Committee: Special Conference on Global Reform and Ethics

Issue: Reducing interstate conflict through the promotion of shared values and common security strategies
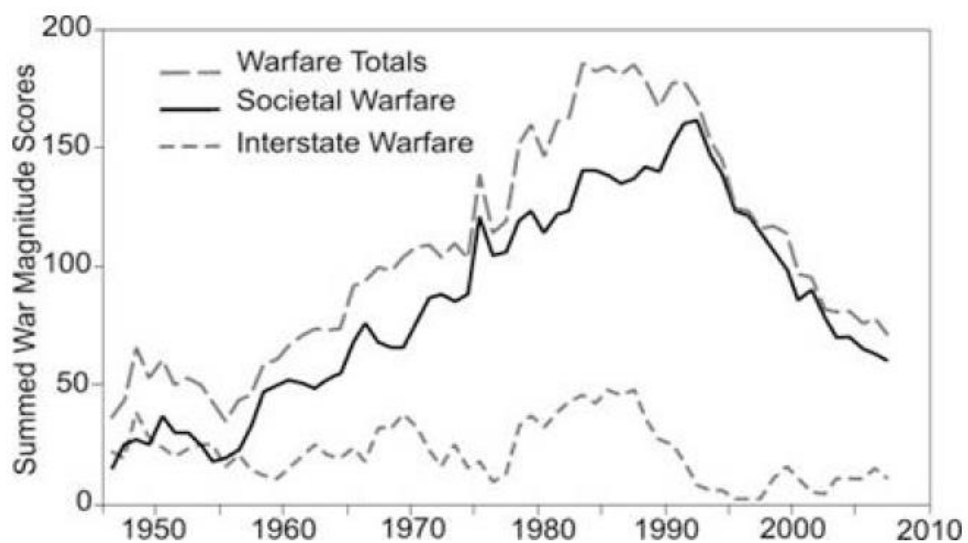
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INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring, Latin American ethnic clashes, the rise of ISIS, and North Korean cyber-terrorism – all conflicts that intensify the complex spectrum of international relations and threaten global security in today's world. The cause is simple: interstate inequalities and differences, which usually pertain to socio-politics, environmental degradation, and economic issues.

Figure 1: War magnitude measured by societal and interstate warfare over time.

As seen on the graph above, a fall in conflicts has been recorded in the past two decades. However, the rise in interstate conflicts in the past five years, from 2011 to the present, primarily due to the Arab Spring and later ISIS, has not been included. Therefore, this figure has a two-fold purpose: not only does it suggest that the need to ameliorate the current situation and strive to reach the ideal level of peace is still very pressing, but also, it proves that with meaningful attempts, such as the promotion of shared values and common security strategies, a significant change can be made.

It is certain that 'international mediators', such as the United States, have been successful in alleviating tension and even solving instances of interstate conflict. However, such acts of intervention are commonly regarded as interferences in international affairs and as aiming at temporary prevention, rather than long-term harmony.

Instead, conflicts must be tackled using sustainable growth policies that focus on economic and social development. This is the reason why the Millennium Project, a United Nations initiative to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), includes the aim of reducing conflict through "shared values and new security strategies", and recognizes it as the tenth global challenge.

The book *Using Conflict in Organizations,* clearly explains the idea that "shared values ensure that plans are coordinated" (Carsten K W De Drew, Evert Van de Vliert). Since coordination is highlighted, it is reasonable to emphasize the importance of creating common security strategies as a method of achieving and enhancing stability.

Although the promotion of these concepts seems ideal, it is crucial to fathom that time is definitely a factor, as shared values require a period of transition for new, shared ideas to become deeply ingrained in the general public. In addition, it is even tougher to employ strategies through which the effective implementation and national compliance of the new security strategies will be realized. Ultimately, only when nations truly adhere to and agree with the security strategies can the conflict be deconstructed and the dispute resolved.

A combination of cultural engagement through shared values and mutually planned security strategies will surely prove effective if achieved.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Interstate Conflict

A conflict, as stated by the Oxford Dictionary, is the "incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles or interests", commonly in the form of a "prolonged armed struggle". An interstate conflict specifically, is a conflict that involves two or more governments/states. The Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University comments that, "the primary warring parties, who started the incompatibility, must be government parties for a conflict to be classified as interstate". Therefore, it is important to

understand that an interstate conflict solely pertains to a conflict between government parties and does not include non-governmental parties.

Security Strategy

A security strategy is a plan that recognizes the main internal and external security threats of a nation or organization, such as terrorism or cyber-espionage, and outlines detailed strategies and procedures to deal with them. Each country draws up its own national security strategy as a defense framework, yet such frameworks also exist for larger entities, for example, the European Union.

Shared Values

According to the Oxford Dictionary, values are "principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life". When the values are 'shared', people feel unified, as they are brought together through mutual concepts and ethics. The term 'shared values' is very prevalent in business when describing the key principles of an organization, "which guide decisions and behavior of its employees, management and members", as described in the Business Dictionary. In this case though, the term pertains to the explicit or implicit fundamental beliefs that are common to states and their people, including, but not limited to, religion, political ideology, societal structure, traditions and education.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Causes of Conflicts

The causes of interstate conflicts can be classified into three categories:

1. Socio-political:
    a. Migration.
        i. Ethnic and religious clashes due to racism.
        ii. Global inequalities due to socioeconomic discrimination.
    b. Transnational political interests (e.g. Diaoyu Islands dispute).
    c. Indigenous, minority protests (e.g. Tribal protests in Brazil).
2. Economic:
    a. Crisis of production and distribution of resources primarily in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs).
        i. Increases in the price of resources (food, water and energy).
    b. Transnational economic interests related to trade.

3. Environmental:
    a. Drain on natural resources due to population growth.
        i. Scarcity of resources, both food and water, which leads to "hunger fights".
    b. Climate change and environmental degradation.

⇒ According to research conducted by the United Nations, environmentally caused conflicts, including environmental degradation and lack of natural resources, are twice as likely to revert back to violence and dispute within five years of their resolution. Therefore, these causes must be tackled at their root, so as to stop the occurrence of further conflicts.

Africa

The African continent is unfortunately plagued by poverty and epidemic diseases such as malaria and AIDS. On a social level, overpopulation, cheap labour, unemployment and illiteracy could be seen as the leading forces behind social upheaval which in turn leads to both internal and external disputes in each respective nation.

As African countries were colonized in the past by various empires, each with their own culture and religion, nations experience religious clashes, such as the one regarding Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. These clashes frequently spread violence and catalyze sectarian disputes in the surrounding region. Interstate wars, such as the one between North and South Sudan, not only cause casualties and environmental destruction, but also lead to great numbers of internally displaced people, who migrate across borders even after the end of the conflict, and therefore exacerbate relations between bordering nations. This is a way in which interstate accusations arise, as was the case when Sierra Leon accused Liberia for war crimes and mistreatment of its citizens.

Asia & Oceania

Even though Asian countries have had a projected leap into Western development, political and religious frictions in the continent still endure, and are giving rise to territorial disputes, forcing superpowers like Russia and the U.S. to turn their foreign policy attention to Asia. China, for instance, is facing big internal challenges concerning energy, citizens' demographics and religion – all issues that must be well managed so as to avoid future conflicts. Tensions over South China Sea's supplies and control over oil reserves will create further territorial disputes between the bordering nations.

In July 2015, the Iran nuclear deal brought good news to the international public. However, other nations' ambitions, for example North Korea's, still remain threatening. Pakistan's internal instability and blurred relationships with India and Afghanistan increase the risks of extremist action and can dilute all the peacemaking efforts done until now. Religion is being manipulated as a tool to spark conflicts, like the Maoist violence in India, and other such disputes in Indonesia, Philippines and Bali. The fight of rights by the Muslim population within Asia is constantly spreading. Fears of new aspirational independence movements, like that of Kurdistan, is a risk for countries like Syria, Turkey and Iraq, even more so as they are the only faction that is currently stopping ISIS from expanding.

The Asian continent is also experiencing changes in leadership, changes that is expected to affect the political dynamics of the area, like the relationship between North and the South Korea. The question to pose however is whether repression is still the best method to avoid conflicts, like those in Bahrain and China.

Europe

Today's Europe suffers greatly from the economic recession of 2008. As a result, unemployment levels, especially those of the youth, which have even surpassed 50% in some nations, have increased drastically, reaching 26.5% in Greece and 24.5% in Spain according to statistics released by Eurostat in 2014. In order to tackle unemployment and other issues stemming from the crisis, austerity measures related to fiscal policy were imposed on nations such as Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland by European creditors (the ECB, the IMF, etc.). These decisions caused massive public protests, as the measures seemed draconian and almost asphyxiating to the citizens of the aforementioned countries. Recently, in the summer of 2015, after the third Greek bailout, heavy criticism arose regarding the European Union and the democratic foundations on which it was established, as countries such as Germany were accused of having malicious intentions, judging from the harshness of the measures involved in Greece's new aid package. Subsequently, the European political power disparity has lead to further tension between European countries.

Moreover, due to the Arab uprisings, many European nations are experiencing surges of undocumented immigrants from Africa and Asia. This situation adds to the ethnic, minority conflicts and deteriorates relations between the host countries and the immigrants' countries of origin, since their presence is seen to add to the 'host' country's rise in crime rates. Adding on, the presence of existing Roma populations, as the case is in the Basque

region of Spain, is a constant source of national conflict in which both the government and terrorist groups/rebels, such as ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) have their share.

North America

As ice is melting, disputes between U.S. and Canada on claims of sovereignty concerning the Arctic area have heated. The argument relies on the assumption that in the present era, if the U.S. collects fossil fuels, such as natural gas and oil, tension between the U.S. and Canada could arise. The United States, as an international interventionist, is not considered an interstate conflict starter.

South America

South America is one of the two only continents, along with Europe, that is currently not involved in a war. This, however, does not necessarily mean it is conflict-free. Although conflicts in twenty-first century Latin America are not like those of the nineteenth century, such as the Paraguayan War (the War of the Triple Alliance), disputes still exist, but not in the form of interstate war. South American nations experience instances of corruption in governance, public services and/or national and international businesses. As a consequence of corruption, conflict arises. Drug war-related killings in nations such as Mexico are frequent, and conflict is heightened due to the fact that drug smuggling involves transportation through the borders of numerous Latin American states. Furthermore, as those living in slums, for instance in Brazilian favelas, are polarized, it is believed that the vast inequality created heightens the crime rate and violence. In terms of territorial disagreements, Bolivia and Chile for example, are currently disputing over whether Bolivia has the right to have sovereign land with access to the Pacific Ocean. Although interstate conflict over boundaries is common and such incidents can lead to clashes, interstate war is infrequent.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1957	European Economic Community was founded to ensure peace and prosperity to European nations. It later became the European Union in 1992.
1963	The establishment of The Organization of African Unity, which later

	became the African Union, so as to confirm the unity of African states and thus avoid interstate conflict.
1968	The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty is approved in order to eradicate the use of nuclear warfare. It is considered a significant step and common security strategy.
1975	Resolution 3379: Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, was passed in the General Assembly, and marked a significant progression to a more united world with shared values through racial equality.
2002	The Millennium Project, a United Nations initiative to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is created with the aim of reducing conflict through "shared values and new security strategies". It recognizes it as the 'Tenth Global Challenge'.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

As the UN Charter states, the UN was founded upon the principles of a "peace and security" and therefore most of the UN's efforts ultimately do pertain the reduction of conflict, and more specifically interstate conflict. The most relevant effort made so far though, is the Millennium Project.

The United Nations: Millennium Project

The Millennium Project was founded as a continual study of the future in 1996 and devised from 2002 to 2005, as initiative by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It recognizes fifteen Global Challenges and works transnationally to formulate solutions to them, through collaboration involving governments, individuals and corporations at a worldwide scale. As the 'Tenth Global Challenge' it sets the question: "How can shared values and new security strategies reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism and the use of weapons of mass destruction?" For more than ten years, therefore, this question has been researched and discussed, in order to implement the necessary measures to come to both short-term and long-term solutions.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The United Nations: Millennium Project

The creation of a specific 'task force' allows for an in depth research on the 'Global Challenges', of which reducing conflict is a part of. Consisting of around 15 to 20 international representatives from both the academic, the public and the private sectors, each task force aims at formulating feasible solutions through research on the issue.

European Union: Unit of External Action Section

The EU has created a unit of External Action Section, which acts as an active conflict preventer within Europe.

The FIIA/CICS Project

A project created by the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA) and the Centre for International Co-operation and Security (CICS). It aims at raising awareness and comprehension of the conflicts occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa. It outlines effective strategies for conflict prevention, management and reduction (CPMR) and promotes regional collaboration.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Solutions, especially those related to shared values, will require time to be effectively implemented. What is certain though, is that substantial technological and social changes will have to be made. Shared values must ensure stability and political integration. Security strategies must tackle the core of the causes of conflict and prioritize the protection of individuals as well as sovereign states. Solutions could include:

- The creation and implementation of 'Public Education Programs'.
- Early warning systems for governments and UN agencies.
- Punitive punishment for those committing war crimes.
- Geneva Convention should include the necessary treatment for instances of intra-state conflict.
- Adjusting to environmental changes, such as increase or decrease in floods, droughts or river flow rates, depending on the area and climate of a region, rather than attempting to alter the environment.

- The common security strategies could include:
    - Destruction of biological warfare,
    - Establishment of an international audit system for each weapon type,
    - Laws to reduce arms sales, and thus, violent crimes.

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Pictures' and Graphs' Bibliography

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