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ijirset@gmail.com

www.ijirset.com



Environmental & International Politics

Dr. Brahmanand Pratap Singh

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Pratap Bahadur PG College, Pratapgarh City,
Pratapgarh, India

ABSTRACT: Environment is now a key component of international relations and, given the rising attention climate change receives in particular, a matter that now has high priority in diplomatic circles. With states in danger of disappearing below rising seas and major disruptions to water supplies and food systems projected for future decades if steps to curb greenhouse gas emissions are not taken soon, environmental matters have become central to contemporary international politics, and to their academic study. Environment emerged after the Cold War as a priority matter for scholarly analysis because scholars are concerned with matters of pollution, conservation and resources; but also because there are interesting analytical puzzles surrounding how the international system deals with them and the changes resulting from the introduction of new modes of governance, institutions, agencies, knowledge and norms.

How all these aspects might be studied as international relations is also not a simple matter, but given their importance they have increasingly impinged on scholarship. Likewise, the rise of International Relations as an Anglo-American 'discipline' – a matter more closely related to the rise of industrial powers than usually acknowledged – has shaped the kinds of questions asked about environment and the assumptions about how environmental politics is to be included in the field. Frequently, this has led to technical issues of regime design, compliance and funding mechanisms being focused on matters of justice or perspectives from marginal places. A partial response to this were interesting case studies on social movements and how their norms have impinged on the formal deliberations of states and intergovernmental agencies, a matter of governance more widely understood than the narrower concerns of formal state government.

KEYWORDS: environment, politics, international, conservation, resources, government

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the 1980s, with rising worries about ozone, fallout from Chernobyl, rapid deforestation and burning in Brazil, chemical disasters such as Bhopal, and nascent concerns about climate change causing weather disruptions and water shortages; it was not hard to point to the insecurities that environmental matters caused in many places. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) suggested that poor use of resources and rising scarcities might well lead to conflict and, as such, sustainable development was understood as a necessary prophylactic. Failure to deal seriously with climate change, in particular, and the larger transformations of other Earth system elements already underway, in general is likely to lead to arguments for artificially modifying Earth system temperatures by such geoengineering projects as stratospheric aerosol injection. While this thoroughly alarms critics of environmental modification, not least because of the potential of such projects to exacerbate international tensions, the future is likely to see such discussions rise in prominence in international relations unless policies for dealing with global change become much more effective soon.[1,2]

Given the speed and scale of global transformations now in motion and the failures to integrate matters of ecology into larger concerns with peace, human rights and militarism, the old environmentalist question of 'who speaks for Earth?' is an ever more pressing issue for International Relations. Among the key new themes for the current generation of scholars are questions of how to end the fossil fuel era, and the urgent matter of facilitating transitions to much more sustainable patterns of life.

II. DISCUSSION

The emergence of new global players, the growing interdependence and connections on a global scale, the erosion of the traditional division between national and international levels and the advent of a global governance system have led the discipline of International Relations to a growing focus on globalization, since relations among sovereign states are now insufficient to analyze and understand the political, economic and social dynamics of the current world.



Today there is a growing interdependence among states, which cannot be regarded as independent, autonomous and impermeable entities, such as "billiard balls" moving in a table, bumping against each other-a Westphalian characteristic-but rather as interdependent and interconnected actors in the international system, forced to work together on the basis of collective efforts and energies, something illustrated by the cobweb model of world politics. The great vulnerability of national economies to events that take place anywhere in the world, the massive use of digital technologies that allow individuals to communicate using uncontrollable means by governments, and the fact that the most prominent issues in the world, as the environmental ones, are inherently transnational, tell us that the Westphalian logic of the international system is increasingly questionable. Additionally, the emergence of an embryonic system of global governance, in which interests are articulated and aggregated, decisions are made and policies implemented, reveals that the international system of the twenty-first century holds post-Westphalian features. However, it would be a mistake to assume that this is a world without borders, because, in certain cases, which are enhanced by globalization itself, they are even more important at present, as shown, for example, in the strengthening of the state's role as an economic national agent and in the emergence of authoritarian powers in the international arena, such as China and Russia.[3,4]

Sovereignty and domestic authority are changing, creating the concept of the disaggregated state, a more active state in a global world, full of overlays, in which the pursuit of national goals leads governments to participate in an extensive collaboration network, as well as in numerous forms of multilateral cooperation. Thus, sovereignty can be seen as the exercise of shared public power and authority among national, regional and global players, something that does not imply, in any way, a decline of the state. In fact, one can argue that there is a strengthening of the state's position in the international system. Sovereignty and authority are now increasingly exercised in a supraterritorial stage, even though territoriality is still politically significant.

In a world full of economic and technological changes, and new forms of political and social mobilization, one also witnesses a very broad diffusion of power, associated with the rise of the BRICS and the MINTs. Diffuse and uncertain power periods are difficult and dangerous, as the emergent powers may seek to challenge the status quo, while the established powers may try to stop the emerging countries through, for example, hard power strategies, which include the threats presented by traditional and new forms of military force (for instance, cyber warfare). Thus, some speak in the return to the Westphalian order of the international system, given the reevaluation of national security and the renewed concern about the outbreak of war. Nevertheless, one cannot neglect the complex nature of the current international order, which seems to face Westphalian challenges, such as the transition of power and the rise of new powers, and post-Westphalian challenges, such as changes in the balance between national and international levels, the material conditions of globalization and the growing importance of soft power and the legitimacy notion associated with it in terms of foreign policy. States now face global challenges, the resolution of which will require the development of processes that rely on a wide range of actors and various forms of governance, international law and political globalization. Furthermore, the emergence of new powers is an opportunity to boost cooperation, since there may be a better balance of power in the international system, so that dialogue and consultation seem to be the best and most realistic relationship strategies among the various powers. Otherwise, conflict may be the main characteristic of the system. Globalization is, therefore, a "double-edged sword," which creates a hybrid international system.[5,6]

Although there is the emergence of a global governance stage and a growing interdependence between states, as well as a strong link between the achievement of national interests and the active participation in supranational arenas, it is clear that, regarding global issues-i.e. the ones which affect the international community as a whole and whose implications require global regulatory approach -international organizations and regimes in which states exercise their sovereignty have not an appropriate structure to manage and resolve such issues. The failure of the international society in addressing environmental problems such as climate change reflects the need for a reform in the international institutions of the UN system or even the creation of new ones, eminently global-oriented, able to manage and handle situations involving long-term issues. The emergence of new powers and global issues points to this path, in order to avoid tensions in the system. We are therefore facing a transition period in which the international system is marked by Westphalian and post-Westphalian characteristics and the world is faced with the possibility of the outbreak of tensions, conflicts and wars, but there is an unprecedented need for cooperation.

Environmental issues play a significant role in this matter, as they have features that enhance the onset of conflict, but at the same time call for global cooperation and coordination. The environment appears in the twenty-first century as a key issue in international relations, as it has enormous potential to turn the tide of globalization and the structure and the dynamics of the international system. Additionally, the way the international community manages the environment will profoundly affect the future of humankind.



III. RESULTS

The international community is undergoing a major transition. The international order which has formed the postwar world is being forced to accommodate to these radically altered circumstances, and various trials and efforts are on the way.[7,8]

Dialogue is now firmly a part of East-West relations centering on relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the confrontational structure that has characterized the postwar world appears to be showing signs of change. Dialogue has become the norm in U.S.-Soviet relations since General Secretary Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 and the first U.S.-Soviet summit meeting in six years was held in November of the same year. Hoping not to reiterate the failure of the previous detente experienced in the 1970s, the United States is trying to integrate all aspects of its relationship with the Soviet Union and has defined the progress in the four areas of the bilateral relationship, arms control and disarmament, human rights, and regional problems as the criteria for progress in the overall relationship. The INF treaty to completely eliminate intermediate-range nuclear forces was signed in December 1987 and the Soviet Union completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989. At present, the United States and the Soviet Union are negotiating in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). In Europe, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process is being accelerated and visible steps are being taken to improve the human rights situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Progress is also being made in the negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) talks. With the more active exchanges of high-level visits between Eastern and Western Europe, there are heightened expectations that it might be possible to overcome the East-West division that has defined the international order in postwar Europe.[9,10]

IV. IMPLICATIONS

Sino-Soviet relations are another element having a major impact upon the international order. Here too, the era of confrontation is over as General Secretary Gorbachev visited China in May 1989 and held a summit meeting with Deng Xiaoping, Chairman of the Central Military Commission - the first Sino-Soviet summit meeting in 30 years - in an effort to normalize relations between their two countries and parties.

With the continued lethargy in the socialist economies, the Soviet Union, China, and a number of East European countries have moved forcefully to implement economic reform. However, such events as the ethnic movements in the Soviet Union and the Chinese suppression of students and other citizens seeking democratization have proved that there is no easy and assured path to economic reform and its accompanying political reforms, and forces have appeared in some East European countries spurning reform. It is important to see what impact these developments will have on the shaping of the new international order.

Turning to regional issues, there are movements toward resolutions. While each regional conflict has its own inherent causes, the improvements in East-West relations and the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan are bound to have an effect, directly and indirectly, on these conflicts. Agreement was, for example, reached on the Angola-Namibia problem in December 1988. Even on the Cambodian problem, efforts are being made to achieve peace and the International Conference on Cambodia was held in Paris in late July 1989.[11,12]

The 1988 Seoul Olympics saw the participation of the majority of nations and regions of the world, and this was the first Olympic Games in 12 years that had the participation from both the Eastern and Western camps and other areas. In 1988 and 1989, South Korea's relations with a number of socialist countries were improved, including agreements to, for example, open reciprocal trade offices and establish diplomatic relations.

There is also movements toward shaping a new order in the world economy. Overall, healthy growth of the world economy has continued which indicates that the free-trade system at the heart of the international economy and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which support this system have basically functioned effectively. However, there is still a need for the maintenance and strengthening of international policy coordination among the industrialized democracies in light of the heightened concern about inflation, huge external imbalances that are coming down too slowly, and increased pressures for protectionism. The vast expansion in world trade has made it imperative that we revise and strengthen the GATT regime established on the assumption that trade meant trade in goods, and the Uruguay Round has been convened to draft rules in such new areas as services, investment, and intellectual property rights. The emergence of the Asian newly industrializing economies (NIEs) has shown that discussions on managing the world economy can no longer be restricted to the industrialized countries alone, and the



Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has begun a dialogue with the NIEs. At the same time, the situation remains grim for the developing countries, and conditions are deteriorating in the African and other Least Developed Countries (LLDCs). The debt problem in Latin American and some other middle-income countries has gotten worse to the point that it is now a critical issue affecting the sound development of the world economic and financial system and has even sparked social and political problems in some countries. Various efforts are taken to respond, positively through both bilateral and multilateral channels, to the debt problem and other problems in the developing countries. The ratification of the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, progress in EC market unification, and other moves for greater regional cooperation also bear watching as important developments affecting the shape of the future world economy.[13,14]

There has recently been increased concern expressed over such global environmental problems as the decline in forest resources, destruction of the ozone layer, and global warming trend. These are issues that must be addressed by the international community as a whole, and active efforts are now in evidence toward resolution of these problems.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Managers must monitor currency, infrastructure, inflation, interest rates, wages, and taxation. In assessing the economic environment in foreign countries, a business must pay particular attention to the following four areas:

- **Average income levels of the population.** If the average income for the population is very low, no matter how desperately this population needs a product or service, there simply is not a market for it.
- **Tax structures.** In some countries, foreign firms pay much higher tax rates than domestic competitors. These tax differences may be very obvious or subtle, as in hidden registration fees.[15]
- **Inflation rates.** In the U.S., for example, inflation rates have been quite low and relatively stable for several years. In some countries, however, inflation rates of 30, 40, or even 100 percent per year are not uncommon. Inflation results in a general rise in the level of prices, and impacts business in many ways. For example, in the mid-1970s, a shortage of crude oil led to numerous problems because petroleum products supply most of the energy required to produce goods and services and to transport goods around the world. As the cost of petroleum products increased, a corresponding increase took place in the cost of goods and services. As a result, interest rates increased dramatically, causing both businesses and consumers to reduce their borrowing. Business profits fell as consumers' purchasing power was eroded by inflation. High interest rates and unemployment reached alarmingly high levels.
- **Fluctuating exchange rates.** The exchange rate, or the value of one country's currency in terms of another country's currency, is determined primarily by supply and demand for each country's goods and services. The government of a country can, however, cause this exchange rate to change dramatically by causing high inflation—by printing too much currency or by changing the value of the currency through devaluation. A foreign investor may sustain large losses if the value of the currency drops substantially.[16]

When doing business abroad, businesspeople need to recognize that they cannot take for granted that other countries offer the same things as are found in industrialized nations. A country's level of development is often determined in part by its infrastructure. The **infrastructure** is the physical facilities that support a country's economic activities, such as railroads, highways, ports, utilities and power plants, schools, hospitals, communication systems, and commercial distribution systems. When doing business in less developed countries, a business may need to compensate for rudimentary distribution and communication systems.[17,18]

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