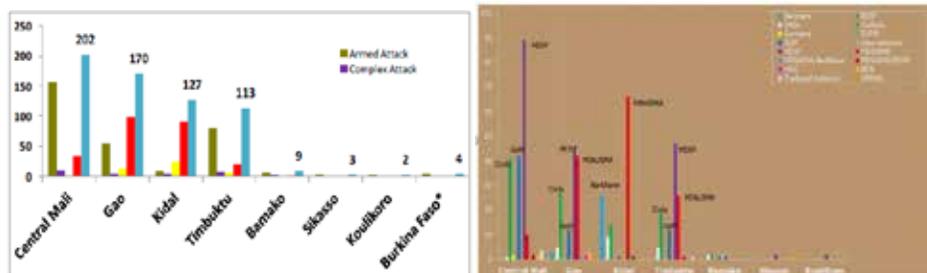
Map 13: Impact Points of 9 Mortar Attack on Kidal Helipad



⁶⁶ Available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma>, accessed on 21 November 2019.

MINSUMA has become the most dangerous mission because of the sporadic attacks on MINUSMA patrol by TAGs. Peacekeepers were killed by mines laid in the road while going for patrol. MINUSMA carries and distributes food and logistics in a convoy where MINUSMA does not have the means to send those by air. Those convoys are also being attacked by mine or IED. In many occasions, TAGs orchestrated comprehensive attack on MINUSMA camps with mortar/rocket fire followed by Vehicle-Borne IED (VIED) attack over guard posts and entrance of camps. On 20 January 2019, TAGs attacked Aguelhuk Camp of Sector North and killed 10 Chadian soldiers and severely injured 17 of them. Again, they threw nine mortar shell over Kidal Camp of Sector North on 03 April 2019. The impact point of Kidal Camp is shown in the Map 13. As all the mortar hit in the heliport area, only two parked helicopters had minor damage in their hull. One Togo soldier died during that time due to heart failure. As the peacekeepers of MINUSMA are staying inside same camp with French Forces, TAGs treat both the UN and French Force equally and they attack both whenever they get the opportunity, though the mandates of both forces are totally different.⁶⁷ MINUSMA needs to develop current intelligence capability into a system that is accessible to all TCCs so that most exposed soldier get benefit from the mission’s intelligence capability of All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU).⁶⁸ Figure 3 shows terrorist attack per region and targets of attack .⁶⁹

Figure 3: Terrorist Attack Per Region and Targets of Attacks⁷⁰



Air operation in MINUSMA plays a vital role in UNPKO in Mali. The road communication in Mali is very poor as such the UN aircraft and helicopter became the lifeline in transporting troops, equipment and food in most of the remote locations where MINUSMA troops are deployed. Helicopters are being used for

⁶⁷ Brigadier General Zakaria Ngobongue, Sector Commander, Sector North, MINUSMA, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 20 April 2019.

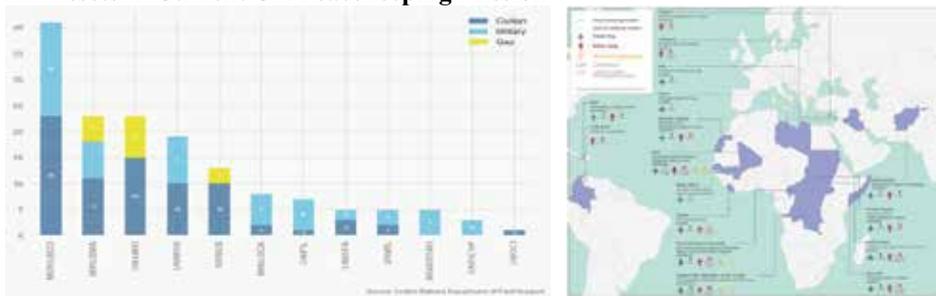
⁶⁸ “Inequality in MINUSMA, African Soldiers are in the Firing Line in Mali”, *DIIS Policy Brief*, December 2016, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Bruno Charbonneau, “The Dilemmas of International Intervention in Mali”, *A Stabilizing Mali Project Report*, Centre Franco Paix, Canada, October 2017, pp. 16-17.

⁷⁰ Bruno Charbonneau, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

reconnaissance, casualty and medical evacuation. It is also used for carrying troops, passenger, food and cargo, especially in those places where the runway is not available or not operational. In MINUSMA a good number of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) are deployed from Germany and Sweden which play a significant role in ISR information of TAGs movement. Moreover, Mirage F1CR, Rafael and Mirage-2000 of France are deployed in Chad for close air support and air interdiction missions.⁷¹

Figure 4: Number of Helicopter and Current Deployment of Civilian and Military Air Assets in Current UN Peacekeeping Mission⁷²



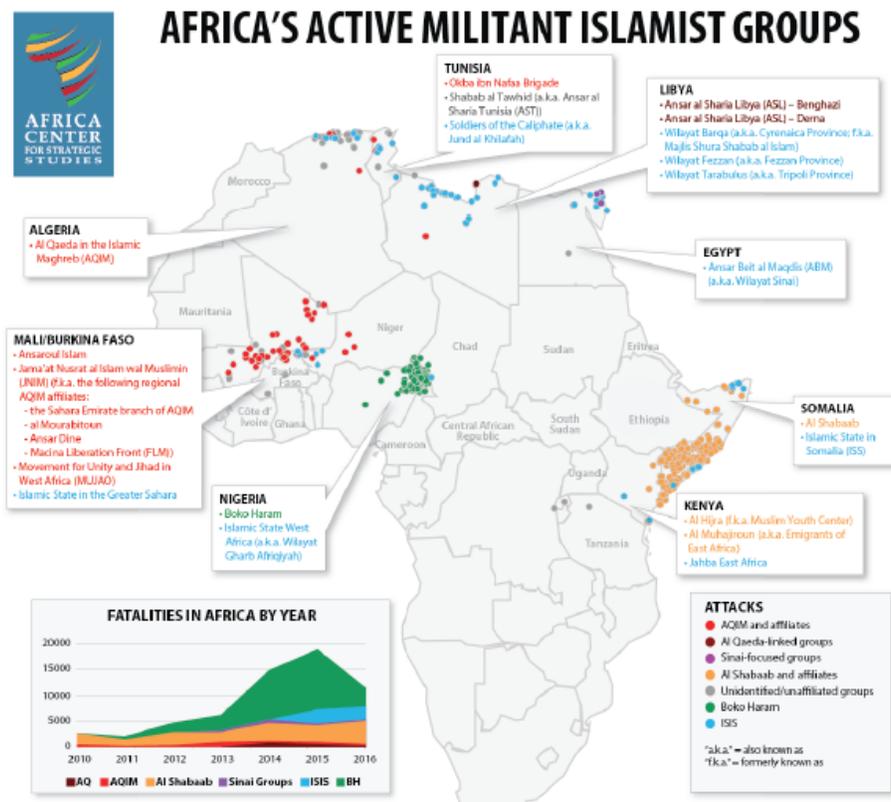
In Mali, seven fixed-wing aircraft, 25 helicopters and 42 UAS are deployed. In 2017, only 11 helicopters were operational; MINUSMA’s authorities consider the lack of helicopters and of tactical air transport capacity to be one of the mission’s major weakness. This gap exists because military helicopters and strategic or tactical airlift capabilities are expensive and rare, and countries tend to keep them for themselves before putting them for the disposal of the UN. Moreover, MINUSMA aviation is operating in a challenging security environment and harsh climate conditions; its military air assets had been damaged by attacks in Kidal and Gao over since deployment, and two attack helicopters (one Dutch Apache and one German Tiger) had crashed since 2015.⁷³

MINUSMA, along with the armed forces of France and regional actors are reaching its goal slowly in bringing peace to the country, guarantying security of its people by removing the terrorist groups. MINUSMA is also helping in bringing stabilization to Mali by restoring government control in northern and eastern territories, assisting in political stabilization and upholding the human right. To face asymmetric war against TAGs in counterinsurgency operations, TCCs need to deploy forces with adequate equipment and trained personnel. Notwithstanding the

⁷¹ Md. Shafiqul Alam, Air Commodore, Contingent Commander, interviewed on 03 March 2017.
⁷² Novosseloff Alexandra, “Keeping Peace from Above: Air assets in United Nations Peace Operations”, New York: International Peace Institute, October 2017, pp. 8-21, available at https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1710_Keeping-Peace-from-Above-1.pdf, accessed on 11 July 2019.
⁷³ Ibid, pp. 4-21.

achievement, many challenges still exist, such as security issue of terrorist attack, illegal weapon and drug trafficking, restoration of territorial integrity, security of the people which is undermining the MINUSMA.⁷⁴

Map 14: Africa’s Active Militant Islamist Groups



7.5 Challenges of MINUSMA

There are few challenges of MINUSMA which need to be addressed in Mali and at DPKO, UNHQ for bringing sustainable peace in the Sahel region.

- The Islamic militants and extremists did not give up their arms and their countless attacks remained to mark their presence. On the one hand, there are the internal problems in the country like the ethnic conflict and the deep economic disparity. On the other hand, there is regional instability with increasing extremism. The success of the MINUSMA

⁷⁴ Huda Enamul, Wing Commander, MINUSMA, Mali, interviewed on 01 June 2017.

mission is largely inhibited by the increased strength of TAGs in the region. MINUSMA works in close cooperation with the French troops because of the fragile security situation in the country. The French forces will continue military actions against the TAGs. MINUSMA will have to face complex attack and insurgency against peacekeepers in Mali.⁷⁵

- b. MINUSMA is running with a shortage of air assets required for UNPKO. Providing adequate air support by air assets for operations has become a great challenge.⁷⁶
- c. To reduce fragmentation of actors, violent extremism, organized crime both local and transnational, establish rule of law in the northern region and bring all rebel and armed groups in the Peace Agreement and DDR process has become a great concern for MINUSMA.⁷⁷
- d. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) adopted a “seduction strategy” aimed at stimulating the virtually non-existent local economy and providing social service to the local population. The strategy includes:
 - i. The recruitment of combatants and auxiliaries (e.g. guides, drivers, informers and paramedics)
 - ii. The supply of food stuff (e.g. cereals, sugar and tea), fuel, tyres, spare parts and weapons
 - iii Subcontracting hostage-taking and keeping

It has resulted in whole families deriving their livelihoods from activities generated by AQIM. In addition, AQIM has developed family ties through marriage between its men and young local girls. Thus, AQIM has been able to take advantage of the weak public services and income-generating opportunities in the north and to gain support from selected parts of the population, while traditional chiefs have had difficulties in maintaining their authority. The organized crime started not from greed but for survival. There is an urgent need to invest in alternate livelihood opportunities for groups vulnerable to organized crime.⁷⁸ It has become the greatest challenge for MINUSMA to push Mali government to establish local government

⁷⁵ Ritter Noemi, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁷⁶ Enamul Huda, Wing Commander, MINUSMA, Mali, interviewed on 01 June 2017.

⁷⁷ Abdul Al Ahad, Squadron Leader, Senior Air Traffic Controller (SATCO), Tessalit Airfield, Mali, interviewed on 02 January 2019.

⁷⁸ Elisabeth Skons, op. cit., pp. 16-17,.

in the north, develop proper educational facility, put law enforcing agencies, protect border and start economic activities so that poverty is reduced and people do not remain unemployed.

8. Solution for Peace

The recent mandates for northern Mali represent a new trend of peacekeeping, with new tools, technologies and capabilities that have never been used so much in other UN peacekeeping missions, such as the use of UAS (in DR Congo, the UN also use UAV but for very limited scale) and ISR equipment to gather information. Critical human intelligence that could be provided to the mission from the local population is inherently limited as TCCs of EU do not speak the local language. TCCs of West African countries do not have access to information of ASIFU as such their field information is not included in the intelligence report. ASIFU has actual intelligence-gathering capabilities of the mission, but elements of ASIFU are absent in the northern region of Kidal, the hotspot of the mission.⁷⁹

MINUSMA in Mali presents a threat to peacekeeping principles. Though UNPKO in Mali is an inception of fifth generation hybrid mission with mixed command of two forces introduced for the first time in the history of UNPKO, but the involvement of the AU, and French Military Forces could undermine the impartiality of this mission and consequently the consent of parties involved. Furthermore, MINUSMA Forces got involved in substantial fighting in Mali in order to ensure self-defence of its troops. As MINUSMA is fifth generation hybrid mission, all peacekeepers must be trained to work in mixed command with other forces like the French, take action under Chapter VII and develop their weapon system to meet asymmetric war scenario fighting against unconventional forces. The success of Mali would allow the UN to deploy forces where asymmetric war scenario is prevailing, like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya. UNDPKO must develop policy guidelines for peacekeepers so that they can face unconventional threat with proper training and equipment. This would reduce the casualty of peacekeepers to a great extent.⁸⁰

UN Forces are being targeted by TAGs because of coexistence of forces in the same camp with the French having totally different mandate. French Forces conduct anti-terrorism operation killing TAGs based on intelligence information. This creates vengeance among TAGs and local people related to TAGs. So, they retaliate by attacking soft and isolated garrison of MINUSMA. They also target

⁷⁹ Fatema Tuzzohura Mow, Flight Lieutenant, Senior Air Traffic Controller (SATCO), Kidal Heliport, Mali, interviewed on 31 March 2019.

⁸⁰ Azazul Bar Chowdhury, Brigadier General, Director General, Operation and Plans Branch, Armed Forces Division, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 26 September 2018.

patrol, convoy and camps of MINUSMA for success. Most of the TAGs conduct their operation in North and East of Mali, and after operation, they disappear within local population or in neighbouring states of Algeria, Burkina Faso and Niger. If the operation of MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane continues simultaneously, UN peacekeepers will be targeted for attack and casualty will increase in future. French Forces should make all-out effort to wipe out terrorists once for all. Supply of arms and ammunition to TAGs are to be stopped. Border of Mali needs to be protected for controlling exit and entry of TAGs into Mali. Mali does not have a dedicated border guard force. However, the government of Mali has planned to establish Border Guard Corps by 2020.⁸¹ This would also help in stopping arms trafficking and movement of TAGs in Mali.

There is a stalemate condition in the peace process, and DDR activities are going very slow in Mali. There is a lack of sincere effort by agencies involved in the peace process and DDR. International and regional organizations are providing funds for DDR, but they are least concerned regarding the implementation of terms and conditions of peace process and DDR. The Government of Mali seems to be busy with other issues not really giving the required attention to the peace process and DDR. All stakeholders in Peace Accord of 2015 must act sincerely in fulfilling all the term and conditions on which they all agreed upon. The success of MINUSMA will depend on the effective implementation of the peace agreement and DDR is the prerequisite for that success. Government of Mali has to play major role in implementing all the terms and conditions endorsed in the peace agreement and bring sustainable peace in Mali. Regional organizations like AU, EU, ECOWAS can help Mali to come out from present crisis and bring sustainable peace in the region.⁸²

MINUSMA and the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) are providing training to Malian Armed Forces and law enforcing agencies, but they are reluctant to be deployed in the northern region and border areas. Sensitization and motivation of local Tuareg is a must so that they do not help foreign, transnational and local TAGs operating from Libya, Algeria, Niger and Burkina Faso. Media can sensitize local Tuaregs through many innovative ideas so that local innocent Tuaregs do not help TAGs for any action against civil population and peacekeepers. Independence in the northern region of Mali will break the unity of Mali and create a safe haven for TAGs in the Sahel region.

⁸¹ Available at <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2018/12/16/mali-border-guard-corps-reinforcements-timbuktu/>, accessed on 25 August 2020.

⁸² M. Yousuf Ali, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Overseas Air Operations, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 20 September 2016.

Development work in north and eastern areas of Mali is a prerequisite to reduce differences between north and south and to bring back normalcy in that region. Rule of law must be established in the northern and eastern part of Mali. A good number of educational institutes of different level (primary, secondary, tertiary) must be developed so that local people can be educated which would make them competent for a good job instead of becoming terrorist or spoilers. Representation of the northern region in central government must be ensured so that people of northern Mali do not feel that they are being marginalized. Local rebels and armed groups are to be endorsed in peace accord and DDR process. Government of Mali must stop corruption, mismanagement of the economy and disputed legislative election. This would stop military coup and build a strong government which can administer the country smoothly. Election of local government must be done, so that leadership at the root level is developed in the underdeveloped rural areas of Mali. Ethnic differences must be mitigated for the greater cause of peace in the Sahel region. The leadership of MINUSMA has to play a pivotal role in driving the Malian government to reduce differences among the regions in Mali.

9. Conclusion and Way Forward

Mali, once the most stable and democratic state of West Africa became a hot spot of the world in 2012 after the northern region declared Independent Azawad state. Destabilization of Mali had a risk of spreading instability to the neighbouring countries of the Sahel region. France has contributed very well in regaining the lost territories in the north and eradicating terrorist activities in Mali. Operation Serval was successful in driving out all foreign terrorist groups from Mali and restore the territorial integrity of Mali in the map of the world. The UN and France are operating simultaneously in Mali having different agenda and mandate. MINUSMA is the most dangerous UN Peace Keeping Mission in the world now where the UN lost the highest number of peacekeepers in a single mission. As Islamic militants and violent extremists did not give up their weapon, they will keep on attacking MINUSMA and French Forces. MINUSMA forces must have training in asymmetric warfare so that they can contribute equally to counter-insurgency operations. To achieve the objective, MINUSMA forces need to be proactive, vigilant and robust in order to reduce casualties and increase dominance over TAGs. The differences between the Mali Government and people of the northern region and differences between ethnic groups in other regions are creating great difficulties for MINUSMA to bring peace in Mali. MINUSMA is a pioneering UNPKO where ISR has been done by UAS and other sources. ASIFU is primarily responsible for intelligence gathering and disseminating to concern agencies, but until today, TCCs exposed to the attack of TAGs did not get the benefit of ISR information. Challenges of MINUSMA need to be addressed by the senior leadership of MINUSMA to bring success in conflict

resolution and building sustainable peace in Mali. As the UN started fifth generation hybrid mission in Mali for the first time under mixed command, TCCs are to prepare, train and equip peacekeepers to meet the asymmetric warfare scenario to reduce casualty.

The mediators and signatories of the peace agreement have a very important role to play in bringing lasting peace in Mali. There are few weaknesses in the peace agreement. There are CMA members who still want independent Azawad state comprised of the northern region of Mali. As local, transnational and foreign TAGs were not included in the peace process, they are trying all out to make the peace process fail. Peace process focused on short term but did not highlight on long term goals. Agreement Monitoring Committee must try to sensitize all rebels to join the DDR process and resolve issues of integrating CMA and Platform in security forces of Mali. MINUSMA as a mediator will have to take an effective role in keeping continuous contact with CMA and Platforms, complete DDR process, integrate the rebels in security forces of Mali, and bring security situation to normalcy.

Initiative and bold steps must be taken by the Mali government in conducting local election so that local government can function for the development of remote underdeveloped areas. Unless the political wheel of local government starts rolling and law enforcing agencies start functioning in the northern and eastern region, normalcy in life will not be achieved. Local government must create more job opportunity for young people so that they do not involve in crimes like drugs, human and weapon trafficking, abducting foreigners, killing and looting etc. Education institutions must start functioning gradually so that people gain the capability to get job and lead their own area with knowledge and wisdom. The rule of law needs to be established in the north and east, which is totally absent now.⁸³

The citizens of Mali must take major share in bringing peace in their country. They must reduce differences among different ethnic groups, stop killing each other, secure their border from entering foreign and transnational TAGs, stop smuggling of weapon, drugs, human and restore rule of law in all parts of Mali. MINUSMA, EUTM and G5 Sahel Joint Force can assist in training and developing law enforcing agencies, armed forces and political institutions in local government so that rule of law can be established in the northern and eastern region of Mali. For that, the willingness of political leaders is prerequisite, but as of now, political leaders are having weakness to do that.

⁸³ Md. Monjurul Kabir Bhuiyan, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Overseas Air Operations, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 30 October 2017.

International players and all stakeholders of the UN, EU, AU, ECOWAS, NGOs and Sahel Alliance have more role to play in focusing on the crisis of Mali and help Malian people come out of this crisis by providing adequate fund for training, developing infrastructure, educational institutions, political and law enforcing agencies etc. A strong, professional and committed Armed Forces need to be developed in Mali so that they can face foreign, transnational and local TAGs, secure the border from weapon, drugs and human trafficking. At the end, the success of MINUSMA and French Forces will depend on the effective implementation of the peace agreement. Most importantly, the Malian government must play a greater role in resolving the crisis in Mali once for all and build sustainable peace in the country. This will bring peace and tranquillity in the Sahara Desert and Sahel region as a whole. Finally, the following measures should be adopted for bringing sustainable peace in Mali:

- a. French Forces need to engage all out to eliminate TAGs from the northern and eastern region taking ISR information from ASIFU (MINUSMA) and own sources. At the same time, MINUSMA Forces have to ensure safety and security of the civil population and stop human rights violation by TAGs. For that TCCs are to take ISR information from ASIFU, and they need to train and equip their forces to act decisively in asymmetric war scenario existing in Mali.
 - i. MINUSMA needs to develop current intelligence capability into a system that is accessible to all TCCs so that most exposed soldiers get benefit from the intelligence capability of ASIFU.
 - ii. Border of Mali needs to be protected especially in the north and eastern side so that entry and exit of foreign, transnational and local TAGs are controlled totally in the border areas with Algeria, Burkina Faso and Niger. For that, Armed Forces and Border Guards of Mali need to take the responsibility and be deployed in border areas as soon as possible.
- b. All stakeholders in the Peace Accord of 2015 must act sincerely in fulfilling all the terms and conditions on which all they agreed upon. The success of MINUSMA will depend on the effective implementation of the peace agreement. Government of Mali has to play a major role in implementing all the terms and conditions endorsed in the peace agreement and bring sustainable peace in Mali. The regional organizations like AU, EU, ECOWAS can help Mali to come out from the present crisis and bring sustainable peace in the region.

- c. MINUSMA should provide all-out support to DDR process and help local organizations in DDR activities so that arms and ammunition do not remain in rebels' hand. Local armed groups are to be motivated to leave their arms so that they can be endorsed in the peace process and DDR.
- d. Sensitization and motivation of local Tuareg people living in the northern region must be done so that they do not help TAGs operating from neighbouring countries.
- e. Ethnic differences must be mitigated for the greater cause of unity and peace in Mali. Without peace and stability, development work will not be possible to materialize.
- f. Development work in the northern region of Mali is a prerequisite to reduce differences with south and bring back normalcy in that region. Establishment of local government and deploying law enforcing agencies, armed and border protection forces are a prerequisite for bringing the rule of law in the northern and eastern part of Mali. Local people should open educational institutions and develop qualified people for job. The Mali government must end corruption, mismanagement of the economy and disputed legislative election and work sincerely in reducing differences between north and south. MINUSMA can help in training and developing political institution and law enforcing agencies in those regions. Representation of these regions in the central government of Mali is very much required.
- g. Election of local government must be conducted on a regular basis so that leadership at the root level is developed in the underdeveloped rural areas of Mali.

Annex: List of Interviewees

1. Abdul Al Ahad, Squadron Leader, Senior Air Traffic Controller (SATCO), Tessalit Airfield, Mali, interviewed on 02 January 2019.
2. Alam Md Shafiqul, Air Commodore, Contingent Commander, BANAIR-2, MINUSMA, Mali, interviewed on 03 March 2017.
3. Alam Siddiqui, Group Captain, Director, Directorate of Supply, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 25 July 2017.
4. Ahmed, Jamil, Wing Commander, Deputy Director, Directorate of Finance, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 15 December 2016.
5. Ali M Yousuf, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Overseas Air Operations, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 20 September 2016.
6. Ali Shawkot, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Communication and Electronics, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 13 August 2017.
7. Azazul Bar Chowdhury, Brigadier General, Director General, Operation and Plans Branch, Armed Forces Division, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 26 September 2018.
8. Bakar Abu, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Finance, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 15 December 2016.
9. Bhuiyan Md. Monjurul Kabir, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Overseas Air Operations, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 30 October 2017.
10. Ehsan M Quamrul, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Engineering, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 10 August 2017.
11. Mow Fatema Tuzzohura, Flight Lieutenant, Senior Air Traffic Controller (SATCO), Kidal Heliport, Mali, interviewed on 31 March 2019.
12. Huda Enamul, Wing Commander, MINUSMA, Mali, interviewed on 01 June 2017.
13. Huda Md Shaharul, Air Commodore, Contingent Commander, BANUAU, MINUSTAH, Haiti, interviewed on 19 April 2017.

14. Karim Md Mazharul, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Air Operations, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 15 December 2016.
15. Mustafijur Rahman K H, Wing Commander, Deputy Director, Directorate of Finance, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 20 March 2019.
16. Saiful Islam Muhammad, Wing Commander, G-3 Air Ops 1, Sector North HQ, MINUSMA, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 03 April 2019.
17. Muhit Abdul, Air Commodore, Director, Directorate of Personnel, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 17 August 2016.
18. Ngobongue Zakaria, Brigadier General Sector Commander, Sector North, MINUSMA, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 20 April 2019.
19. Nuruzzaman M., Wing Commander, Deputy Director, Directorate of Meteorology, Air HQ, Dhaka Cantonment, interviewed on 25 August 2017.
20. Rashid Ahmed-ur, Wing Commander, OIC FF, MONUSCO, Bunia, DRC, interviewed on 10 July 2016.
21. Saifuddin Mohammad, Wing Commander, Pilot in Command, BANATU, MONUSCO, Bunia, DRC, interviewed on 15 June 2016.
22. Santoni Colonel Pierre, Deputy Sector Commander, MINUSMA, Sector North, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 25 April 2019.
23. Sarkar Md Sharif Uddin, Air Commodore, CC, BANUAU, MONUSCO, Bunia, DRC, interviewed on 20 February 2017.
24. Sivillon Christophe, Head of Office, MINUSMA, Sector North, Kidal, Mali, interviewed on 19 March 2019.

BOOK REVIEW

Islamic Law and International Law: Peaceful Resolution of Disputes by Emilia Justyna Powell, published by Oxford University Press, New York, 2020, xiv+314 pages.

Contemporary international law has obliged states to resolve their disputes between them exclusively by peaceful means. In contrast with the Western formal approach, the Islamic legal tradition follows a specific approach to conflict management, e.g., reconciliation, apology and constructive dialogue between disputants. As the peaceful settlement of disputes between states has become one of the fundamental principles of contemporary international law and Islamic Law States (ILS) have a vital role to play in the contemporary international system, there is an increasing need for non-ILS to cooperate with ILS. Cooperation is crucial not only for reducing the abundance of international disputes stretching from trade, human rights, environment to peace and conflict but also for expanding the plurality of international laws to ensure more justifiable and legitimate world order. For successful cooperation, also important is to acquire a deeper understanding of the variance and development of Islamic law in the ILS. Thus, through proper logic, mechanisms, causal explanation, and empirical investigation *Islamic Law and International Law: Peaceful Resolution of Disputes* brings light to the relationship between Islamic law and international law and how international law is perceived through the lens of the Islamic legal tradition.

The book spans a total of 314 pages, including an introduction followed by eight chapters. It is the outcome of Emilia Justyna Powell's motivation to study the relationship between Islamic legal tradition and international law during her conversation with colleagues, friends, family members, policymakers and practitioners of Islamic law.

The central argument of the book is the balance or amalgamation of secular law with religious law in the context of ILS that can explain their preferences for international conflict management methods. Thus, there seems to be no one easily identifiable attitude shared by all ILS. To this end, it provides comparative analyses of Islamic law and international law within the context of each of the ILS historically, over time and geographically across the Islamic milieu. In the introductory chapter, the author mentioned that the book is going to challenge some long-standing assumptions of the Western scholars that "there is no diversity within the Islamic milieu, they are Islamic in the same way and to the same degree", "all ILS are oft perceived as being ipso facto unfriendly toward international law." Throughout the book, these

assumptions are debunked in a very tacit manner through detailed information and precise evidence.

The eight chapters of the book illustrate different aspects of the relations between international law and Islamic law. The first chapter provides an overview of the book, its key arguments, organization and significance. The second chapter explains the concepts crucial to this study: international law, Islamic law, and the categories of the ILS. It projects international and Islamic law as dynamic systems that have changed over time and will continue to evolve. The third chapter explores the divergences and convergences of Islamic legal tradition and international law. The fourth chapter introduces the theory of Islamic dispute resolution and sheds light on how the Islamic approach to conflict settlement shapes contemporary interstate dealings of ILS. In the subsequent chapters five, six and seven, the author incorporates a series of statistical analyses to test the theory and hypotheses about the Islamic milieu's preferences with respect to international dispute settlement. In the concluding chapter, it summarizes the main arguments as well as the empirical findings, stressing the timeliness of insights gained through this research.

To set the context of the theory and analysis of the Islamic peaceful settlement of disputes, the book devotes significant concentration to the concept of Islamic law and international law. For instance, it argues that overall characters and functions of international law have changed since antiquity due to its adjustments with globalization and changes in the international system. Consequently, it takes a multi-layered character. Like international law, it also defines Islamic law officially as an ongoing, constantly evolving and dynamic entity. The book reflects the continuous evolution of the domestic legal system of the ILS on the constitutional as well as sub-constitutional levels. Hence, the author deserves a firm appreciation for precisely evaluating the development of both Islamic law and international law as legal systems.

In order to understand the relationship between Islamic legal tradition and international law, the book chooses the ILS categories because they embrace a unique relationship between secular laws and religious laws in its governance. To what extent Islamic law incorporates and implements in the domestic legal system vary from ILS to ILS. The ILS category includes states whose legal system charged to a higher degree with the obligatory implementation of sharia. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the 1992 Basic Law of Governance directly states that "the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna (Traditions) of the Prophet" form the constitution of the country. Other ILS like Qatar, Egypt and Morocco limit the direct, obligatory influence of sharia to a part of their official laws like personal law and criminal law. The category also adds states like Indonesia delegating decisions about sharia's presence in governance to the state's administrative subunits. Through examples of different categories of ILS, the

author rightly demonstrates that “there is not one Islamic law, but many Islamic laws—depending on how it is interpreted and amalgamated into a particular legal system within the ILS”.

To explain the ILS’ behaviour towards international law, the book attempts to measure the presence of Islamic law and secular law in the officially recognized legal system. In this regard, it comprehensively identifies the elements of Islamic law and secular law. The elements of Islamic law include mention of sharia and Islam, holy oath, Muslim head-of-state requirement, Islam/sharia education and customary law in the constitution. On the other hand, secular laws’ features include rule of law, supreme courts, secular courts, peaceful resolutions of dispute, women in the judiciary and education in the constitution. For a proper understanding, the author, in chapter two, presents a series of figures illustrating the extent to which Islamic law and secular law are present in the ILS domestic legal systems from 1945 to 2012.

A major focus of the book is detailing the differences and similarities between the Islamic legal tradition and international law. In doing so, the author finds that there are clear divisions in the literature. There are scholars portraying Islamic law as fundamentally inconsistent with international law, while others dismiss existing differences. In contrast with the existing literature, it identifies three points of convergence, i.e., the law of scholars, customs and rule of law where Islamic legal tradition and international law coexist and complement without conflict. At the same time, there are three points of divergence—the relations between law and religion, sources of law, and religious features in the courtroom (i.e., religious affiliation, gender judges and holy oaths). By providing a comparative analysis, it claims that ILS’ use of international legal mechanisms lies in the similarities not much in the differences between Islamic law and international law.

Taking into account the constitutions and legal institutions of the ILS, the book formulates a distinct theory that places law at the centre of the inquiry. In essence, the author develops the theory through a two-stage process. In the first stage, it counts the extent of Islamicness across twenty-nine states in the post-World War II period. The second stage correlates domestic legal arrangements with ILS behaviour on the international stage. While formulating the theory, the book limits itself into four distinct legal features defining the most preferred form of social interaction for ILS: a unique logic of justice, non-confrontational dispute settlement, collective embeddedness of the third party and incorporation of Islamic religious principles into the resolution process. The book theorizes that ILS, whose domestic legal system is highly infused with a version of sharia, will most firmly adhere to Islamic law-inspired elements in the international arena. Thus, ILS most committed to the Islamic legal tradition domestically is naturally attracted to third party non-binding methods, e.g., mediation

and conciliation. These methods fulfil the preferences of ILS regarding the nature of social interaction by incorporating principles of sharia in dispute resolution. While international legal mechanisms, e.g., adjudication and arbitration tribunals are unlikely to bear these expectations of ILS as these are, to a great extent, based on the Western legal logic. In contrast, for ILS, whose domestic legal systems incorporate strong secular laws, international legal mechanisms provide acceptable settlement venues. Hence, each domestic legal system in the ILS amalgamates secular law with religious law in a different way which fundamentally shapes the state's view of international conflict management. There is no uniform way by which Islamic legal tradition shapes ILS views to international settlement venues as the incorporation of Islamic law in the domestic law varies across time and space.

Though the book is about explaining the legal factors determining ILS choices of settlement venues, it does not totally discard non-legal factors. It identifies power relations between disputants, strategic considerations, the strength of legal claims, concern for domestic politics, regime type, the cost and length of proceedings and feasibility of future compliance as important factors to exert influence on states' choices. However, it would be intriguing to have further discussion on these non-legal factors.

To test the theory, the book incorporates a series of statistical analyses in the context of territorial disputes. In this regard, it considers elements of Islamic law and secular law as independent variables and bilateral negotiations, non-binding third party methods (inquiry, good offices, conciliation, mediation) and binding third-party methods (arbitration, adjudication) as dependent variables. The pattern of evidence supports that secular legal features, e.g., presence of secular courts, constitutional mention of the Supreme Court and peaceful resolution of dispute, attract the ILS to arbitration and adjudication because these features have a deep connection with international formal venues. On the other hand, the opposite situation is observable to the ILS, whose legal system is tied with traditional Islamic precepts, e.g., principles of Islamic law into the education system and religious requirement in their state leader, preferring less formalized venues. Importantly, among all the elements of Islamic law's presence in ILS' domestic legal system, commitment to sharia-based education plays a primary role in shaping ILS' preferences.

The book also elaborates the main judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to examine Islamic law and international law nexus. In this regard, it identifies compulsory jurisdiction and compromissory jurisdiction as dependent variables. The compulsory category comprises two types of states. The first category of states accepts the compulsory jurisdiction with or without reservation. The second category states do not recognize the Court's jurisdiction.

Through empirical analyses, the book points that legal convergence between Islam and international law pulls ILS to ICJ. It infers that the presence of secular legal features influences ILS' decision to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ. For example, ILS with constitutional mentions of peaceful resolution of disputes and rule of law are more likely to embrace the ICJ. On the contrary, embedded Islamic law features into ILS' domestic legal systems discourage these countries from accepting the Court's jurisdiction.

In order to go beyond the particulars of secular law and international law within ILS domestic legal systems, it considers the Islamic school of jurisprudence as an independent variable to understand the views of ILS towards international mechanisms for conflict management. The empirical analysis suggests that Islamic schools of jurisprudence have no influence on ILS' views of international conflict management as it has substantially weakened overtime. Consequently, scholars have few opportunities for influencing formal state governance on the issue of international conflict management.

The book rigorously explains the ample influence of the regional particularities of the Middle East, Asia/Oceania, and Africa's ILS behaviour towards the international conflict management, particularly in the context of peaceful settlement of disputes. Islamic legal tradition has been remade and reconfigured across regions. Over time, the region-based plurality of sharia had settled deeply into the domestic legal system of the ILS. Such regional divergence of preferences derives from pluralism of cultures, traditions and customs specific to each region. Based on the empirical evidence, the author argues that Middle Eastern states are more likely than other ILS to attempt mediation and conciliation in resolving territorial disputes. On the contrary, ILS located in Africa and Asia/Africa favours the binding third-party methods. Through assessing regional variance, the book successfully moves beyond the particulars of the secular law-Islamic law relations within ILS' domestic legal system.

The book is thematically well-organized, rich in information and empirical evidence. It is also written in a reader-friendly style. As far as the objectives are concerned, the book is a commendable initiative. It is simple enough to the readers unfamiliar with Islamic law and at the same time solid enough to those who have expertise in the study of Islamic law. The title of the book is also consistent with the basic ideas, arguments and discussions. The findings of the book are the outcome of a well-conducted research. Conducting in-depth research through collecting both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the presence of Islamic law and secular law in constitutions, legal practices and institutions of the thirty ILS is challenging. The author excels in this area and successfully arranged several interviews comprised of Islamic law scholars, practitioners of international law, including judges of the

ICJ, States' Legal Counsels in the ICJ and international arbitration tribunals, the Legal Advisor of the UN and several policymakers and religious leaders performing various functions in ILS and non-ILS. With a multi-method approach, the book not only addresses the lacunae of the existing literature through going beyond historical and normative description and moving forward formulating a generalizable theory but also assists the scholars and policymakers of the international law community to understand the uncommon attitude of ILS towards international law and its dispute resolution venues.

Although the book is precise, compact and rigorous, it is not beyond limitations. Considering editorial mistakes, there are few spelling and grammatical errors that should be revised in its second edition. The main criticisms lie in the conceptual stance and methodology. The book is focused extensively on the concept of international law, peaceful settlement of the international dispute, Islamic law, Islamic law state, but it lacks an adequate discussion on the origin of sharia, rule of law and debates over its meaning. Though the book describes the methodology, it misses a detailed discussion of it in the introductory chapter. Though the book offers many promising insights into Islamic law, secular law and how these laws are incorporated in the domestic legal system of the ILS, there are scopes to conduct empirical research on implications of these laws in determining the relations between ILS and non-ILS. Another point that can be illustrated is the feasibility of building up the entire analysis through coding information from 172 constitutions and major constitutional amendments of the ILS. Because there are limits to the information that such data can provide and many dynamics remain unexplored.

The book *Islamic Law and International Law: Peaceful Resolution of Disputes* has definitely added value to the existing literature on international law, political science, Islamic law, comparative law, Islamic studies, international relations, and peace and conflict studies. With its multidisciplinary approach, it develops some considerable hypotheses as well as a theory that marks several exceptions compared to the prevailing perspectives. For instance, in contrast with other literature on Islamic law and international law, this book acknowledges the diverse attitude of ILS towards international law and international settlement venues. It can, thus, be identified as a point of departure for further research and a paramount reference point portraying the relations between Islamic law and international law in the context of peaceful resolution of disputes.

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 - Promoting Cultural Diversity of Small Ethnic Groups in Bangladesh
 - Upcoming 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, Dhaka: Revisiting A Shared Journey
 - রোহিঙ্গা সংকটঃ বাংলাদেশ কর্তৃক গৃহীত পদক্ষেপ ও পর্যালোচনা (Rohingya Crisis: Measures Taken by Bangladesh and An Appraisal)
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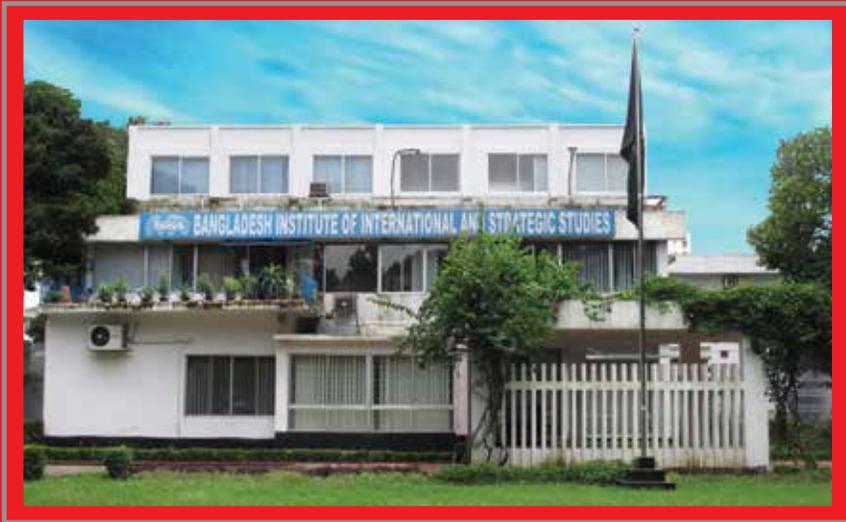
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