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Introducing the Framework Model for the Evaluation of Deterrent Value of States

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***Zia Ul Haque Shamsi**[1]

Abstract
The term 'deterrence' is closely intertwined with the national security of sovereign states and is frequently misunderstood within strategic literature. Some argue that acquiring specific arms and equipment is essential for achieving deterrence, while others contend that security hinges on acquiring Deterrent Value (DV) through various means, including but not limited to arms and equipment. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of deterrence—its definitions, conceptual framework, political objectives, and its role as a military strategy—is crucial before reasoned judgment about its effectiveness as a safeguard for national security. This paper aims to construct a framework model delineating a state's deterrent capability as the paramount guarantor of its national security. Employing inductive and deductive reasoning, this model will objectively analyze the efficacy, or lack thereof, of the tools upon which the security architecture of any state is founded. By facilitating case studies of diverse states, the framework model will aid researchers in predicting future events and extracting relevant lessons from past occurrences.

Keywords
Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons, National Security, Economic Security, Cyber Security, Pakistan

Introduction
The value of the social sciences lies in their subjective nature, encompassing a diverse array of meanings, contexts, assumptions, and essences within each strategic term. Notably, terms such as 'security,' 'conflict,' 'terrorism,' 'extremism,' and even 'deterrence' lack universally agreed-upon definitions. This article strives for clarity, particularly concerning *deterrence* and *security*. The objective is to explore the inseparable linkages of these concepts before concluding the pivotal role of deterrent capability in ensuring the national security of any state.

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Given that the national security of any sovereign state represents its most paramount and indispensable national interest, one for which states may resort to warfare against perpetrators, it becomes imperative to grasp its fundamental components. Traditionally, strong militaries were regarded as the exclusive guarantors of a state's national security. However, military security constitutes just one facet of broader national security imperatives for any state in the evolving paradigm.

Since the reintroduction of the term 'hybrid warfare' (Nemeth, 2002), although its conceptual roots extend back to the teachings of the ancient Chinese sage Sun Tzu around 2500 years ago (Shamshi, 2023), non-military elements of national security have gained prominence over military considerations for ensuring the security of a state. The prioritization of these elements is contingent upon each state's unique threat perception, influenced by factors such as geographical location, topography, regional security dynamics, and diplomatic relations with neighboring states. With the contemporary understanding of national security encompassing both military and non-military dimensions, it is pertinent to explore the subject further to develop a framework for evaluating deterrence.

Note on Methodology

Deductive reasoning is utilized to maintain objectivity, while inductive reasoning is employed to develop a novel framework for calculating and assessing the deterrent value of any given state. This aspect is inspired by Sun Tzu's precept of 'Know your Enemy and Know Yourself.' Qualitative analyses examine various methodologies for determining a state's capabilities and capacities to confront adversaries of comparable or asymmetric strength. Relevant literature on deterrence, national security, and hybrid warfare is thoroughly reviewed and analyzed to ensure the research's relevance. Works such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (1963), Clausewitz's *On War (2007), Liddle Hart's Indirect Strategy (2008), Bernard Brodie's writings on deterrence,* and Mearsheimer's contributions to realism are consulted extensively. These sources significantly contribute to developing a novel framework model (C-7) tailored for calculating and evaluating the Deterrent Value (DV) of any state.

Conceptualizing National Security

Notwithstanding the significance of conventional deterrence, several nations rely on nuclear deterrent capability as a guarantor of state security. Therefore, it is essential to understand the concept of national security within the context of the evolving paradigm (Five Essential Elements, n.d.). This author's definition of national security is inspired by the Australian phrase *no worries*, primarily because the concept has undergone a significant shift in the changed paradigm and cannot be measured on the scale of military security alone. The other significant elements of national security include political security, economic security, cyber security, and, conceivably, digital security in the fast-evolving Artificial Intelligence (AI) environment.

Firstly, the definitional conundrum warrants attention. As previously noted, there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of security or national security. Consequently, this paper examined at least three reputable dictionaries to ascertain a linguistic definition. Accordingly, "the quality or state of being secure: such as freedom from danger (safety), freedom from fear or anxiety, freedom from the prospect of being laid off (job security)" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). "Security refers to all the measures taken to protect a place" (Collins Dictionary, n.d.a). Meanwhile, Cambridge defines security as the "protection of a person, building, organization, or country against threats

such as crime or attacks by foreign countries" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Since all the lexicons pointed towards the safety aspects more than any other aspect, the definition(s) for national security by different scholars were considered.

According to Joseph J. Room, Walter Lippmann defined national security in terms of war, "a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able if challenged, to maintain them by war" (Romm, 1993, p.5). This definition aligns with the argument presented in this paper, emphasizing that nonmilitary aspects merit increased attention to ensure the national security of a state within the context of the evolving paradigm. Hence, each component of national security is succinctly defined to elucidate its role in ensuring security and thereby supporting the deterrent capability of the state.

Political Security

Political security, an integral component of human security, is comparable to economic and military security (Holmes, 2014; United Nations, 1994). Without a robust political system, no state can earn a respectable status in the community of nations. The entire state machinery needed to manage the state of affairs to ensure the security of the state and the well-being of the people largely depends on how sound and stable the country's political system is.

In any democratic society, elections are fundamental to democracy, embodying principles of representation and civic engagement, thus necessitating adherence to constitutional provisions for timely conduct. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure a fair and equitable environment for all political leaders and parties, thereby preventing the emergence of law-and-order issues stemming from legitimate political activities. Crucially, all state institutions must abstain from any form of political manipulation or interference in governance, as this is the exclusive responsibility of the elected government, accountable to the populace in subsequent elections.

The concept of 'political engineering,' defined as the deliberate structuring of political institutions to achieve specific objectives, underscores the importance of maintaining the integrity of political processes (Reilly, 2007). Recent elections in Turkey serve as a testament to the potential for democratic expression in the developing world (Clarke, 2023), highlighting the significance of political stability in safeguarding core national interests and, ultimately, the state's security.

Economic Security

Another essential element of national security is the economic security of any state (Neu & Wolf, 1994). No nation can peacefully coexist or advance within the international community without achieving economic independence and security. The most challenging aspect of an economic downturn is that the nation struggles to fulfill its legitimate security requirements without compromising national development, directly impacting human security components. The economy of a state not only influences its political standing within the international community but also enables the government to establish its spending priorities. Domestic political considerations may prompt the government to allocate more significant resources toward specific areas that may not align optimally with the needs of the populace.

Moreover, the regional security environment may dictate that the government allocate substantial earnings to maintaining security infrastructures. However, any

government that ignores public sector development spending and fails to relieve the common citizen compromises national security.

In the contemporary competitive global landscape, nations that depend on international donor agencies or 'friendly' donations for sustenance, often due to significant national debts, confront elevated risks of compromising national security objectives. Hence, economic security emerges as a cornerstone, as no nation can legitimately assert 'security' if its economic underpinning is unstable. Even with formidable armed forces and secure borders, an economically dependent state may struggle to assert its sovereignty in the modern paradigm.

Such states find themselves beholden to their donors, who wield considerable influence. Donors may demand repayment of loans, seize pledged assets, seek concessions on national security matters, or even coerce the state into compliance. Additionally, the ability to maintain and enhance conventional and nuclear deterrent capabilities hinges heavily on economic viability. Nuclear capabilities are not static but demand substantial ongoing investment in improvement and innovation. Thus, economic stability is vital for overall security and the sustainability of defense capabilities.

Inspired by the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's quote for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), "[…] A country without a strong Air Force is at the mercy of any aggressor. Pakistan must build up its air force as quickly as possible. It must be an efficient air force that is second to none and must take its place with the Army and the Navy in securing Pakistan's Defence" (Hali, 2022, para 9).

Cyber Security

Historically, rivals have made efforts to disrupt the communication systems of the adversary physically; however, in present times, cyber warfare has taken up this space. Similarly, thoughtfully devised tactics/strategies were adopted to access the information systems and create mechanisms of misinformation and disinformation within the opposing forces (Shamsi, 2022).

While newly developed technological tools have significantly benefited human society, they have concurrently put them at risk of being disrupted regarding privacy, fake news, and vulnerabilities in financial transactions. One such illicit activity, often committed by criminally minded computer experts, is *Hacktivism*. The term denotes individuals who illegally access personal data with the intent to cause psychological and financial harm. Likewise, the reports of cyber-attacks on financial institutions siphoning off huge sums have become routine. Although no large-scale cyber-attack has yet been reported in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, numerous systems related to the economy, defense, business, and decision-making processes at all levels remain vulnerable.

The employment of cyber-warfare as part of a strategy to disrupt 'enemy' lines of communication and cause harm to its potential capabilities has made state institutions highly vulnerable. Similarly, personal security (as an essential element of human security) remains vulnerable to disruptions in communication, location tracking, and financial transactions, among other aspects. Therefore, international organizations must formulate legal frameworks to safeguard individuals' rights, ensuring that cyber warfare does not encroach upon their privacy or lead to the unlawful deprivation of their financial assets.

As indicated above, cyber-warfare is considered a more suitable tool for offensive action against its rivals due to its immense power to disrupt communication

systems. Such an action can paralyze the related system by disrupting the defined timeframe. These systems may include highly sensitive defense establishments, including command and control systems, missile firing sites, air defense systems, and, more concerningly, the decision-making mechanism at the strategic level.

Given the above, 'cyber war' and 'cyber conflicts' are becoming prominent *hybrid threats* in the evolving paradigm. With the advent of digital technologies, the rate of cyber-attacks has increased, such that states now commonly employ cyber-attacks against their rivals (Rutherford, 2019). Furthermore, Hunter and Pernik (2015) argue that sophisticated campaigns integrating low-level conventional and special operations, offensive cyber and space actions, and psychological operations utilizing social and traditional media are employed to influence public perception and shape international opinion.

Additionally, cyberspace has emerged as a primary domain for conducting cyber warfare (Almäng, 2019). Hybrid warfare (as a tactic): Cyber-attacks have the potential to directly impact civilian populations, inducing emotional, psychological, and economic consequences. Due to the subtle nature of cyber warfare operations, both state and non-state actors keep increased flexibility in their actions compared to traditional state powers. However, as a crucial component of national security, cyber security hinges mainly on a country's capacity to invest in and adopt modern technologies, including AI and space technologies (National Cyber Security Strategy, 2013). Nevertheless, its effectiveness is also contingent on the country's economic security, as technology-intensive elements necessitate substantial investments for development and maintenance.

Environmental Security

Environmental security only gained attention in national security discussions when its impact began to affect both climate and human lives, mainly due to the excessive use of explosive materials (Barnett, 2010). The Siachen War between India and Pakistan in 1983 serves as a poignant example, causing more casualties than any other conflict between the South Asian rivals and leading to the rapid degradation of the glaciated region (Hakeem, 2022; Zain, 2006).

While international forums actively debate environmental degradation resulting from hazardous weaponry, and efforts have been made through arms control and disarmament treaties to mitigate its effects, this paper elucidates the intersection of 'environmental security' with regional 'politico-military dynamics.' Pakistan, for instance, has been embroiled in conflict since its independence in 1947, particularly over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) (Hussain, 2021). Similarly, Afghanistan has endured four decades of warfare, with significant spillover effects on Pakistan due to geographical proximity (Karim,2017).

Therefore, this article explores environmental security through two primary dimensions: the degradation induced by hazardous war materials and the politico-military environment prevailing in conflict zones. The ongoing Siachen conflict between India and Pakistan is an illustrative case, showcasing environmental deterioration, particularly evident in the accelerated melting of glaciated mountains attributed to military activities (Siachen, 2023).

Similarly, the politico-military atmosphere remains volatile and unpredictable, often exacerbated by irresponsible rhetoric from leadership on both sides, driven by political expediency. India's orchestration of the Pulwama incident and

subsequent Balakot attacks stand as examples to which Pakistan swiftly retaliated the following day (Yusuf,2019; Siyech, 2019). The aerial clashes in February 2019 could escalate horizontally and vertically, posing a significant national security threat to the region.

Military Security

Traditionally, states focused on building a strong military force to defend territorial integrity and sovereignty (Idachaba, 2019). The security infrastructure was developed based on the perceived threat and geographical considerations, prioritizing the army, navy, or air force. However, with the advent of nuclear technology, the relatively more developed states immediately grabbed the opportunity to monopolize nuclear technology. These states formed an exclusive group of nations that could afford the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons (US, USSR, UK, France, and China)[2]. The rest of the world was forced to be deterred by these P5 countries for decades. Hence, the states, confident of their military security due to an expanded security infrastructure, suddenly felt insecure and started to look for other options.

Regardless of the strength of a state's security apparatus, both developed and developing nations remain vulnerable to external interventions by more powerful states. This underscores the importance of recognizing and prioritizing various elements of national security, as briefly outlined above. The Afghan War serves as a poignant example, where the (former) Soviet Union, despite its extensive security infrastructure and an arsenal of traditional and advanced weaponry, lost its political identity without a single shot being fired on its soil.

Similarly, despite its size and military capabilities, Ukraine is rapidly losing ground and territorial integrity, primarily due to a lack of readiness in other elements of national security, such as diplomacy, economy, cyber warfare, and support from allies, to confront a global power. Similarly, Iraq, once a regional powerhouse with a formidable military infrastructure and nuclear ambitions, faltered against an international coalition formed to liberate Kuwait following its invasion in 1990 under the leadership of its now-deceased President Saddam Hussein.

On the other hand, Qatar, a small peninsular state in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, survived an extremely precarious security situation when, on 05 June 2017, several brotherly neighboring countries imposed a blockade (land, air, sea). It was none other than the non-military effort that saved Qatar from a Kuwait-like situation.[3] Therefore, in the contemporary technology-driven environment, where social media has elevated public opinion to a critical and influential force, military security alone is insufficient to ensure the national security of any state.

The aforementioned elements of national security are essential for fortifying a state's capacity to ensure its security both internally and externally. In the current paradigm, no single element can guarantee peace, stability, and security, as national security is now more closely aligned with human security than ever.

Conceptualizing Deterrence

To understand the term 'deterrence, at least three sources were consulted for their definitional explanations. With regards, the term was conceived as "the act of making

[2] The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was an Agreement signed in 1968 by several of the major nuclear and non-nuclear powers that pledged their cooperation in stemming the spread of nuclear technology.

[3] Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

someone decide not to do something, [….] the act of preventing a particular act or behavior from happening" (The Britannica Dictionary. n.d.).

Merriam-Webster defines deterrence as "the maintenance of military power to discourage attack—nuclear deterrence" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b). Likewise, it is described as "the prevention of something, especially war or crime, by having something such as weapons or punishment to use as a threat" (Collins Dictionary, n.d.b).

Interestingly, each definition associates deterrence primarily with the evolution of nuclear weapons, implying that deterrence (as a concept) or strategy did not exist in the conventional era. However, this paper argues that deterrence is one of the oldest strategies for ensuring personal or collective security and advancing one's interests and influence. It has been selectively effective over time. The primary objective of a deterrence regime is to dissuade adversaries from planning and executing acts of violence or war by instilling fear of the consequences they cannot afford.

Therefore, the concept of deterrence must be understood in its entirety— meaning, concept, policy, and strategy— before it is considered a primary tool for the security of a state. In modern times, the concept and definitions draw reference to the birth of nuclear weapons in 1945. Brodie and Dunn (1946), the strategists of nuclear deterrence theory, were of the view that "[…] if aggressor feared retaliation in kind, he would not attack." Explaining further, "[…] thus far, the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them" (Brodie & Dunn, 1946, p. 74). There is little doubt that this traditional meaning and concept of deterrence worked well between the Cold War adversaries because they understood its consequences and perhaps learned some lessons after the Cuban Missile Crisis (CMC) of 1962.[4] However, in the changed paradigm, deterrence cannot be accomplished solely by military means. A combination of hard and soft power is required to achieve credible deterrence to ensure national security.

Inseparable Linkage between Deterrence and Security

The above discussion on the definitional explanations of security and deterrence leads to the conclusion that there is an inseparable linkage between security and deterrence. Because non-military aspects are the overriding factor in the national security of any state under the changed paradigm, and military security is just one element of deterrent capability that a state must acquire. In either case, deterrent capability acquired to ensure one's security against a relatively more significant and vital state or expand influence onto relatively smaller and weaker states will significantly play a role in the process. Therefore, it is incumbent upon academics, researchers of international affairs, and strategic studies to logically, rationally, and dispassionately evaluate the state's deterrent capability to predict a future event and perhaps help the decision-makers in strategic decision-making.

Evaluating the Deterrent Value of a State: Framework Model C-7

To logically evaluate the deterrent value of a state as a guarantor of security, it is necessary to evaluate it on specific universal criteria. Since the deterrence theory gained prominence in the post-nuclearized era, evaluating the state's capabilities on its status

[4] Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 is considered the most dangerous situation where the Cold War rivals, the US and USSR, came close to nuclear war over the employment of Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) by the Soviets in Cuba.

would be prudent: Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) and Non-Nuclear Weapon State (NNWS).

For this purpose, this paper has developed a 'Framework Model C-7' to evaluate the deterrent value of any state (NWS and NNWS) against any other NWS and NNWS. The C-7 Model represents the *Capability*, *Credibility*, *Capacity*, *Communicability*, *Command*, *Control*, and *Conduct* of the evaluated state, with a strong political will of the evaluated state. The C-7 Model is expected to help researchers evaluate the deterrent value of NWS against NWS, NWS against NNWS, and NNWS against NNWS (conventional domain).

States pursue nuclear capabilities for many reasons, as Cruz (2020) noted. Nonetheless, two primary rationales stand out: firstly, to bolster the security apparatus of the state, and secondly, to augment influence by attaining an elevated status within the international community of nations. Therefore, it is evident that the deterrent capability of an NWS will be essentially different than that of an NNWS. Also, it would differ from an NWS and an NNWS. However, a common framework is being developed to maintain objectivity for easy understanding and logical conclusions.

Capability of States

Generally, capability reflects the state's abilities and the intent of the leadership. It does not necessarily reflect military capability alone; it also includes its non-military attributes. These may include the will-to-do, diplomacy, economy, and people's support for state institutions. Moreover, capability must be evaluated in both *Offensive* (i.e., active) and *Defensive* (i.e., passive).

Offensive capabilities may include Launch Platforms (Airborne, Land-based, Sea-based), Missiles (Ground-based, Air-Launched, Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles-SLBMs), Bombs (GPS-guided stand-off, IR-guided, Over the target), Airborne Jammers, and Ground-based jammers, etc. Whereas the *Defensive* capabilities may include Ballistic Missile Defence Systems (BMDs), silos, camouflage and concealment, dispersal, depth, etc.

The relative size of the nuclear arsenals will add to the deterrent capability significantly because the more significant numbers of nuclear weapons will undoubtedly make it more difficult for any adversary to destroy the deployed nuclear weapons in a single and surprise attack. Whereas the debate may continue on the efficacy of numbers in calculating deterrent value, the numbers become a factor while planning an operation for and against the NWS.

Credibility of States

Subsequently, an imperative consideration pertains to the credibility of a state in executing its intended operations. The importance of credibility in each domain, leadership (i.e., practicality), and equipment (i.e., technical) cannot be overemphasized. The deterrent value of the state cannot be practical if the opponent doubts the credibility of the rival, either in its leadership's determination or the technical efficiency of the acquired capability. This is one reason why the opponents in peacetime keenly monitor statements and body language. Any miscalculations in this regard often lead to violence and undesirable situations.

Several pertinent instances underscore this point, such as the US cautionary message to the Taliban government after the tragic events of 9/11, urging them to surrender Osama Bin Laden under threat of repercussions ("US Warned Taliban after 9/11 Attacks," 2011). Similarly, in a more contemporary context, (former) Prime

Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan issued warnings to India in the aftermath of the Pulwama incident, advising against any adventurism ("Pakistan Warns India against Attacking," 2019). However, in the abovementioned situations, Saddam, Mullah Omer, and Modi doubted the credibility of the subject warnings and hence faced undesirable consequences. Conversely, the subdued reaction of the United States to warnings issued by Iraq's President Saddam Hussein weeks prior to the invasion of Kuwait bolstered the resolve of the Iraqi leader, ultimately leading to the execution of his intended invasion (Hoagland, 2024).

Capacity of States

The capacity of a state to absorb, execute, or respond to a challenge is another critical element of the C-7 Model, or in simple terms, the war *stamina* of the state. Capacity includes many factors, each critical in its domain, and may become an overriding factor when the time to decide comes. The most important could be the organizational capacity to *act* or *react* in a particular security situation. The assessment of a state's deterrent efficacy may encompass several facets, including the resilience of its military capacity, technological assistance before, during, and after projected operations, the economic strength enabling resistance or execution of such operations, and conceivably, the state's political and intellectual acumen to confront international pressure if adverse circumstances arise, as well as its ability to garner diplomatic backing when deemed necessary.

Interstate Communicability: A Multidimensional Analysis

Another critical factor that may determine the strengths or the weaknesses in the deterrent value of any state is its communication of the intent or the strategic communication by its leadership. The opponents would keenly look at the posturing of the state, which may be done through statements by the responsible officials or the actions of the state. The statement has to be clear, concise, and specific. This may make the intent clear or keep it ambiguous, but it would largely depend on the policy of the state and the strategy of the services. The deterrent value of any state is seriously affected if the deterring state cannot impress upon the state to be deterred. If the adversary doubts the intent of the opponent, this is one area that may create confusion and lead to an irreversible situation. Therefore, the politico-military leadership of the state, initiator, or recipient must desist from issuing irresponsible statements to domestic audiences on security issues.

Command Structure of the States

This paper has adopted a nuanced approach, delineating the conventional association between command and control. It argues that these two elements possess different connotations and merit separate evaluations. Command specifically pertains to military command, intelligence, and communication networks and their resilience against physical and technical intrusions.

As discussed earlier, cyber warfare poses a significant threat in this regard, making the security of military command structures paramount, particularly against technologically advanced adversaries. Moreover, the paper posits the significance of robustness and technological sophistication within military command structures. Whether domestically developed or adapted from external models, ensuring their security and technological integrity is paramount for safeguarding against potential threats.

Control Structure of the States

The control aspect primarily concerns the organizational oversight of sensitive technology and systems. Whether these systems fall under political or military jurisdiction, each possesses distinct implications stemming from its operational methodologies. A critical consideration pertains to the authorization of the use or non-use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in response to existential threats to the state. Furthermore, the effectiveness and efficiency of these systems necessitate evaluation within a historical context, encompassing their development, testing, and deployment phases. For instance, the North Korean nuclear program exemplifies heightened opacity due to the pervasive control exerted by its dictatorial regime (Kitano, 2016). Consequently, uncertainties persist regarding the future of security in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly concerning South China (Guan,2000) and the complex dynamics surrounding the Taiwan Strait issue (Mc Devitt, 2004; Qimao, 1996).

Conduct of the States

Under the 'Conduct of the States' umbrella, an evaluation is conducted on internal and external behavior during crises. This assessment encompasses various factors such as the state's historical background, value system, socio-cultural composition, ethnic and demographic makeup, domestic political framework, and type of governance. Opposing entities scrutinize the state's governance structure, defense expenditures, citizen welfare, education system, research and development capabilities, and economic self-sufficiency.

Additionally, the state's behavior in international forums and its political alignment with global and regional powers are crucial to its conduct, domestically and internationally. The state's adherence to international obligations is of particular significance, reflecting its future trajectory. Notably, North Korea serves as a prime example of poor conduct among nuclear-armed states, displaying defiance towards international obligations, particularly in the contested Korean Peninsula region (Howell, 2023).

Methodological Framework: Guidelines for Academic Inquiry

The C-7 Model can be deployed for either NWS or NNWS. Also, this may work in situations where the researchers are war-gaming between NWS versus NWS, NWS versus NNWS, and NNWS versus NNWS. The sole purpose should be to conduct a dispassionate analysis to determine the future outcome of an impending conflict. However, once the deterrent value of a state is determined, its findings must be placed before the decision-making body of the country with emphasis on the following factors:

Doability

Based on the evaluations of the deterrent value, the leadership may opt to pursue either an offensive or counteroffensive strategy, assessed through the lens of feasibility or *doability*. While this may entail revisiting specific processes, the leadership must thoroughly deliberate on the feasibility aspects of potential operations. Numerous historical examples highlight the consequences of incorrect information provided to political leadership, leading to ill-advised decisions and exacerbating problems (Dunne, 2011; Bassil, 2012)

For instance, the Kargil conflict in 1999 in South Asia was launched without proper knowledge and approval from political leadership (Lavoy, 2009). Similarly, in the Middle East, President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair were presented with

manipulated data regarding Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (Davies,2010). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the research team to present accurate data to the decision-making body of the state, accompanied by clear, concise, and focused recommendations regarding the feasibility of potential operations.

Preferability

Correctly assessing preferability is another crucial aspect before deciding to undertake certain operations. Even if the evaluation of deterrent value is positive and the operation is deemed feasible, it is essential to question whether it is the preferable course of action. This assessment should consider the global and regional environment, as well as the timing of the operation of the state's current priorities.

For instance, Pakistan's Kargil operation was not a preferable option when the political leadership was actively engaged in efforts to mend relations with India following the nuclear tests of May 1998, initially conducted by India and subsequently by Pakistan. Similarly, while Iraq's invasion of Kuwait might have been feasible due to Kuwait's limited capacity to resist, it should not have been deemed a preferable option for the invaders, given the broader geopolitical ramifications.

Affordability

Indeed, every operation undertaken by a state carries an inherent cost, which extends beyond material expenses to include socio-cultural ramifications. It is imperative to conduct a rational cost-benefit analysis to weigh these factors. For example, numerous military operations led by the US and its allies faced vehement protests from the public across the US and Europe. Public opinion, particularly in the developed West, holds significant sway, especially with the advent of social media. Additionally, the political cost of a decision must be calculated before concluding. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on 1990 August 2 serves as a stark example of failure to consider the political repercussions of such actions.

Acceptability

Lastly, the acceptability of a planned operation must be carefully deliberated internally and externally, perhaps even involving allies. Assessing whether a state's actions will be acceptable to domestic and international audiences is essential. Moreover, the legality of the action must always be evaluated alongside ethical and moral considerations.

Examples abound where the international community did not accept actions: Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait (Hoagland, 2024), the Saudi-led quartet's blockade of Qatar in June 2017 (Cherkaoui,2018; Nonneman, 2022), and Pakistan's incursion into Kargil in 1999 (Lavoy, 2009). These instances underscore the importance of considering the broader implications and potential reactions to state actions. Only after thorough evaluations can it be reasonably assumed that necessary precautions have been taken, enabling states to make informed decisions on strategic matters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the inseparable connection between deterrence and security cannot be overstated. Therefore, understanding the significance of deterrent value is paramount, necessitating careful evaluation and precise execution to achieve desired outcomes. The Framework Model C-7, when coupled with considerations of 'Doability, Preferability, Affordability, and Acceptability' (DPA2), offers a comprehensive approach to planning future operations and retrospectively analyzing past events to glean valuable

insights. Ultimately, researchers must analyze the probability of success for proposed operations, enabling decision-makers to make informed choices. It is therefore argued that academic experts should thoroughly examine the C-7 Model and provide recommendations for improvement before its integration into strategic literature, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in contemporary security discourse.

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The Great Game of Space: Space Political Adventurism and Battle for Superpower Status Beyond the Horizons

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Abstract

Wars will not be fought on the grounds in the future, but explosions will occur beyond horizons. This research paper has extensively inscribed the subject of advanced strategies of the Great Powers, space militarization, and political adventurism of China, the USA, and Russia. The paper presents the political stratagem and space arms race of Russia, China, and the USA, which are combating each other for power status in orbits of space. As China and Russia challenge USA dominance in space, the USA seeks to weaponize space to maintain its supremacy and counter its rivals. The evolving international structure and world order are steering warfare into new dimensions, with space militarization posing nontraditional security threats. Despite international legal efforts and multilateral cooperation, major powers continue to expand their space arsenals, creating national security concerns. The study argues that international institutions have failed to curb the space arms race due to their ineffectiveness. Thus, there is a need for a shift in focus to find common ground and resolve this space security conflict. The paper provides a theoretical overview of the role of international institutions and state behavior in the international system. Using qualitative research techniques, the study conducts in-depth exploration through secondary data gathered from various articles, journals, reports, and other related sources. Descriptive and explanatory research approaches are employed to achieve the research objectives.

Keywords

Political Adventurism, Weaponization, Satellites, Arms Race, Surveillance, National security

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Introduction

The Great Game is a concept that has existed since the 19th and 20th centuries when major states emerged in the world diplomatic and political confrontation (Ingram, 1980). In the post-Empire era of the international world, powerful states started heading towards creating new world orders so that the political arena of the world could revolve around such states (Khanna,2008). Initially, the Great Game referred to the rivalry of Russia and Great Britain in their spheres of influence in Persia, Iran, Mughal India, and South-Central Asia. The great game is a game of influence and status of superiority in the international world (Smith, 2013).

Today, the concept of the Great Game has got into new dimensions. The security realm has also changed with the change in the international structure. In past eras, the notion of security was understood conventionally by focusing on traditional threats. However, technological advancement, changes in geopolitical strategies, and the rise of new international actors have enabled new threats to the world. The political adventurism of global powers in space is one of the new emerging threats that pose both traditional and non-traditional security issues through militarization, satellite interference, space debris, and surveillance.

During the Cold War, space witnessed intense militarization by the global superpowers, namely the USA and the USSR. By the 1960s, China emerged as a new challenger in space, leveraging its advancements in space technology and military capabilities. This period saw global powers competing to explore and utilize space for strategic interests, each vying to establish dominance in space. Space technology evolved significantly in the 20th century, serving various military and commercial purposes. However, as the 21st century unfolded, space gradually emerged as a critical domain of national security, driven by heightened political adventurism by states such as the USA, China, and Russia, extending beyond the confines of Earth's horizons (Wehtje, 2022). These central states are allocating significant resources to their space budgets. Today, warfare among great powers in this century does not necessarily commence with the sounds of explosions on the ground or in the sky, but rather, it can erupt in outer space (Abdoullaev, 2014).

With the assertive power projection and political adventurism of global powers in outer space, countries like the USA, China, Russia, India, and the commercial sector are conducting advanced technological and military activities in space. The USA was the first country to develop a significant interest in space exploration. The USA's Artemis program, announced in 2019, aims to return humans to the moon for the first time since 1972 (de Zwart, 2021). Over time, however, it has evolved into a race for hegemony to maintain the USA's status as a superpower (Stroikos, 2022).

The USA and Russia developed their space agencies to compete against each other in their space ambitions (Sheehan,2007). China's entry into space political adventurism and the space arms race have introduced new dimensions to international space security. Since the 1980s, the Chinese space agency has been working to challenge the long-standing duopoly of the USA and Russia in space (Juda, 2018). China's impressive Anti-Satellite (ASAT) program continues to advance, while the USA is expanding its counter-ASAT deterrence and developing next-generation space technology to meet these challenges (Walsh, 2007).

Although multilateral cooperation exists aimed at controlling the arms race in space, the primary agenda of the Russia-China alliance in space cooperation is their rivalry with the USA. This unity reflects a new power dynamic in bilateral agreements, with the aim of establishing an alliance against the USA (Easton, 2009).

India is emerging as a powerful player in space, particularly altering the dynamics with China. India is actively developing satellite navigation systems and surveillance capabilities to protect its interests, showcasing its proficiency in space missions. Its quest for regional hegemony and efforts to counter China further complicates the situation (Hussain & Shahzad, 2023). Although the European Union, NATO, and commercial sectors are also involved, the rivalry between the USA, Russia, and China continues to capture the most attention. Despite international institutions and treaties, the proliferation of space weapons has persisted into this century. Five treaties, including the significant Outer Space Treaty of 1967, were adopted to limit space weapons, but China, Russia, and the USA have neither signed nor ratified these treaties (Wehtje, 2022).

This research paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a detailed analysis of the space arms race, power dynamics, and political adventurism of China, the USA, and Russia in outer space. The paper aims to address the critical security threats posed by the arms race in space. It highlights that space politics is becoming a significant security concern for the world. Additionally, the study explains the weaknesses of the international legal framework and multilateral collaboration. Despite legal obligations, international treaties, and multilateral cooperation, the space arms race continues to escalate, transforming space from a realm of peaceful exploration to one dominated by political agendas and debris in orbit.

Several scholars have explored this topic in terms of traditional security issues, such as the threats posed by satellite destruction, space weaponization, and the potential for nuclearization in space to conventional warfare. However, this study aims to explain how states' political activities beyond the horizon are leading to a new form of conflict involving data warfare, espionage, clandestine operations, and surveillance by states against one another.

Global powers may avoid direct or conventional war, but the potential for harm from hybrid warfare is increasing due to space weaponization. The term ‘great game’ describes the arms race and the ongoing political machinations of global powers (Deutsch & Gramer, 2022). The weaponization of space by major powers has significant global impacts, affecting not only each other but also the broader international community. This research analyzes these global ramifications and political strategies that threaten national security. The existing legal framework has failed to ensure the peaceful use of space, indicating a need for revision. This paper contributes to the study and understanding of space-related security issues and the ongoing activities of the USA, China, and Russia.

This paper explores the following research questions: What is the grand strategy of the USA, China, and Russia in outer space? What are the principal threats posed by the political adventurism of the USA, China, and Russia in space? Why does the international legal framework fail to control the arms race in space, and what could be the possible shifts in multilateral cooperation and the Outer Space Treaty? Through these questions, the paper aims to address critical security threats and analyze the weaknesses of the current international legal framework in managing space militarization.

Research Methodology

The research in this paper employs a mixed-method approach, utilizing both descriptive and explanatory research methods to meet the research objectives. Qualitative research techniques have been used for data collection, analysis, and in-depth exploration of

existing literature. Secondary data has been meticulously collected, evaluated, and analyzed. Several case studies have also been included to elaborate on the research ideas.

Space Militarization and Strategic Dynamics

The weaponization and military utilization of space are not novel concepts, but they have significantly advanced in the 21st century. Space plays a crucial role in the national security strategies of the USA, Russia, and China, bolstering their capacity to comprehend emerging threats, exert global influence, execute operations, facilitate diplomatic endeavors, and sustain global economic viability. The current and future strategic landscape in space is increasingly characterized by congestion, contention, and competition (Russell, 2022).

A highly anticipated report on USA space activities, released in 2022 by the leading space consulting and market intelligence firm Euroconsult, unveiled that the US government allocated $92 billion to space endeavors, marking an 8% budget increase from 2020. This underscores the commitment of global powers to allocate substantial portions of their budgets to space weaponization, aiming to uphold hegemony both on Earth and beyond. Some researchers posit that while the USA and Russia may collaborate in outer space, the USA harbors concerns about China's burgeoning power in this domain (Gadd, 2021).

However, some research findings suggest a shift in Russian space policy, attributed to two primary reasons. Firstly, the position of Roscosmos in the global space sector has markedly declined. Secondly, Russia is grappling with economic and technological constraints due to Western sanctions, rendering it less reliant on its space infrastructure than China and the USA (Vidal, 2021). Lalitha (2021), in his article, offers a succinct overview of the space race and competition among the three major powers — USA, China, and Russia — in the post-Cold War era. He contends that space power has evolved into a political instrument for the USA, Russia, and China to maintain hegemony in a multipolar world order.

Choo (2021), in his article "The United States and China: Competition for Superiority in Space to Protect Resources and Weapon Systems," argued that China and the USA are fighting for hegemony in space, which has progressed into a high-level strategic battle. However, Russia and China are cooperating and plan to work together in outer space to directly compete with the USA and its partners (Hsiung, 2021). Langeland and Grossman (2021) argued that the USA is becoming more reliant on its space capabilities for its security and prosperity. China perceives the USA's activities as a threat to achieving space supremacy. These recent studies have shown that the USA, China, and Russia are working on their space programs and missions to achieve supremacy in space.

However, there are some limitations in those studies. Ghazala Yasmin Jalil (2023), who is a research fellow at the Arms Control & Disarmament Centre, ISSI, argued in her issue brief that although there are international treaties for arms control in space, there are several challenges in discussing effective regulations between the global states in terms of outer space treaties. She argued that there is a lack of clear definition of what refers to be called a space weapon because there is a blurred boundary between civil and military use of space. All the scholars have made significant contributions to space security. However, a lack of knowledge of other

dimensions of international treaties and multilateral cooperation may limit the global states' interests in space. Also, scholars have explained the militarization of space as a traditional warfare threat, so the literature is somehow deficient in what are the nontraditional security threats through ongoing space adventurism.

Theoretical Framework

Neorealism, or structural realism, emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system. Neorealists argue that there is no overarching authority in the international system, leading states to rely on self-help, secure their interests, and struggle for survival. Each state pursues its interests and protects its security on land or beyond. The neorealist perspective effectively explains states' behavior in space. The USA, China, and Russia each have their interests. When the USA began its space program, it created a security dilemma for Russia. All these states pursue the development and deployment of space military assets to maintain their strategic advantage and counter the capabilities of potential rivals.

Furthermore, neorealism's skeptical critique of liberal institutionalism offers another view of states' behaviors towards the international community. Neither the USA, China, nor Russia has signed an outer space treaty to limit their weapons in space. This indicates that international institutions have little significant influence on states' behavior toward peace. Powerful states can manipulate institutions to pursue their interests, as neorealism argues. Neorealism posits the ineffectiveness of international institutions in mitigating conflicts and promoting cooperation.

Comprehensive Analysis of Geopolitical Strategies in Space Militarization

Today, the world faces various traditional and nontraditional threats. The lust for power has led major states to secure their interests and compete with others using nontraditional tactics, technological advancements, and unconventional methods. China, Russia, and the USA are engaged in a space race and militarization, countering each other with advanced capabilities and tactics. This political adventurism in space poses a major security threat to all nations. Spying and surveillance can lead to misinformation wars, cyber wars, and propaganda wars between states. Despite international efforts to limit the space arms race and malicious activities, major powers continue to increase their destructive weapons in space. International institutions have been ineffective, as powerful entities influence them. Therefore, states need to recognize the complexities of the space arms race and find common ground to address the nontraditional security issues created by the Space Great Game.

Space Arms Race and Great Game of Great Powers

Since technological advancement, humans have made remarkable progress on Earth and beyond. This technology has expanded the frontiers of exploration, increased our knowledge, and augmented our control over various domains. However, the peaceful potential uses of space in cartography, communication, navigation, and exploration have diminished due to military and political adventurism. Humanity now possesses the capabilities to both enhance life on Earth and destroy it entirely (Jasani, 1978).

The concept of a 'great space game' emerged from the strategic and political confrontations among global powers vying for influence over space resources. Initially, the term "great game" referred to the geopolitical struggle in Central Asia. In the 19th century, the term evolved to describe the pursuit of global power and influence due to

shifts in the international structure (Stegen & Kusznir, 2015). "In the context of great powers, nothing is more important in the competition than the attitude of great powers toward the world" (Novo, 2021, para 8).

Today, the world is contesting various traditional and nontraditional threats. The lust for power has led the world's major states to secure their interests and compete with other states using nontraditional tactics, technological advancements, and nonconventional methods (Andrew, 2021).

Among the global powers, China now has a significant impact on geopolitics through the 'great game.' As a major player, China has expanded its power from nuclear capabilities to economic influence, from the depths of the seas to the heights of space and beyond (Atal, 2005). Although China did not initially participate in the space race and geopolitical maneuvering, changes in the international structure have enabled it to emerge as a leading economic powerhouse, challenging Russia and the USA (Stegen & Kusznir, 2015).

Russia has always aspired to see a multipolar world. Since coming to power, Putin has worked to restore Russia to a powerful and dominant position similar to its status during the Cold War. Russia's increasing capabilities in cyber technology, artificial intelligence, and space modernization have positioned it as a significant player alongside China and the USA (Sarfaraz, 2021). Russia has become a key player in space advancement and weaponization, aiming to counter the USA's dominance and challenge it through technology, space operations, data warfare, and surveillance (Edwards, 2003, p.1).

In contrast, the USA is considered a strategically more competent player than in past years, recognizing the ongoing need to be part of the great game (Hulsman, 2021). America is actively working to counter both China and Russia at higher levels. Former President Donald Trump once stated that merely having a presence in space is not enough for America. He also proposed the creation of a Space Force to ensure American dominance in space (Skibba, 2018). This political adventurism and militarization of space by the USA, China, and Russia appear to be driving the global power race into new realms.

Russia, China, USA and Their Space Political Adventurism in Space

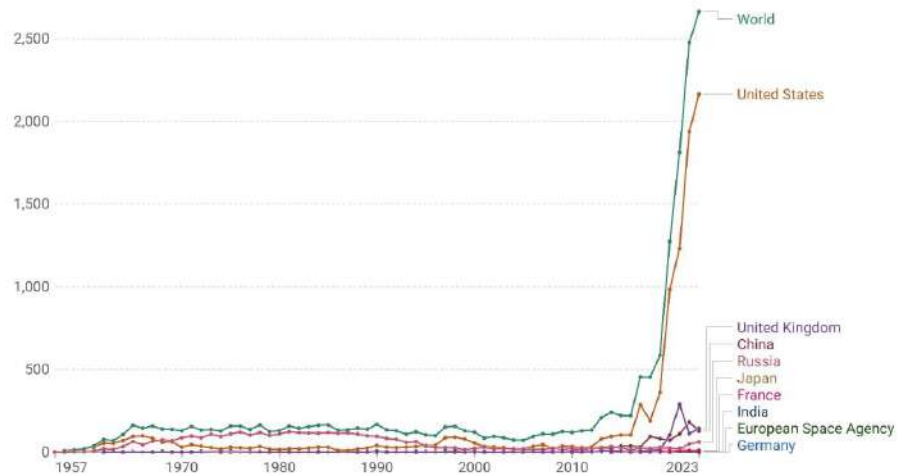
Space competition began between the USA and Russia in 1957 with Moscow's Launch of the world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1. China's emergence as a space power occurred in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Both China and Russia expanded their space military capabilities and integrated counter-space capabilities into their warfighting strategies and national security agendas against the United States (Defence Intelligence Agency, 2022).

China and Russia are trying to end the USA's dominance in space, while the USA is trying to weaponize space to counter China and Russia and maintain its dominance (Warraich, 2022). The USA first tested a nuclear bomb with a series of high-altitude nuclear tests in space, which were known as Fishbowl and Starfish Prime. Starfish prime exploded at an altitude of 250 miles above the height where space orbits are today (Brian Gutierrez, 2021). Russia, China, and the USA have military units specialized in space operations, making space a war-fighting domain. Although these states have developed sophisticated space weapons, such as kinetic and non-kinetic, a conventional war is not expected. The stakes are high as the world has an increased

reliance on connectivity and information, creating new realms of security threats to the world (Wehtje, 2022).

Over the past years, states have vulnerably increased their space budgets (Euroconsult, 2022). The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs has given data for several space objects launched between 2023 and 2024, as shown in Figure 1 below. It has shown that many space objects, satellites, landers, probes, crews, and spacecraft have been launched into space. The USA has launched the most significant number of space objects, more than 2000 objects in a year in outer space. Then comes China and Russia, with less than 500 objects yearly (Our World in Data, 2024).

Figure 1. Annual Number of Objects Launched in Space



Source: United Nations Office for Outerspace Affairs (2024)

The most influential actor in space is the USA. With advanced technology and the world's largest spending budget on space, the USA has become a principal threat to its national security. The United States Space Force has become a sixth branch of its military force, responsible for conducting space military and political operations (United States Space Force, 2022). On the other hand, China is working hard on its massive nuclear program to modernize and to modernize the military. President Xi Jinping described his dream of making China a space power. On Dec 31, 2015, China launched the People's Liberation Army 'Strategic Support Force', SSF. Its purpose was to advance its machinery that revolves around and protects satellites, keep an eye on enemies' operations, and retaliate against them (Warraich, 2022).

The SSF's Network System Department focuses on cyber threats and electronic warfare, while its Space System Department executes space missions. Satellite networks, known as constellations, collaborate to perform various functions. Notably, the Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite constellation managed by the USA Air Force's Delta Eight, providing free global positioning services. This system supports civilian navigation worldwide and aids in optimizing travel routes for ships, among other functions (United States Space Force, 2022).

Russia has a storied history in space exploration, dating back to the Cold War era when the USSR launched its first satellite. In recent years, Russia has sought to

reclaim its prominent position in space affairs, particularly evident in its crucial role in supplying the International Space Station. However, Russia's stance on space arms control appears contradictory, as it supports limitation agreements while militarizing space. The establishment of the Russian Aerospace Forces in 2015 underscores Russia's commitment to safeguarding its space interests (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 2022).

Furthermore, Russia operates its satellite navigation system, Glonass, similar to the USA's GPS, providing navigation services to the Russian military and the global community. Launched in 1982 and declared fully operational in 1993, Glonass operates primarily in low and medium Earth orbits. However, the most strategically significant orbital range lies in the geostationary orbit, approximately 35,000 to 40,000 km above Earth's surface (Dolman, 1999). This orbit hosts critical operations, including telecommunications, television broadcasting, and covert communications. The USA's dominance in this orbit is paramount, with its satellites facilitating early warning systems, secure communication channels, and diplomatic messaging, highlighting the significance of the space domain in geopolitical power dynamics.

Principle Threats of Militarization in Outer Space

The escalating intrusion of political interests into outer space has spawned a multitude of threats. Three categories of weapons wielded in space pose significant dangers. First, anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons, capable of destroying satellites from space, ground, or sea, constitute a grave menace. Second, space strike weapons, including lasers or kinetic weapons, hold the potential for extensive destruction. Lastly, Ballistic Missile Defence systems and hypersonic satellites can neutralize incoming missiles or other objects (Jalil, 2023).

Moreover, spying and surveillance are rampant threats in space. In addition to destructive weaponry, states deploy surveillance and data-spying instruments for political maneuvering. China and Russia can target objects in far-reaching orbits, with China strategically positioning installations closer to US space forces, even operating satellites around US geostationary orbits. Espionage tactics involve decoding information obtained from rival satellites to fuel political propaganda, exemplified by both Chinese and Russian actions against US satellites, reciprocated by the USA in its pursuit of space dominance (Singer, 2008).

Furthermore, states have developed weapons enabling direct hijacking or destruction of enemy satellites for data theft. Russia's progress in satellite hijacking, exemplified by the 2014 launch of Kosmos 2499, dubbed 'Kamikaze,' underscores this trend. American surveillance detected suspicious activity surrounding a Russian satellite, ultimately revealing its espionage function, showcasing a tactic mirrored by China and the USA (Scuitto & Rizzo, 2016).

The proliferation of small satellites, known as Nano and Microsatellites, exacerbates surveillance concerns, as they are challenging to detect (Tellis, 2007, p. 42). Additionally, space debris poses a significant hazard. China's 2007 missile launch that collided with its weather satellite resulting in the creation of 6,000 additional debris pieces, underscores the potential for widespread destruction and serves as a stark warning to rivals (Hughes & Lowe, 2009).

Space Arms' Race: Taming New Realms of Security Issues

Throughout centuries of space exploration, humans have derived numerous societal benefits, as space exploration inherently expands human knowledge. From the inception of space flight, it became evident that space exploration catalyzes basic science and technological advancements. However, the emergence of new challenges has necessitated evolving approaches over time. Governments worldwide have increasingly collaborated to undertake complex space missions, showcasing the power of partnerships in achieving milestones in space exploration.

Nevertheless, the proliferation of space wars among powerful states has disrupted life as we know it. Military experts warn that attacks on satellites could cripple essential systems such as GPS, banking, and power grids, severely impacting military operations and daily life. States appear fixated on advancing technology and exploring space without considering the broader implications for the world and its inhabitants.

A significant concern is electromagnetic radiation, an invisible technology satellites can employ to jam communications between ground stations and other satellites. The USA, China, and Russia routinely jam other countries' links with navigation satellites (Westbrook, 2019).

As technology evolves, so do the tactics and methods of warfare. Conventional wars have become increasingly rare, with the world now facing more critical and complex challenges such as cyber warfare and hybrid warfare. While the notion of a war in outer space may sound like science fiction, it is a reality that we must acknowledge could have devastating consequences at any moment (Johnson-Freese,2007).

Space has the potential to become the battleground of the future, posing threats to data security and political stability. Political data can be compromised in space, significantly impacting political decisions on Earth. The spread of disinformation and political interference between states can profoundly affect people's lives in targeted nations (Lenntech, 2006).

Furthermore, intense satellite collisions can trigger solar flares, resulting in space debris, coronal mass ejections, and dangerous cosmic rays that affect objects in space and pose risks to life on Earth. Thus, the stakes extend beyond political agendas to encompass the very natural environment of our planet (Skibba, 2014).

In the ongoing century, the prospect of a great power war looms, yet it will not manifest with ground-shaking explosions; instead, it may ignite from silent flashes of laser light and bursts of kinetic energy in outer space. States have attained the capability to destroy each other's space assets, a potential outcome of future conflicts. Anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) like those developed by Russia can dismantle satellites in space (Banerjee, 2022).

In recent years, Russia launched a satellite purportedly for weather forecasting, only to later destroy it, leaving debris to surveil American satellites for propaganda and policy insights (Warraich, 2022). Similarly, China has deployed permanent blind spy satellites and developed cyber warfare units in space to manipulate control systems. Its advanced hypersonic Fractional Orbital Bombardment System launched in 2021 involves placing nuclear weapons into low-earth orbit. China's aggressive satellite deployment, with 108 out of 1809 satellites launched in 2021,

includes the development of jammers to augment military reconnaissance platforms for space-based surveillance (Banerjee, 2022).

Moreover, China has been engineering co-orbital satellites to neutralize enemy satellites and microwave space weapons capable of direct Earth-based targeting. In response, the USA, China, and Russia are intensifying efforts to deploy directed energy weapons in space. For instance, China has ground-based lasers aimed at US reconnaissance satellites. Conversely, many US reconnaissance satellites surpass Chinese satellite technology, prompting China's assertive space weaponization as a direct threat to US space operations, given the USA's heavy reliance on its space assets (Desmond, 2007).

To counter China's advancements, the USA has fortified its space dominance with over 270 military satellites and established an Operationally Responsive Space office in Mexico. This office aims to deploy smaller satellites with lower boosters for swift satellite replacement, facilitating data collection in outer space. The USA also enhances its counter-ASAT deterrence and develops next-generation technologies to meet emerging challenges (Easton, 2009).

Space Militarization and the International Legal Framework

The United Nations attempted to establish a legal framework to limit the space arms race to protect space from exploitation due to the political and military adventurism of states. Five major treaties were adopted to govern space activities: 'The Outer Space Treaty, 1967,' 'The Rescue Agreement, 1968,' 'The Liability Convention, 1972,' 'The Registration Convention, 1976,' and 'The Moon Agreement, 1984' (Wehtje, 2022). The Outer Space Treaty is the most significant, signed in 1967 to benefit all nations wishing to explore space (Roberd, 2016). This treaty stipulates those states should not develop military bases, test weapons, or conduct other dangerous space-related activities. It asserts that space is accessible to all nations and encourages cooperation for peaceful exploration. The treaty also regards astronauts as envoys and forms the basis of international space law (Panjwani, 2021). Article IV of the treaty explicitly bans the placement of nuclear weapons in space.

In October 2023, the United Nations held the 17th meeting on disarmament aspects of outer space, where states debated ways to sustain space security and prevent weaponization. The debate presented two approaches to preventing an arms race in space: promoting responsible state behavior toward security issues and negotiating a legally binding framework to limit space militarization (United Nations, 2023).

China's representative supported the notion of a legally binding framework to protect space security, stating that many states are unwilling to negotiate such treaties, causing a stalemate. Russian representatives also favored the legally binding approach, acknowledging the need for confidence-building measures and multilateral agreements. The Russian Federation proposed a resolution to establish a separate four-year working group focused on developing legal instruments to address the risk of conflict (United Nations, 2023).

The representative of the United States emphasized the importance of commitments to ensure responsible state behavior towards conflict. The USA supported creating an open-ended group to regulate state behavior but rejected the idea of a no-first-weapon placement policy in outer space (United Nations, 2023).

Weaknesses of International Treaties and Cooperation to Prevent Space Arms Race

Politics often prevents the formation of unlikely alliances. States have been competing for strategic advantages in space for a long time. However, the likelihood of a large-scale conventional war using space weapons in space or on Earth remains low. Nonetheless, specific threats create long-term security issues for states. If space is framed as a battleground, states will continue to deploy and test weapons in space (Connor, 2020).

The existing legal framework has many shortcomings, failing to limit the arms race in space and counter the potential threats of space warfare. For example, the Outer Space Treaty, established in the 1960s, is outdated. Since then, space weapons, actors, states' capabilities, and the international system have dramatically changed. With advancements in technology and warfare methods, the perception of space has shifted from a realm of exploration, science, and fiction to a critical factor in the political and military ambitions of powerful states.

Another weakness of the Outer Space Treaty is its limitation to weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons, without addressing threats like cyber-attacks, political conflicts, surveillance, micro and nanosatellites, and electronic warfare. Additionally, the dual-use nature of satellites presents ongoing challenges. A satellite claimed for weather forecasting can be a spy satellite used for various malicious purposes, as evidenced by Russia's actions.

International institutions have also been subject to the influence of powerful states. The realist perspective explains how international institutions often work according to the agendas of powerful states. The UN has made declarations on limiting the space arms race. However, neither the USA, China, nor Russia has signed or ratified those treaties, indicating the failure of international institutions to influence major powers. Consequently, international treaties lack legally binding capacities. Moreover, states tend to cooperate only when it aligns with their national interests.

Need for Change

The international system is anarchic, and there is an atmosphere of mistrust. Therefore, when a state chooses to increase its military power, it is either to counter security dilemmas (as Russia and China) or to maintain a status quo of hegemon or superpower (as the USA). The major states will continue to increase their capabilities until and unless there is a proper, legally binding international framework to influence the states or to limit them in specific ways. Even though space is no longer a game field for only major powers, other states are also involved in space activities, understanding the ongoing international culture, opportunities, and needs. If the space race does not stop here, after 30 or 40 years, we will see that space will no longer be for peaceful purposes, and we will all be at the stake of war beyond horizons. States must understand the outcomes of space militarization and political adventurism, and change is needed. States should seek a common ground for a threat that is for all. Even the public must be aware of their governments' *malicious activities* because humans everywhere are against war. Public pressure might bring a change in a state's policy toward wars. There is a lot more to explore in space. Therefore, there should be a peaceful passage for the future.

Conclusion

The concept of the Great Game has evolved with changes in the international structure, as states have reached a point in space where they can destroy the space assets of other countries, affecting future conflicts. Modern developments in space technology, such as satellites, contribute to military, environmental, and communication advancements worldwide. These new challenges have led to new approaches. Over time, governments worldwide have increasingly cooperated on complex space missions, demonstrating the power of partnerships in achieving space accomplishments. Space power has become a political tool for the USA, Russia, and China to maintain hegemony in the multipolar world order. This political adventurism poses potential threats to all nations on Earth. Rather than conventional war, major space powers are steering the world toward nontraditional security issues. The USA can leverage the rise of friendly space agencies and space forces to establish a balance of power in space, while Russia and China's security policies sufficiently protect their space operations. The international legal framework has failed to prevent the space arms race, as treaties like the Outer Space Treaty cannot fully address the threats posed by technological developments in space. International bodies have also failed to influence the behavior of major states due to the anarchic nature of the international system. However, the international system needs a shift in focus. The lack of cooperation in space has led to mistrust, misinterpretations, and a hostile relational environment, which needs to be addressed. States must realize the importance of finding common ground to discuss futuristic and advanced threats. Open discussions among states can provide ideas for standard solutions to space security. As more actors become involved and recognize the importance of space, discussions for solutions need to be more inclusive. If one state demonstrates responsible behavior, it could lead to significant changes in limiting the space arms race.

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Decoding Operational Latitude of Russian Private Military Companies (PMCs): A Case Study of Wagner Group in Syria

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Abstract
The usage of private military companies (PMCs) has remained rampant among significant world powers since the Cold War. Historically, PMCs emerged as small contractors initially but gradually attained multiplicity with distinctive capabilities. The Russian Wagner Group provides multi-dimensional and sophisticated support to the Putin Administration. The Group accounts for an advanced, diplomatic, and target-oriented operational latitude that maneuvers Russian strength in Syria and Ukraine. Russian mercenaries are state-specific, i.e., the use of the Wagner Group in Syria and Ukraine, making it challenging for the opposition to understand the functioning and administration of these companies. By 2019, the Group remained covert yet precarious for its enemies. However, the new advancements suggest that the idea of plausible deniability is now shifting towards overt use and far-reaching proprietorship of the Group as a branch of Russian military interests. The research focuses on the private structure of Wagner Group paving the way for new challenges towards the NATO countries, shifting from conventional military threats from Russia towards overt, opportunist, and task-oriented PMCs.

Keywords
Private Military Companies, Russia, Syria, Ukraine, Sudan, Wagner Group, Operational Latitude, NATO

Introduction
The Russian use of Private Military Companies (PMCs) has a historical development legacy from the soviet period to the contemporary international stage. They work in coherence with the Russian army to materialize the idea of proxy warfare in the Middle

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East, Ukraine, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Sudan. Precisely speaking, Russian mercenaries are state-specific, i.e., the use of the Wagner Group in Syria and Ukraine, and henceforth, it is far more challenging for the opposition, i.e., the US and other NATO countries, to understand the functioning and administration of these companies. The primary purpose of these PMCs is to create strategic deception with wide operational latitude. These companies preferably hire volunteers and retired army personnel, and the financial transactions from the state are made through offshore bank accounts. The Group's organizational framework sheds light on Russia's modus operandi and how PMCs can be used effectively and exclusively to combat any major power. So far, Russia has roughly used eight PMCs, and the Wagner group is the most dynamic and swift of all, paving the way for more technologically advanced competition between the U.S. and Russia in the wake of the Ukraine war and the recent situation in Sudan.

This research study is significant for highlighting Russian interests in the Middle Eastern region, which range from security, strategic, and information to economic gains that PMCs serve. It sheds light on how Russia has re-established its stance and presence in the region with the help of PMCs under the Putin Administration. The study also signifies how Russia uses the operational latitude of Wagner Group to contain its rivals in the region and abroad. This research study will further explore how Russian PMCs play a role in fulfilling Russia's national interests. How does the operational latitude of Wagner Group, i.e., leading Russian PMC, fulfill Russian interests? How can Wagner's operational latitude be analyzed and combated by Russian rivals? How is Wagner Group used covertly and overtly? Lastly, would it shed light on how Wagner Group has transformed paramilitary gains into economic gains in Syria?

The research is descriptive, exploratory, and analytical as it describes and explores the amplified role of PMCs in terms of quality and quantity in Russia. It also details the operational latitude, legal background, emergence, ownership and leadership, training, command and control, financing, recruitment, logistics support, and operations of Wagner Group in Syria and Ukraine. As Østensen (2018), in his article 'Russian Use of Private Military and Security Companies: The Implications for European and Norwegian Security' states that the Russian Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) are becoming relevant due to President Putin's acknowledgment of the use of these companies specifically during the Syrian Civil War. The phenomena of Russian mercenaries are unique as they are robust, ideologically motivated, and less inclined to provide logistical support. Nevertheless, Russian PMCs must be far from being legalized by the Russian Duma in a bid to waive international responsibility for the actions performed by these companies. However, it was observed in the European regions that PMCs are increasing in relevance and becoming more sophisticated as Russia invests in various PMCs, further polarizing the concept and deepening its vagueness.

Sukhankin (2018) states in his article 'Continuing War by Other Means: The Case of Wagner, Russia's Premier PMC in the Middle East' that Russia has endorsed the use of PMCs since the Soviet period as these are pivotal in ongoing proxy wars in the Middle East and its periphery. The covert use of these companies promotes the idea of 'rationality' and thus can be linked with Graham Allison's conceptualization, i.e., 'linking purpose with action.' The intelligence, training, infrastructure, and logistic support are deemed as the 'action,' whereas 'purpose' is rooted in the growing multi-dimensional military spectrum in the region. The ad hoc decision-making from Moscow regarding the creation of Wagner in Syria advocates the fact that these companies are crucial for Russian foreign policy in Syria.

From a holistic perspective, the proxy militias and paramilitary groups in Syria, Libya, and Ukraine by Russia extend influence beyond Russian territory without legally binding the companies with Russia. The covert use of PMCs is crucial in shaping Russian foreign policy for escalation management and regulating the civil war in Syria, as the responsibility for PMCs' action can be easily denied by the Russian Federation. They are preventing Russia from defamation on the international forums and emerging as a cunning enemy against the United States.

PMCs' Role and Implications in International Relations

There is still no clear definition of PMCs; however, literature on private military security suggests the term is used in coherence with private security providers or organizations (Østensen & Bukkvoll, 2018). This theoretically means that the companies are semi-passive security providers, i.e., providing critical support in armed conflicts, operational support, and assistance in military training. These often need clarification regarding the definition of mercenaries in international relations literature. However, a stark difference exists between both, i.e., mercenaries strictly work for private or personal gain and may or may not be associated with a single state. On the contrary, PMCs have a broad array of interests regarding reputation, linkage with a particular state, and public client base. These companies are now regarded as legal and corporate entities, which consist of highly trained and organized soldiers and military personnel acting as intermediaries between the soldiers and the government (Leander, 2005).

The theoretical ground associated with PMCs accounts for advanced military involvement in the region of influence by a particular state. These companies are sophisticated and stretch beyond the reach of conventional military forces, burdening the state's reputation. The scholarly literature also discusses the advantages of PMCs over the conventional military by characteristics such as the ability to deploy rapidly, minimize public outrage over the use of force, and prevent violation of human rights. Lastly, acting efficiently for the states with weak military and armed forces, i.e., PMCs can be a potential counterweight in such a scenario.

Operational Latitude of Wagner Group

Operational Structure of Russian Private Military Companies

The Russian PMCs are broadly conceptualized under the spectrum of 'plausible deniability,' i.e., the arrangement that allows the state to avoid being criminated in *de facto* illegal activities beyond the borders of the Russian Federation, which can be subjected to punishment through international law. As stated in the literature, the Wagner Group provides innovation and employment of military forces, which is starkly different from Western principles (Rondeaux, 2019). Recent developments in 2023 suggest that the Wagner army has spread across Sudan, Ukraine, and Libya, the major hotspots of Russian interest. Henceforth, it is inevitable that the Russian Federation will reorient and re-define the Group, giving up upon plausible deniability to state responsibility and, therefore, will continue to confuse the Western adversaries and NATO countries (Kumar, 2023).

Legal Background of Wagner Group

Wagner Group shows covert and overt linkages with the Russian Federation depending upon the severity of circumstances. Nevertheless, PMCs such as Wagner Group are considered legal through the Russian Duma regardless of backlash from PMC scholars. By March 2018, a bill was submitted to the Russian Federation Duma to legalize PMCs in Russia. The bill was rejected by the Minister of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

and Russian National Guard; however, due to the profitability of PMCs and the fulfillment of Russian interests, the initiative is rendered acceptable and covertly useful (Østensen & Bukkvoll, 2018).

The politicians and scholars in favor of legalization center their argument around the Soviet Union's historical use of PMCs during the Cold War, deeming the notion tried and tested as part of the 'Russian style' of involvement in various regions of the world.

Recently, Wagner Group's interests have exceeded Russian aims as it intervened in Sudan and Libya (Kumar, 2023), which created insecurity for the Russian military. PMC's structure is slowly and gradually becoming autonomous and focusing on company gains as it depletes Sudan with gold reserves. Therefore, the legal structure that initially benefitted Russia should now be reinterpreted to bring the Group under strict Russian control.

Emergence from Slavonic Corps Limited

Slavonic Corps Limited is regarded as the parent company of Wagner Group, registered in 2012. An in-depth analysis of the Slavonic Corps shows the present-day working and operational structure of the Wagner Group (Asgarov, 2021). It was formulated to increase the competitive advantage of the private military industry in Russia in the wake of the post-Cold War era. The corps consisted of retired army personnel and military professionals who had been part of contractor missions in Iran, Afghanistan, the North Caucasus, East Africa, and Tajikistan.

The timing of the formulation of the Slavonic corps is linked with the Civil war in Syria. By 2013, Russia got involved in active 'plausible deniability' by sending quasi-PMCs to fight on behalf of the Russian military, which can be regarded as the first step towards the use of private military in Syria. Back in 2013, the Slavonic Corps battled with anti-Assad forces while keeping close monitoring of areas rich in hydrocarbons (precisely for economic purposes). Under the clause of protecting the processing of hydrocarbons, the Slavonic Corps attained experience of Syrian soil, already battling a civil war. A number of 267 members of the Group were divided into two units consisting of Cossacks and ethnic- Russian mercenaries. The mercenary Group headed by Dmitri Utkin later obtained the name Wagner Group (Sukhankin, 2019).

Ownership and Leadership of Wagner Group

Contractors and business figures typically own PMCs. This is exemplified by the Wagner Group, a Russian entity owned by Yevgeny Prigozhin, known for his involvement in illegal activities such as money laundering and prostitution, for which he has faced legal repercussions in Russia. Prigozhin's close associate, Viktor Zolotov, has held prominent positions within the Russian Security Council since the 1990s, particularly under the Putin Administration. Additionally, the ownership structure of the Wagner Group involves coordination with the Putin Administration and the Olgins Troll Factory, which promotes anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western propaganda through information warfare tactics.

Prigozhin's business interests extend to Syria, where his companies Ev and Propolis have secured agreements to control a significant portion of the country's oil and natural gas resources (Reynolds, 2019). Furthermore, the alliance between EvroPolis and the Wagner Group has enabled them to exert considerable influence over the Syrian economy, mainly through their involvement in the Syrian electrification program, which encompasses the entire nation (Port, 2021). These developments suggest that Russia's

ownership of PMCs in Syria is driven by strategic interests aimed at consolidating military and economic power in the region.

The leadership of the Wagner Group is attributed to Dmitri Utkin, who is known to be a part of the Slavonic Corps and played a vital role in Syria and Ukraine. The second most famous figure, Andrey Troshev, served in the Soviet and Russian Armed Forces during wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya. Since 2016, Troshev has provided training and ensured the interests of war veterans who are a part of PMC's industry. Nevertheless, under the leadership of Troshev, the auto has access to an advanced train, Polygon Polygon (Herd, 2018).

Training of Wagner Corps

The corps training is on an extraordinary training ground, a 'polygon.' The training ground allows the corps to attain expertise in sophisticated rocket launcher systems, guns, and tornado rocket launchers. The training aims to provide Wagner Group with up-to-date means of electronic warfare (E.W.) while coordinating between land and air operations (Marten, 2019). Moreover, partisan and guerilla-type training is also provided by Boris Chikin and Andrey Trosher (Sukhankin, 2019). The courses last about two months but can be decreased depending upon the need and utility of forces. As mentioned, the corps are provided with quality training in the shortest period from Slavonic Corps experience in Ukraine and Syria.

Command and Control System (C2)

As the Private Military industry is based upon extensive duplicate military training, coordination of the 'military path' of Wagner Group is essential. Within the extensive command and control structure, the upper level consists of the Commander-in-Chief and Managing Director, the middle level consists of administrative for the P.S., and the bottom level consists of regular/routine corps. An investigation by Fontanka also reported that the well-organized C2 structure of Wagner mirrors that of the Russian Armed Forces, indirectly showing proximity to the Russian government (Sukhankin, 2018).

Therefore, Wagner Group works like the Russian army and serves the broad military interests of the state in Syria in particular and the Middle East in general. With a firm command and control system in Syria consisting of 5,000 personnel, the structure is expected to double the ratio to 10,000 personnel in a bid to enhance Russian presence and support the Assad regime (Herd, 2018).

Financing of Corps

The Wagner Group theoretically springs from the notion of 'plausible deniability,' which can be hampered if the group's financial structure is clear and transparent. Henceforth, the financial structure must be rendered opaque to maintain the secrecy of how well the corps are equipped or paid. Specific reports suggest that the financing of corps is primarily based on expertise, experience, and successful operations performed by the designated personnel.

Enlightening the undeniable link between the Syrian Government and the Wagner Group, research carried out in 2017 shows that financing of Wagner personnel was regarded as the responsibility of the Syrian government in August 2017. As stated by Wagner Group's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigue, all the transactions of the Wagner Corps are made through hard currency, which is also carried out by contractors and people in business (Russian or Syrian) who can have economic interests associated with specified regions in Syria (Marten, 2019). Henceforth, it is evident that the corps assists businessmen and contractors in accessing the resources in specified regions monitored by

Wagner Group, which gives an utmost advantage to the PMC's growth in Syria for future years.

Recruitment

The recruitment drive of Wagner Group is multi-dimensional and critical in terms of the rise of the PMC's industry, and the notion of secrecy provided the contours of the Syrian Civil War. There are various sources through which recruitments are made, showing direct and indirect linkages between the Russian identity and the armed forces. There can be divided as follows:

Cossacks

The Cossacks have been repeatedly tested in Ukraine in a protest against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych. By attaining successful results and annexation of Crimea by 2017, an offshoot of the Cossack Organization was also found in Syria under the leadership of Roma Zabolotny. However, the Islamic State in Syria denies any such link or presence of Cossack organization, which leads to the fact that Cossacks can be limited or minute to be recognized by the enemy but add to the strategic presence of Russia and understanding of the landscape (Rizzoti, 2019).

War Veterans/ Retired Military Personnel

Russia tends to reorient and re-vitalize its lost legacy on strategic and military grounds by utilizing retired military personnel to command and head its PMCs and Wagner Group. It is usually divided into two factions: the Union of Donbas Volunteers and the Combat Brotherhood. The groups are an instrument of recruitment.

The Volunteer Society for Co-operation with Army Aviation and Navy (DOSAAF)

The cooperation provides extensive and short-term training ideal for Wagner Group, as stated by the Deputy Director of DOSSAF. The cooperation provides expertise in specific weaponry and munitions and guarantees short-term military-style training, which was the reason for becoming a recruitment tool for Wagner Group. Similarly, DOSAAF provides target areas upon which the retired army personnel and Cossacks work. Henceforth, it is a joint effort for recruitment, training, and strategic military planning (Marten, 2019).

Military Commissariats

The military commissariats generally refer to the military department wing that supplies food and equipment to the functioning military. In a bid to supply food to military camps and lumber camps, these personnel are also aware of the military and strategic landscape. In the case of Wagner Group, it is reported that military commissariats in various conflict zones such as Tajikistan, Afghanistan, South Caucasus, and Chechnya were given priority in recruitment regarding know-how regarding military functioning. By 2015, military commissariats had aided around five military operations in Syria and Libya and connected with the Wagner Group (Sukhankin, 2019).

Ethnically Non-Russian Regions

The Russian Private Military culture is inclusive and target-oriented. Henceforth, Wagner Group recruitment includes a broad spectrum of candidates for whom Russian nationality and ethnicity can be compromised. For example, corps belonging to ethnic non-Russian regions such as Crimea have often been used in Syria depending upon operational utility.

Logistical Support

The logistical support of Wagner Group includes air and sea logistical support. The close coordination and support from the Russian government mainly act as a cord and backbone of the operation of the Wagner Group. The air logistical support includes close coordination with military contractors and aviation companies and military presence in spheres of influence for Russia. The military-transportation aviation link strengthened in 2015 between Russia and Syria. A study further explores the Russian ambition and commitment to provide logistical support to the entire Southern Federal District (SFD). The author further explains that the city of Rostov-on-Don in Russia is specially designated to supply soldiers and munitions to Syria through Cham Wings Air Company, showing Russian policies prioritizing the functioning of Wagner (Benaso, 2021). Similar is the case with providing supplements to Ukraine, highlighting Russian interests and commitment to providing aviation support mainly through Platov International Airport.

In terms of sea and naval logistical support, it is stated by Russian Foreign Minister's Department of Non-Proliferation and Armed Control Mikhail Ulyanov that Russia has been aiding naval equipment to Syria since 2013, which is the backbone of PMC's industry in Syria (Ulyanov, 2015). The naval and sea equipment provides not only assistance in radio-electronic warfare equipment but also maneuvers. It manifests Russia's manifold economic interests through Syrian-bound cargos (military and non-military). Examples such as that of the Black Sea Fleet and Landing Ship Kaliningrad (an offshoot of the Baltic Sea Fleet) was a strategic move to transport not only personnel and food but heavy weaponry, military equipment, and tanks under the guise of transporting cargo to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Covert Use of PMCs by Russia

Russia has endorsed the use of PMCs since the Soviet period, as these are pivotal in an ongoing rift in Syria, Ukraine, and Sudan. The covert use of these companies promotes the idea of 'rationality,' which can be linked with Allison's conceptualization, i.e., 'linking purpose with action.' The intelligence, training, infrastructure, and logistic support are deemed as the 'action,' whereas 'purpose' is rooted in the growing multi-dimensional military spectrum in the region. The ad hoc decision-making from Moscow regarding creating the Wagner Group advocates that these companies are crucial for Russian interests. The covert use of PMCs is crucial in shaping Russian foreign policy for escalation management and regulating the civil war in Syria, as the responsibility for PMCs' action can be easily denied by the Russian Federation. They are preventing Russia from defamation on the international forums and emerging as a cunning enemy against the United States and NATO countries (Sukhankin, 2018).

Overt Use of PMCs by Russia: Wagner Presence in Sudan

The recent reports by various media groups shed light on the presence of the Wagner group in Sudan. By February 2023, the E.U. has sanctioned a Wagner group subsidiary, i.e., Meroe Gold, for intervening in Sudanese soil and promoting an anti-state narrative. The Group is also involved in illegal gold mining, depriving the state of essential revenue. Moreover, the E.U. has also documented evidence of human rights violations in Sudan. These developments suggest the Wagner Group is moving far beyond Russian interests and focusing on personal/prosperity-based gains. However, the Wagner group has utilized Russian contacts with the Sudanese company to issue gold mining permits, which leaves less margin for the E.U. to intervene and sanction the Group (Strong, 2022).

By 2022, Prigozhin admitted to creating the Group as he campaigned towards recruiting more troops for the Group. The Group also owns Wagner Centre, which is located in St. Petersburg, Russia. It is the first property ever owned by the Group for training and recruitment. Henceforth, the Wagner group, which remained undercover for almost a decade of its creation, now remains present and seen on Russian soil. It may also allow other parties or private military groups to assist and help, which was not the case previously. The current situation becomes grave for NATO countries as Prigozhin claims that Wagner troops are the best in the world. Similarly, it can also be envisioned and expected that the Russian Federation will remain a covert owner and supporter of the Group. At the same time, it fulfills its ambitions in Libya and Sudan (Sukhankin, 2020).

Power, Profit, and Plausible Denial of Russian PMC: From Paramilitary to Economic Gain

The Syrian Arab Republic is regarded as the hotbed of the Russian Private Military industry; as termed by Vesti-24 (Russia's major information outlet), Wagner Group is working swiftly in the right direction regarding aviation and artillery forces. However, a gradual shift from military and paramilitary operations to specifically extending control over areas rich in hydrocarbons is observed in this regard. As analyzed through the study published in 2018 by Ruslan Leviev (member of the Conflict Intelligence Team Investigation platform), explained by Reynolds (2019) in his study, there was limited or no trace of Islamic State in the Latakia Region. However, only a few anti-Assad militants, yet still, the Wagner Group increased deployment of forces into the region. The shift from military presence to economic gains is regarded as the 'right direction,' which precisely means that the Group followed a path to attain its ulterior motive of economic gain (as already outlined in the Russian foreign policy objectives, i.e., to attain a higher seat in natural gas, oil, and petroleum prices) (Reynolds, 2019). Missions such as Ground Reconnaissance, Baptism by Fire, and Deep Involvement deserve special attention.

The mission Ground Reconnaissance was enacted from September 2015 to early 2016. The operation is regarded as the preliminary task of deploying forces and critical encounters with the anti-Assad forces to provide an entrance to the Wagner Group. After the first mission, Operation Baptism by Fire occurred in December 2016. The operation involves the word 'fire' deduced from innumerable fire shot exchanges with the anti-Assad forces, despite attaining victory in the liberation of Palmyra, i.e., the liberation involved units from Syrian Armed Forces and Russian Forces such as Russian Naval Infantry, Hezbollah, and Wagner Group against Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. The Group's dedication to the mission led to several 32 personnel being killed and the deployment of 1,500-2,000. Baptism by Fire was meant to show full performance to the Syrian Government, increasing trust in the partnership and leading to more contracts. Also, the operation was marked by the use of the best possible munitions and artillery separately from the Syrian government, which invested in the Group after the success of this operation.

The third essential operation, i.e., Deep Involvement, was carried out in February 2018 and can be regarded as contemporary. The operation is named Deep Involvement mainly because it acknowledges the link of the Wagner Group with the paramilitary-style missions aimed at enhancing control of areas rich in hydrocarbons. The Group aims to provide Russia with economic and strategic benefits in oil and natural gas. However, the ongoing Civil war and the presence of militants in zones and areas, which can be a source of monetary benefit to Russian businessmen and the state in general, provide a hindrance to the cause. It can be inferred that the economic interests outweigh the military interests

of the Wagner Group in the contemporary scenario and power politics. Henceforth, the use of the Wagner Group is inevitable, provided the presence of militants and anti-Assad groups.

The Russian Federation also adopted cordial relations with Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir by signing various deals, including establishing a naval base and gold and mineral mining agreements. These deals remained essential as the recent situation unfolded. The Wagner group exploited resources because the deals had already been signed. A significant amount of gold is now smuggled through Wagner Group, as stated by U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in 2020, that Wagner Group and its network are exploiting Sudan's natural resources and using them for personal gain to influence across the globe.' The EU and US imposed sanctions on the Wagner Group, claiming that the Group conducted paramilitary operations, preserved authoritarian regimes, and exploited natural resources. By 2021 and 2022, Wagner Group grew its ties with Sudan-based Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which is fighting against the conventional military of Sudan thereof, carrying on a Civil War in the country already battling the economic and political crisis. Sudan, Libya, Central African Republics, and Mali have also been the hotspots for Wagner to remain intact. Therefore, Russian presence globally cannot be undermined after the recent scenario, which stretches towards the Middle East, Africa, and Ukraine, sourced through Prigozhin's Wagner Group (Barabanov & Ibrahim, 2021).

New Avenues for Russian Proxy Warfare Strategies through Wagner Group

In retrospect, PMCs such as the Wagner Group in Syria have provided Russia with multi-dimensional military scope in the conflict-prone states. The Group is a product of 30 30-year phases of privatization and military modernization by Russia, which has now made state-led corporate armies a reliable phenomenon for Putin's administration. Vladimir Putin utilized many of the military contractors who served in the Soviet period. The contemporary PMCs predate the Putin administration and are expected to outlast this tenure with a new form of hybrid warfare and project-oriented corporate structure. By orchestrating Russian proxy war strategies, PMCs are adding to the economic involvement of Russia in the Middle East by increasing core exports of arms and energy. Around 43 billion dollars of trade is associated with Wagner Group alone to carve out economic linkage with local militias and population. Meanwhile, the undocumented percentage of economic influx moves beyond 64 billion dollars from the Syrian government during re-constructional projects in Aleppo.

The transition from state security to private security, which is government-sponsored, has been part and parcel of Wagner's history since its ancestral Soviet origins. With multiple phases of privatization and modernization, the strategic importance of the PMC industry has increased the Russian deployment of the military, which was the main feature of Yevgeny Primakov's foreign policy during the Cold War till the collapse of the Soviet Union. Special units such as the KGB Development Courses for Officer Personnel training regime have been used in proxy warfare hotspots in states such as Angola and Cuba. KGB provided Russia with connections for private security in the post-Soviet era. Henceforth, the process of strategic vitality of Russian PMCs is slow and gradual, which is the main reason behind the expertise in the PMC industry (Rezvani, 2020).

Conclusion

The operational structure, hiring, financial and recruitment particulars, and logistical structure of Wagner Group show precision and a focused target to provide maximum

support to the Russian Federation. While working covertly, the operations carried out by the Group signify the presence of the PMC's industry and how it is becoming more sophisticated and task-oriented with time. By closely analyzing the operational structure, it can be inferred that the Putin Administration is working closely with the Group, starting with hiring, leadership, agendas, and operations. Henceforth, the Russian Federation is actively using the Group by providing it with pertinent resources while gaining trust, commitment, investments, and contracts from Sudan and Syria. Therefore, as the West expects that Prigozhin's interest may overpower the Russian state's interests, it is less likely to happen, considering how far both parties have benefitted from the two-way relationship. Wagner is moving towards Sudan, Mali, and CAR to internationalize Russian interests and fulfill Putin's wishes.

The notion of 'plausible deniability' is particularly lethal, which can reorient and re-define Putin Administration's stance in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan while denying linkages to 'private contractors' yet specifically using these contractors in counterbalancing US presence in the region. However, the recent gold mining explorations by Wagner in Sudan suggest that complete ownership of Wagner Group's actions also disturbs U.S. and NATO countries as now, the Group has become far-reaching. It declares its linkages with the Putin Administration at a point where the Group is highly potent.

With such advancements in PMC's industry, Russia can emerge as a hegemon mainly because of its high-tech military involvement in Syria, exploitation of resources in Syria and Sudan, political linkages with high officials, and human rights violations that EU sanctions cannot easily tap. Henceforth, the Russian PMC industry is going stronger and sometimes even ahead of the Putin Administration, leading to concerns in the Western bloc.

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Information Operations and Social Media: Case Study of Indian Chronicles and Options for Pakistan

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Abstract
In the era of digital media, states have resorted to social media to pursue several agendas. In this regard, this paper focuses on the pivotal role of Social Media (SM) in the evolving strategies of intelligence, surveillance, and Information Operations (IO). The paper examines various strategies of IO mentioned in US military documents, encompassing Military Deception (MILDEC), Computer Network Operations (CNO), Operations Security (OPSSEC), and Psychological Operations (PsyOps). The paper specifically evaluated the role of SM in PsyOps and coined the term Social Media PsyOps (SMPsyOps). It analyses how the Indian government employed these tactics to conduct IO against Pakistan, unveiled in the Indian Chronicles by EU DisinfoLab. The paper argues that SM has become an open source of intelligence for conducting IO by India and influencing opinions and perceptions of Pakistan in Western capitals. This influence has had a significant impact on Pakistan, and therefore, the paper recommends urgent measures for the government of Pakistan on how to counter the growing Indian network of IO.

Keywords
Social Media, Information Operations, Psychological Operations, Intelligence, Surveillance, Indian Chronicles

Introduction
The advent of Social Media (SM) at the turn of the 21st century has not just revolutionized but fundamentally altered the conduct of communication in a way that the world has not witnessed before. SM sites such as X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and so on have unique features that have exponentially multiplied people's ability to share and consume information and data in the form of videos, pictures, and short statements. These SM sites hold significant relevance when it comes to

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connectivity with the masses and the presence of abundant data and information, making it an ideal ground for Information Operations (IO). Militaries and governments around the world are now realizing the potential of SM for carrying out open-source surveillance and intelligence gathering for IO against adversaries (Fortin et al., 2021).

The Department of Defence characterizes Information Operations (IO) in Joint Publication as "the integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of potential adversaries while protecting our own" (Department of Defense, 2014, p. ix). The definition of IO identifies that any resourceful and actionable information gathered (during military operations) can be utilized in multiple ways against the adversary to gain or maintain a competitive edge (European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, 2020). Information has remained a key component during information operations in the past. Before the extensive use of digital technologies, this information was gathered through physical intelligence networks (Otis, 1991); however, since the advent of SM, the abundance of real-time information has become a component of IO due to the following reasons:

- SM allows a readily available tool to reach the masses. It not only hosts the general public but also important officials holding positions of influence and decision-making powers (Ekwunife, 2020).
- SM also allows cost-free sharing and gathering of exponential real-time information securely and, at times, anonymously, making it an ideal ground for IO (Shallcross, 2017). SM can also act as an extended hand in transiting information from the physical world to the online world.
- SM also complements IO by providing uninterrupted and direct access to information that discloses the perspectives, thoughts, and communications of a wide range of relevant audiences (Theohary, 2015). Likewise, SM can also be used to influence and alter beliefs, perceptions, and understandings.
- IO, through SM, has reduced the time it would take to gather information compared to traditional means. It only takes a second to upload a picture or post a comment on SM (Gery et al., 2017). With further advancements in technology, such as 5G, these actions would become ten to a hundred times faster than 4G (Thales, 2022).

The features mentioned above of SM present a fertile ground for hostile forces to conduct IO. This paper analyses the correlation of IO and SM and investigates the case study of Indian Chronicles to analyze the scope of IO conducted by the Indian government. It studies how the Indian government employed various types of IOs to develop and run fake UN and EU-accredited organizations and how IOs were amplified with the help of SM. The Indian government, for the past 15 years, conducted IO primarily to influence and mold decision-making at the international level against Pakistan. From a security perspective, it is becoming essential for strategists and policymakers to study the influence of SM and its implications for the security of the state. In the end, the paper provides recommendations for the Government of Pakistan to address the growing sophisticated Indian IO campaigns to malign Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This paper employs qualitative research tools by analyzing unclassified U.S. military documents and reports on or related to Information Operations, Psychological Operations, and Military Deception. Other secondary data sources include research

articles, international and national reports by think tanks, media analysis, and foreign office statements to understand the phenomenon of information operations and its relevance to SM.

The paper attempts to dissect information operations and its various types. It highlights how these information operations are increasing depending on SM and why this is the case. The paper explicitly coins SM Psychological Operations (SMPsyOps) and underscores a growing SM propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation trend. It also analyses how disinformation campaigns can pose a significant risk to national security in Pakistan's context and the associated consequences of disinformation campaigns in instigating internal instability and turmoil. In the end, the paper looks into possible options available to Pakistan to counter such large-scale IO campaigns in the future and what possible lessons Pakistan can derive from the launch of such campaigns.

The primary objective is to inform the readers about information operations, associated concepts, and consequences. The second key objective of this research is to assess the role of such IO campaigns, including SM psychological operations, in shaping perceptions and influencing decision-making processes in Pakistan. The third objective is to bring the impact of such IO campaigns into the eyes of government and security officials and magnify the need for a comprehensive security framework to counter Indian acts.

Pillars of Information Operations

The U.S. military has conducted significant research and analysis into IO. In the joint publication 3-13 by the Department of Defense (DoD), IO comprises four pillars: (i) Military Deception (MILDEC), (ii) Computer Network Operations (CNO), (iii) Operations Security (OPSEC), and (iv) Psychological Operations (PsyOps) (Theohary, 2021). The following points highlight the correlation between IO and SM:

- Military deception (MILDEC) employs SM sites to gain an advantage over adversaries and their leaders by misguiding and diverting them into taking detrimental and consequential actions and decisions for a favorable conclusion. (Department of Defense, 2017).
- Computer network operations (CNO) are cyberspace operations conducted through interdependent networks of information technology infrastructures and the available data. These independent networks also include SM and the use of data available on these SM sites. (Paul & Porche, 2017).
- Operations Security (OPSEC) uses SM in a disconnected manner to identify and protect data that could be grouped together to develop a bigger picture (Department of Army Headquarters, 2018).
- Psychological operations (PsyOps) use SM to convey selected information to target the adversary's value system, beliefs, emotions, reasoning, or behavior (Department of Army Headquarters, 2018; McKew, 2019).

While MILDEC, CNO, and OPSEC play a vital role in misleading, collecting, and protecting information on SM, PsyOps is the most critical of IO as it has the additional capacity to sway the opinions and actions of individuals, governments, and groups. As PsyOps reflects a broader range and scope of IO activities to develop a desirable condition and environment, it needs particular attention in the age of SM. The relation between SM and PsyOps is further elaborated below.

Social Media Psychological Operations (SMPsyOps)

Psychological Operations (PsyOps) are utilized in peace and wartime activities (Mabima, 2018). This concept is not new; it is as old as the history of humanity and war (Chin,2019). During Operation Desert Storm and the Vietnam War, printed newspapers, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts were the primary tools of PsyOps used to influence the opinions and emotions of people (Goldstein & Findley, 1996). However, in the digital age, SM platforms have vastly increased the scope and capacity of PsyOps compared to these physical means (Mabima, 2018).

According to the DoD, PsyOps aims to conduct planned operations to convey selected truthful information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and, ultimately, the behavior of their governments, organizations, groups, and individuals (Cowan & Cook, 2018). This definition underscores that the primary objective of PsyOps is to persuade the minds of its target audience (Omand et al., 2012). Today, SM provides an ideal platform for such operations, as the minds that need to be persuaded are readily accessible (Farka & Neumayer, 2020).

Thus, this research introduces the concept of SM Psychological Operations (SMPsyOps). The unique features of SM platforms make them an ideal environment for conducting SMPsyOps. SMPsyOps is supported by numerous research studies and analyses that have been conducted on the correlation between SM and PsyOps. Pakistan recently banned the SM platform X (Twitter) due to intelligence reports (Pakistan Observer, 2024). Similarly, a recent report by researchers at the Stanford Internet Observatory examined 150 removed bot accounts on X (formerly Twitter) and Meta. These accounts employed deceptive tactics to promote pro-Western narratives in the Middle East and Central Asia (Stanford Internet Observatory, 2022). Although the researchers did not attribute these online accounts to any specific entity, officials connected to the case believed they could be linked to the U.S. military (Nakashima, 2022).

SMPsyOps, to promote a desired narrative, has become a routine practice in the age of SM to influence and malign adversarial states. This demonstrates the growing relevance of SM for states and civilian and military leaderships as they increasingly rely on SM to alter people's opinions and behaviors (Mlot, 2013). In addition, the US, Israeli, Russian, and British armed forces have developed a unique bridge that mainly focuses on PsyOps and SM in an attempt to 'master a new kind of warfare' (Flint, 2016, para 3). This indicates that SM and PsyOps are integral to contemporary intelligence and military strategies. The interplay of IO and PsyOps on SM has emerged as an imperative tool to harm the adversary's national security and wage irregular, asymmetric, and hybrid warfare (Mabima, 2018). Such warfare is also quoted as a feature of hybrid warfare, non-contact warfare, 5th-generation warfare, and so on, and is believed to be carried out through proper strategies.

SMPsyOps is further promoted through strategically designed SM campaigns, which use the following methods to achieve their objectives.

- *Propaganda*: SM campaigns propagate an idea or narrative in the minds of its intended targets (Farka & Neumayer, 2020). The propaganda on SM can use truthful information, however, in a manner that is misleading and may include stolen information (Department of Defense, 2014).
- *Misinformation*: Unintentionally sharing false information or fake news on SM without counter-checking the information. Such false information is believed to

be accurate by the intended target under the influence of peers (Acemoğlu et al., 2021).

- *Disinformation*: Unlike misinformation, disinformation intentionally spreads false information (Department of Defense, 2014).

SM becomes the echo chamber for SMPsyOps through propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation. These tactics are propagated by manipulating algorithms using bots and real accounts (Fournier, 2021). An investigation by the BBC revealed that this manipulation involves fake and bot accounts that can create and boost trends within a few hours. Furthermore, the investigation reported that companies offer trending services through bot accounts for approximately USD 200 (Abdulrahman & Subedar, 2018).

This clarifies that Information Operations (IO) employ Military Deception (MILDEC), Computer Network Operations (CNO), Security Operations (SECOPS), Psychological Operations (PsyOps), and SM Psychological Operations (SMPsyOps). These operations utilize information available on SM or use SM to disseminate and amplify desired information and messages to a target audience. They are carried out against adversaries to intentionally damage their reputation among specific audiences. This was demonstrated in the EU DisinfoLab's report 'Indian Chronicles,' which exposed a highly sophisticated disinformation campaign by the Indian government targeting decision-makers primarily in Brussels and Geneva.

Case Study of Indian Chronicles

The Indian government and its security establishment have remained fixated on humiliating, degrading, and maligning Pakistan since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. India has frequently engaged in Information Operations (IO) through various political and diplomatic activities. These IOs not only threaten Pakistan's national security but also create obstacles for Pakistan in achieving its foreign policy objectives.

One example of such an IO, aimed at promoting an anti-Pakistan narrative in Western countries, was revealed in the report "Indian Chronicles" by EU DisinfoLab. This report exposed a network of over 750 fake news sites and more than 550 domain names spanning 119 countries (Alaphilippe et al., 2020). This network included over ten resurrected NGOs accredited by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to reinforce anti-Pakistan propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation. The task of amplifying fake news and propaganda was carried out by Asian News International, a leading news agency in India (Javed, 2021).

Misleading depictions, with covert support from the state, evidently characterized the entire information operation (IO). Conducting such an operation for 15 years would have been impossible without the resources and perseverance afforded by state backing. While Pakistan has frequently pointed out instances of such IO by India, it was first exposed in 2019 by an EU DisinfoLab report titled 'Indian Chronicles' (Alaphilippe et al., 2020). This report uncovered a network of UN-accredited NGOs working in coordination to promote Indian interests while repeatedly criticizing Pakistan. Within the Indian Chronicles case study, various IO tactics could be identified. Military Deception (MILDEC) was employed, as misleading information was disseminated to international decision-making bodies such as the UN and EU and to the audience on SM platforms. The Indian government effectively circulated images and videos depicting fake lobbying, staged demonstrations, and fabricated speeches during press conferences and UN side events orchestrated by fictitious or hijacked NGOs and their members. The report highlighted three informal groups in the European

Parliament, namely the "South Asia Peace Forum," the "Baloch Forum," and "Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan," which actively shared these activities online and staged events in front of the European Parliament to propagate pro-India and anti-Pakistani narratives among the members of Parliament. The impact of these deceptive activities was amplified through repeated posting and sharing on SM platforms, ultimately misleading the target audience away from reality.

Furthermore, Computer Network Operations (CNO) utilized a network comprising over 750 fake media outlets, 550 fake news websites, and associated SM accounts to disseminate misinformation and disinformation among decision-makers within the UN and EU. Notably, Twitter (now X) was observed to trend anti-Pakistan content through bot accounts, influencing a broad audience (Kausar et al., 2021). These online platforms served as honeypots, enticing members of Parliament to engage with and propagate anti-Pakistan content on SM.

Elements of Operations Security (OPSEC) are also apparent. In addition to the tactics outlined in Indian Chronicles, the Indian government employed other strategies to discredit Pakistan. For instance, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and allegations of cross-border terrorism were leveraged to tarnish Pakistan's reputation by disseminating false information linking Pakistan to terrorist funding (Khan, 2021). Moreover, the Balochistan separatist movement was instigated using similar platforms (Khetran, 2017) alongside other incidents. These disparate operations were simultaneously promoted on SM through Indian platforms to achieve a broader objective: influencing and reshaping perceptions of Pakistan in Geneva, Brussels, and other Western capitals.

Psychological Operations (PsyOps) overshadowed these operations as the most crucial factor. As highlighted in the Indian Chronicles report, the primary objective was to propagate an anti-Pakistan narrative in Western capitals by circulating fabricated images and posters depicting violence and atrocities committed by Pakistan against its nationals. These staged protests were then disseminated via SM channels associated with fictitious news agencies to assess the impact of this psychologically manipulative content.

Additionally, the Indian government employed SM Psychological Operations (SMPsyOps) to effectively propagate its anti-Pakistan narrative to Western leaders and the general populace, aiming to influence and manipulate their perceptions. The intention, as revealed in the Indian Chronicles, was to systematically alter international perceptions of Pakistan, ensuring that it is consistently viewed in a negative light. These SMPsyOps, documented by researchers (Hafeez, 2021; Rehman, 2021), were executed to tarnish Pakistan's international standing.

This demonstrates that a detailed and thoroughly planned IO, carried out by the Indian government, was unveiled in the Indian Chronicles. These IOs continued under the nose of Western capitals and on SM due to their anonymity and lack of direct association with the Indian government. The JP 13-3 document stated that the anonymity of cyberspace allows ideal ground for covert information operations, which can be carried out without association (Department of Defense, 2014). If government-sponsored covert IOs are exposed, the government usually denies it.

A similar scenario was witnessed in the case of Indian Chronicles, as the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) denied the claims made by the EU DisinfoLab report, and the MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said that India does not practice disinformation campaigns as it is a responsible democracy (Mohan, 2020, para 2). On this denial, Pakistan reiterated the involvement of the Indian government

in such dubious campaigns. On the issue, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, stressed the notion that the Indian-funded network is manipulating the international system for its nefarious designs (Reuters, 2020). This highlights the urgent need to address the fasting-spreading trend of fake SM campaigns to malign and discredit states. In this regard, Pakistan must take firm and proactive measures to counter this trend.

Countering Information Operations on Social Media

There is no denying that Pakistan has dramatically benefited from SM in terms of connectivity and communication, facilitating strong ties with the global community. However, Pakistan has faltered in constructing a robust counter-narrative against harmful content on SM platforms. Despite urging SM companies to establish local offices for better communication and coordination, Pakistan's influence in overregulating these platforms remains limited due to resistance from these companies.

In contrast, India wields significant influence over SM platforms, giving it an advantage in shaping perceptions and narratives. India has effectively propagated pro-Indian and anti-Pakistani narratives in Western capitals, including the United States, diverting attention from its nefarious activities. Despite the revelations in the EU DisinfoLab report, Pakistan has yet to take concrete steps to identify, address, and counter such malicious agendas.

Effectively countering IO through SM demands a well-conceived and executed strategy involving multiple ministries working in coordination. Unfortunately, the absence of a national-level SM strategy and its implementation remains Pakistan's weakest link, leaving it vulnerable to exploitation by adversaries. To mitigate this vulnerability and counter militarization effectively, Pakistan's decision-makers must prioritize enhancing the security of its weakest link through the following measures:

Diplomatic Efforts

Pakistan must prioritize addressing Indian Information Operations (IO) and disinformation campaigns, such as the Indian Chronicles, in its discussions with Indian counterparts. It should aim to tackle the issue at its root by engaging with the Indian government and related factions, urging them to take action to alienate and cease such IO campaigns, particularly on SM. Pakistan should also contact governments and international institutions mentioned in the Indian Chronicles, urging a joint investigation into the staged activities in their respective cities and meetings. The Pakistani foreign minister should ensure that the topic of Indian IOs and strategies for dealing with them remains on the agenda during diplomatic meetings.

Cooperation with Social Media Companies

The Pakistani government should formally request SM companies to conduct thorough reviews of the authenticity of staged anti-Pakistan protests, especially in Western capitals, and seek their cooperation in removing such content from their platforms. Pakistan should actively engage with SM platforms to address the increasing prevalence of Indian IO campaigns on their sites.

Treating Social Media and Digital Media as Components of National Power

Recognizing the significance of SM and digital media in terms of IO, the Pakistani government should integrate these domains as elements of national power. Pakistan should convene relevant public and private stakeholders to assess and analyze SM and

IO trends, aiming to formulate policies to counter Indian IO campaigns and highlight their weaknesses.

Understanding ABCD of Disinformation

To tackle online propaganda, disinformation, and misinformation, Camille François, Graphika's chief innovation officer, presented a framework titled 'ABC Framework to Address Disinformation'. The framework presents a three-tier framework to identify manipulative actors, deceptive behaviors, and harmful content (François, 2019). Adding another element of D that deals with information distribution can make this framework an effective tool for government agencies and industries to tailor their security approaches by covering these four key vectors (Alaphilippe, 2020).

Nullifying Misinformation and Propaganda Through Social Media

Countering misinformation and propaganda, especially on SM, is essential to preventing falsehoods from gaining traction and evolving into perceived truths (Trottier, 2015). Establishing a dedicated unit within Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to identify and combat anti-Pakistan misinformation and propaganda online is crucial. This specialized team would actively monitor online platforms, promptly respond to false claims, and provide accurate information to debunk misinformation.

Recognizing the influential role of SM as a force multiplier, Pakistan should initiate comprehensive efforts to harness these platforms as tools for empowerment. Instead of merely observing SM dynamics, government officials and the public should be encouraged to engage proactively. By maintaining an active online presence and communication channels, Pakistan can not only debunk false narratives but also foster confidence and trust, particularly during instances of anti-Pakistan trends online. This proactive approach can effectively neutralize misinformation and reinforce Pakistan's narrative on various issues.

Building Counter Narrative

Pakistan should craft its national narrative to combat India's disinformation campaigns effectively. Regular impact assessments of current information practices are crucial for policymakers to grasp the evolving landscape of misinformation. Pakistan should establish a dedicated department, through public-private partnerships, to conduct frequent assessments of anti-Pakistan events and narratives online. The primary objective of this effort would be to construct a robust counter-narrative.

In cases where Indian Information Operations (IO) targets specific segments of Pakistani society, Pakistan needs to ensure that strong rebuttals originate from those particular segments. This approach would not only highlight Pakistan's authentic narrative but also effectively counter misinformation, disinformation, and IO orchestrated by India. By proactively addressing targeted campaigns with tailored responses, Pakistan can reinforce its narrative and mitigate the impact of false information spread by adversaries.

Shared Database of Digital and Physical Fingerprints of Indian IO

The exploitation of SM by India has escalated into a global concern, impacting institutions such as the UN and EU. Therefore, a collaborative effort to establish a shared database encompassing NGOs, news outlets, domain names, and SM presence is imperative. This initiative would enable targeted UN and EU members to recognize and thwart future misinformation campaigns by India. Additionally, it would safeguard

the digital realms of the UN and EU, minimizing susceptibility to Information Operations (IO), mainly Psychological Operations (PsyOps).

By implementing the recommendations above, the government and state institutions can significantly bolster their capacity for managing SM against Indian IO. This proactive approach combats IO on SM and erects a robust defense against such activities. Moreover, it facilitates secure engagement between the government, state institutions, and the public. Furthermore, it educates Western capitals to discern and resist India's anti-Pakistan agendas, preserving the authenticity and integrity of the Indian government.

Conclusion

The development and expansion of SM in the last two decades has had an astounding influence on social, economic, and political life worldwide. It has created a new space for trade wars, political campaigns, information, and military operations. In the 21st century, SM is utilized as a tool of surveillance and intelligence that, in some way, is responsible for undermining the territorial sovereignty and integrity of states. As believed, the findings of the paper prove that the Indian government has been actively exploiting SM, so it has become more of a national security concern to preserve one's security and frame its own IO strategy to counter its adversary. Since there is no unanimous regulatory and security model at the international level to control the flow and distribution of information at social networking sites, states should take precautionary measures and strengthen their digital security to ensure their national narrative and security. To prevent Indian IO, the paper makes essential recommendations for the government of Pakistan to ensure the security of digital space from anti-Pakistan content.

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The Impact of Identity on the Success of Peacekeeping Missions: The Pakistani Perspective

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Abstract
UN peacekeepers face numerous challenges in the regions where they are deployed, often encountering a non-cooperative host population. This study investigates whether sharing an identity characteristic—specifically race, religion, language, gender, or geo-economic background—with the host population could enhance the interactions between peacekeepers and the local populace, thereby increasing the likelihood of mission success. The research seeks to determine whether the UN should consider deploying peacekeeping troops based on these common identity criteria. The data was gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with veteran and trainee peacekeepers. Through extensive thematic analysis, the study produced the following key findings: (i) There is a positive correlation between shared identity characteristics (between peacekeepers and civilians) and the success of peacekeeping missions; (ii) impartiality and the timely provision of humanitarian assistance significantly contribute to building a positive reputation for UN contingents, which can enhance the 'local acceptance' of peacekeeping missions; (c) language training prior to deployment can substantially improve interactions between peacekeepers and the local population.

Keywords
Identity, Psychosocial, Peacekeeping, United Nations

Introduction
UN peacekeeping involves the deployment of multinational troops to war-torn countries to provide security and stability. As a joint international venture, it symbolizes the global community's commitment to upholding human rights and

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protecting humanity at all costs. However, while this symbolism conveys an idealistic image of peacekeeping, the reality of this enterprise is far more complex and technical.

Since many countries contribute troops for such missions, the UN, with the consent of all parties involved, is responsible for coordinating and managing the deployment of contingents from volunteer countries, comprising soldiers from various cultures, religions, and nations. However, this deployment process does not consider the impact that psychosocial similarities between the deployed peacekeepers and the host country population may have on the mission's success. For example, troops from China, Ethiopia, India, and Nepal were stationed in South Sudan when violence broke out in July 2016. They failed to protect civilians, abandoning their posts and not responding to cries for help from aid workers under attack in a hotel close to a UN compound (Aljazeera, 2016). Would the situation have turned out differently had the UN contingent comprised of troops from African nations with close ethnic ties to the South Sudanese? This raises the question of whether the consideration of identity factors for UN troop deployment can prove to be the missing link in peacekeeping success. Or would the consideration of psychosocial factors such as identity in mandate composition subsequently harm the performance of peacekeeping missions?

Since UN failures receive much more media attention than successes, peacekeeping missions are largely under-appreciated for their efforts to end a conflict or rebuild a society emerging from one. In some instances, peacekeepers act contrary to acceptable standards, tarnishing the reputation of the UN. The misconduct of UN peacekeepers in Haiti is a well-known case. Consequently, prejudice exists against UN peacekeepers in a lot of war-torn countries as the host population does not always trust the deployed troops and thus does not cooperate with them.

Therefore, in this research, the main factors to observe appear to be how peacekeepers perceive their role, how much they can empathize with the host population, and how well that empathy can translate into cooperation and communication with the host population. This empathy and sense of solidarity should be amplified if the UN peacekeepers and the host country's population share common identity factors such as race, religion, language, gender, or a similar geo-economic region. This research aims to answer the above questions and recommend the way forward.

Conceptual Framework

Identity is a much-debated concept. While some consider it a biological fact – an unchangeable reality, others argue that it is a fluid concept that changes according to the environment or situation in which the individuals find themselves. Identity has been defined as "[…] the social position that the self not only possesses but also internalizes. Put differently, for each social status that the self has, it also has an identity attached to it" (Cinoğlu & Arikan, 2012, p. 1116). Furthermore, identity can be understood as "[a] social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviors, or (b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential (or (a) and (b) at once)" (Fearon, 1999, p.1). Hence, identity is very much psychological and social, in essence, psychosocial.

Groups and communities, based on identity, provide a sense of social security and belonging to individuals. These social dynamics inform how individuals interact with each other, particularly in multicultural settings. When the same argument is extended to UN Peacekeepers, there is a significant probability that Peacekeepers will

feel a natural kinship with the people they are sent to protect if those people share a common identity characteristic with the Peacekeepers. These characteristics are religion (that influences social norms and practices), race (a sense of shared heritage or common ancestry), gender (understanding needs and issues faced by people of the same gender), language (a common source of communication—that unites people across nations) and Geo-economic status (first-world country vs. third world country).

Furthermore, given the identity factor's challenge to parties in a conflict zone, Social Identity Theory is considered extremely important in the evolving academic exploration of conflicts. According to this theory, humans tend to categorize other human beings into in-groups and out-groups, which permit individuals "to draw on mental constructs that set expectations and guide behavior as they navigate their social interactions" (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011, p. 274). Applying psycho-sociological theories to literature related to peacekeeping is not a new venture. Woodhouse (1998) used psychological concepts to analyze peacekeeping and improve conflict resolution practices, admitting that peacekeeping on the ground is an essentially psychological process requiring great sensitivity to local perceptions and culture Franke (1999, p.1) further encourages such research when he applies Social Identity Theory to identify tensions during peacekeeping. He argues that in any situation, individuals tend to "derive their self-conceptions from a network of 'central life interests' comprising their identities, beliefs, values, and attitudes." Accordingly, current research hypothesizes that identity does impact behavior and perceptions of peacekeepers towards local people and vice versa.

Literature Review

For peacekeeping missions to be successful, interactions between peacekeepers and the host population (civilians) must be positive, where civilians trust uniformed peacekeepers. In contrast, peacekeepers can communicate effectively with and respond sympathetically toward civilians. Hence, in peacekeeping missions, the identity of the peacekeepers and the civilians can either hamper or facilitate the mission's success.

UN Peacekeepers tread a challenging path as they must keep warring parties from engaging in violent clashes and protect civilians who may get caught in such clashes. Progressively, peacekeepers must also 'build' peace in their Area of Responsibility to 'keep' that peace. Hence, the UN can be envisaged as integral to global governance. Aksu believes that the United Nation's role in governance can be understood as the result of the complex interplay between interests and norms in the global arena (Aksu, 2003). While it is undoubtedly the state's interests that define the UN's role in peacekeeping, it cannot be ignored that the UN has its standing principles. As Tsagourias (2006, p. 1) states, "Peacekeeping is based on the trinity of consent, neutrality/impartiality, use of force in self-defense."

Impartiality is considered a cornerstone of peacekeeping by the UN. As soldiers are sent to keep the peace, they are not expected to side with any party in the conflict while carrying out their mandates. However, as Peter (2015) argues, "[…] not only are UN peacekeeping operations mandated 'to side with the government' against interests of other parties; these missions are also staffed by personnel from parties that have vested interests". He maintains that modern peacekeeping missions are mandated to help the governments of host states reacquire control over their territory. In such scenarios, it often remains unclear whether the troops are deployed primarily to uphold the UN peacekeeping mandate or to safeguard the interests of the states contributing to them (Peter, 2015, p. 359). Regional states are increasingly likely to participate in

regional peacekeeping operations because the conflict impacts their security and political interests.

African peacekeeping ventures into other African countries are riddled with the same suspicion. Since the Cold War, peacekeeping contributions from African countries on their home continent have substantially risen. To understand the impetus behind this increase, an exhaustive quantitative analysis of 47 sub-Saharan African states between 1989 and 2001 revealed that while poorer regimes with lower state legitimacy are more likely to engage in regional peacekeeping, repressive regimes are likely to participate in more different peacekeeping missions, specifically to divert international attention away from the ongoing regime's repressiveness (Victor, 2010).

Furthermore, studies suggest a significant mismatch between the doctrine and practice of peacekeeping principles. One analysis argues that trying to be an impartial actor in a peace process while seeking to disarm one of the parties is paradoxical to the role the mission plays (Peter, 2015). This disparity between practice and doctrine resonates with the findings of a report by HIPPO, which admitted that two contrasting schools of thought exist about the peacekeeping principles: one claims that they 'should be upheld.' At the same time, the other argues for necessary adjustment (Sebastián & Gorur, 2018). Contemporary peacekeeping practice requires upgrading these principles and enhancing communication, cooperation, and sympathy with the local population.

The case of UNPROFOR demonstrates that such considerations can prevent horrendous tragedies from occurring, such as those that transpired in Bosnia. As Najimdeen (2020, p. 20) points out, soldiers from the Netherlands still face the regret of such a tragedy:

> Their mandate as a UN peacekeeping force was to maintain peace amongst the warring parties in Bosnia. Still, the action of the Dutch soldiers underpinned their complicity in the Srebrenica genocide. Since 1995, the memory of wearing the Dutch military badge and allowing the Bosnian Serbs led by Ratko Mladic to slaughter Muslim men and boys will remain an undeletable stigma for the Dutch military.

Like impartiality, host-state consent is also critical for the success of peacekeeping missions. Host-state consent is political, granted by its government as official permission for the presence of a peacekeeping force. A study underscores the importance of obtaining host-state consent, arguing that UN missions in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Somalia were 'strained politically and financially' due to the UN intervention on humanitarian grounds without explicit consent. This lack of consent heightened the threat level faced by peacekeepers and added new complexities to their roles and responsibilities (Kiani, 2004, p. 48). Therefore, a host-state's consent can mean the difference between mission success and failure.

Concurrently, the consent of the local populace for peacekeeping missions is just as significant as host-state consent. While local consent is not a peacekeeping principle, recent studies have highlighted the need to consider it. For example, Whalan (2013) analyzes peace operations' effectiveness and legitimacy from the local lens. She discusses the need to look at the effectiveness of UN peace operations through a local level of analysis and emphasizes local cooperation and involvement in making peace operations successful. Le Roy and Malcorra (2009) agree when they point out that "In the past, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping has been hampered by ineffective

communication, often exacerbated by a limited understanding of local culture, the diversity of views in the population, and divisions along ethnic, gender and other lines" (Le Roy & Malcorra, 2009, p. 15). For example, among the issues faced by peacekeepers in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), one was the behavior of American troops lacked any awareness of local cultures and languages and displayed an absence of insight into how these societies functioned (Leone & Reno, 2001).

For this reason, many researchers argue that a diverse cadre of troops, spanning all nationalities, cultures, religions, and ethnicities, be deployed for peacekeeping. The importance of diversity in deployment has been underscored in the Brahimi Report. This review of existing UN peacekeeping policies proposed that for effective and rapid deployment of professional peacekeeping forces led by capable commanders, the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, make a comprehensive list of possible commanders and heads for missions based on a diverse geographic and equal gender distribution (United Nations, 2000). In addition, Bove and Ruggeri explored how diversity in the composition of UN peacekeeping operations impacted the protection of civilians. The authors used fractionalization and polarization indices to determine how diversity impacted the protection of civilians in missions in Africa between 1991 and 2008, showing decreased violence against civilians in missions with increased diversity. Similarly, they state, "Peacekeepers from different nationalities have their hidden cultural approaches and competencies in intercultural communication and the management of multicultural contexts" (Bove & Ruggeri, 2016, p. 686). Hence, the writers suggest that deploying a diverse mix of troops who can work effectively within a multicultural environment may significantly impact the mission's success.

However, some researchers reason that diversity and identity may complicate the mission dynamics further. Particularly in the case of an ethnoreligious conflict, having the wrong mix of troops could end up aggravating it, making the peacekeeping mission a challenging proposition. Many war-torn countries are culturally diverse, and cultural fragmentation in the local population adds to the complications peacekeepers face in forming a trust-based professional relationship with the local people (Bove & Ruggeri, 2016). In conflicts where ethnicity is already a cause for violence and discontent, sending a diverse blend of peacekeepers might make the situation more volatile and the mission drastically ineffective. The Somalian conflict is a good example. Additionally, several things could have been improved at the administrative level of the mission. For example, the US encouraged the UN to name a Turkish General as Commander of the mission but also ensured a command structure in which the US armed forces reported to the deputy commander, who was an American. This effectively meant a dual chain of command for the mission (Myriam & Brule, 2017), which implied that a command-and-control disparity existed amongst the troops along identity lines. The relationship between peacekeepers and the host country is complex, something that contributing countries fully realize. It is in the best interest of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) that a peacekeeping operation ends successfully. To achieve this objective, practical pre-mission peacekeeping training is essential. Agha quotes General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/37 (1995), which highlights that "Peacekeeping training is regarded as a strategic investment that enables UN military,

police, and civilian staff to implement increasingly multifaceted mandates effectively." (Agha, 2023, pp. 132-133) This investment can mean the difference between success and failure in a mission. This is the reason why many developing countries, including Pakistan, lay a strong emphasis on the training of their peacekeeping troops.

From defining the core concept of identity to understanding what factors lead to countries contributing troops to missions, one thing is clear: Modern, successful missions require more profound understanding and cooperation between the locals (civilians and warring parties alike) and the peacekeepers. It is important to note that at the very core of all conflicts is society itself, one that is defined by the psychological association of its members to the values that define it. How the involvement of outside actors influences individuals and, as a group, the society in conflict is based very much on the analysis of the psychological factors that impact it, i.e., psychosocial factors. Though a broad concept and generally limited to the causes of conflicts, identity might be the missing link to unlocking their solutions. However, the above literature emphasizes that identity's impact on peacekeeping missions warrants academic exploration.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study based on phenomenological research. It aims to understand how identity influences the relationship between UN peacekeepers and the host-country population, focusing on the human experience. The outcome of this research is not based on any preconceived notions; instead, it is based on the analysis of the personal (lived) experience of the main subjects of the research, which are the UN peacekeepers. The study focuses on their perceptions of the host populations of the states where they are deployed.

The primary data in this research has been collected through interviews and group discussions with officers trained for peacekeeping missions and veteran peacekeepers with real-life experience with UN peacekeeping missions in various countries. Field data provided by the Peacekeeping Training Department of the Center for International Peace and Stability (National University of Sciences and Technology) has been used as a primary source to guide the thesis.

The secondary data was collected by analyzing the current Troop Selection Policy and Peacekeeping Selection Standards of the United Nations, as well as UN reports and recommendations for improving peacekeeping missions. These have been interpreted to understand how the UN forms mission mandates and determine where room and flexibility exist for change and improvement in this policy. This is supplemented with data from research articles and books relevant to the research subject.

Identity Dynamics in Peacekeeping Missions

The main question that this research aims to explore is whether the bond of a common identity shared between peacekeepers and the host population can impact the success of peacekeeping missions. The answer to this question will determine if the identity factor must be considered an essential element while deploying troops for UN peacekeeping operations. The objective was to uncover any positive or negative link between identity and successful peacekeeping and determine how considering such a link could transform UN peace operations. A detailed thematic analysis of the gathered data (interviews and focus group discussions) has yielded the following results:

Principles of Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping, a joint international effort to promote peace and stability, is guided by three core principles: Impartiality, Consent of the belligerent parties, and Non-use of force and defence of the mandate. The interviews and focus-group discussions with the veteran and in-training peacekeepers highlighted two of these significant principles to the current research: consent of belligerent parties (both local and host-state) and impartiality.

Local Consent and Response to UN Peacekeeping

While peacekeeping operations are widely discussed in literature, there are few academic analyses of their local angle. The veteran and the in-training peacekeepers mentioned local acceptance numerous times and admitted that local consent is essential for peacekeeping missions. They also highlighted that the past behavior of peacekeepers in a mission influences the way locals perceive a peacekeeping operation and how they respond to the peacekeepers. One officer, who had not only served in a mission in West Africa but had also visited multiple missions, revealed that the locals were used to peacekeeping contingents changing every few months. Therefore, they had 'adapted' to the different cultures or identities of the peacekeepers. Conversely, the peacekeepers developed a good rapport with the local inhabitants. (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023). Therefore, locals of countries who are already exposed to frequently changing peacekeeping contingents are not affected by the peacekeepers' diversity in cultures and identities as the locals are already used to it. Another exciting aspect is the perception of the local population on the performance of peacekeeping operations. Many veteran peacekeepers pointed out that locals would only get upset when the mission did not fulfill its mandated tasks or could not provide the humanitarian assistance it was supposed to deliver.

This goes in line with what Tsagourias (2006, p. 477) says about obtaining support at the root level, "If the PKO is responsive to the needs of the local population, addresses their concerns, provides security and humanitarian assistance and protects them from threats efficiently and impartially, this may guarantee support" and may end up affecting the attitude. The in-training peacekeepers were of the view that perceptions of the local population regarding peacekeepers were affected by the geopolitical environment surrounding their conflict. This often made the affected (local) people believe that the UN was not doing enough, even though on-ground, the peacekeepers would be trying to help. A veteran peacekeeper admitted that a local pulse about peacekeepers was generated the moment they were deployed at the area of operation, and he believed that this first impression was necessary for the success of the peacekeeping mission. For another veteran peacekeeper, the 'race' of peacekeepers vis-à-vis the local population was also essential. While sharing his experience, he remarked that although their contingent, being Asian and brown, had generally cordial relations with the local officials and populace, "[…] there were some instances in which UN vehicles (carrying white passengers) were attacked" (IP-5, personal communication, January 2023). The veteran peacekeeper believed that the identity factor was not highlighted even though it existed; addressing this factor had a great potential to serve as a bridge to reduce biases of the locals and enhance mission success. The in-training peacekeepers argued that the UN always took prior consent for deploying troops from all involved parties (including those representing locals), and, therefore, 'local consent' may not be a factor requiring special attention. From this research's viewpoint, although local consent may be embedded in the Peacekeeping missions, the 'local

acceptance' of the population towards the peacekeepers and the mission, in general, remained critical to motivate both sides to cooperate to keep and build peace.

Host-state Consent and Peacekeeping

Belligerent party consent is a vital peacekeeping principle. As discussed above, "before the deployment of […] the peacekeepers, the consent of the belligerent party is obtained by the United Nations" (IP-2, personal communication, December 2023). Najimdeen (2020) also points out that a peacekeeping mission's mandate directly depends on the consent of all involved parties, particularly the state actor. Hence, host-state consent is equally significant, especially for troops of specific countries. As per the analysis of a veteran peacekeeper, the host government's consent requirement ensures that political issues between states are resolved at the government level and do not hinder peacekeeping operations. After having host-state consent for the deployment of troops, what makes a difference to the mission's success on-ground is the soldiers' professionalism. However, a veteran peacekeeper admits that vested interests on the part of certain deployed states, particularly the deployment of African troops into African nations, are increasingly becoming an issue for peacekeeping operations (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023).

For this reason, many regional states are often barred from peacekeeping missions in their geographic proximity, ensuring UN peacekeeping is not used as a 'political tool.' Therefore, the policy aims to protect the credibility of operations (Peter, 2015). While the national identities of deployed peacekeepers can affect the process of obtaining host-state consent for a peacekeeping mission, one of the veteran peacekeepers also pointed out that consent could be obtained gradually, and the UN is mindful of where it sends which troops. He argued that countries will not give consent where they mistrust the peacekeepers' true objectives, and even if they do give consent, it is not permanent. It can be revoked anytime (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023). This is where the impartiality of the deployed troops becomes equally essential to the mission.

Impartiality

Impartiality is essential to successful peacekeeping missions and is highlighted by the in-training and veteran peacekeepers. A veteran peacekeeper proposed that host governments negotiate peace treaties with all parties to the conflict before deploying peacekeepers. Without such agreements, the peacekeeping mission cannot be impartial, as it [will appear to be] siding with the host government against the rebels. (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023). Sebastian and Gorur (2018) conferred something similar when they argued that mandates openly strengthen the state's authority, contest the mission's impartiality, and damage its legitimacy in front of the other parties in the conflict. Surprisingly, according to the interviewed peacekeepers, host-state consent depends on how impartial the peacekeepers were. The in-training peacekeepers suggested that deploying troops based on identity would affect impartiality, negatively impacting the mission's success. However, a veteran peacekeeper who served in Bosnia believed that sharing a common identity allows local people to become more comfortable with the deployed peacekeepers. Nevertheless, it could be manipulated to show weak impartiality on the part of the peacekeepers, which would then pose a challenge to the mission (IP-3, personal communication, December 2023). The peacekeeper recounted an incident where a Muslim civilian asked a Muslim peacekeeper for assistance, and the peacekeeper, following his duty, gave the required supplies. However, this was misconstrued by the mission administration as evidence of

partiality in conduct. Even though the peacekeeper had only followed the mandate, such an occurrence naturally caused other civilians to doubt the impartiality of the peacekeepers, which then posed a challenge to the mission. Therefore, considering the 'identity aspect' in troop deployment poses challenges to impartiality.

Humanity

Interaction with peacekeepers brought another critical aspect to notice, which was more related to the beliefs of peacekeepers themselves. When asked what common identity would be preferable for a peacekeeping mission deployment, two in-training peacekeepers from different nationalities responded that their preferred mission deployment would be the one where protection of human rights was the primary goal. A veteran peacekeeper agreed that humanitarian assistance was essential in a mission area. Another peacekeeper who served in Cyprus as recently as 2020 said that even beyond being Muslim, seeing the Turkish Cypriot community suffering, seeing humanity suffering was extremely difficult (IP-4, personal communication, January 2023). A peacekeeper who had served in Bosnia also agreed; he believed that humanity came first while it was natural to feel inclined towards people of a shared identity. In his view, if a local came to ask for help, the peacekeeper would solve the trouble first and ask for their identity later (IP-3, personal communication, December 2023). Yamin (2017) conducted a survey where none of the veteran Pakistani peacekeepers cited pay as the top motivation. The uppermost choices were a sense of duty, loyalty to the country, and serving humanity. As one of the peacekeepers remarked, "We are there to serve and protect humanity. As long as we are fulfilling this mission, I believe we are performing our job." (IP-2, personal communication, December 2023). Therefore, as per the experience of interviewed peacekeepers and the perceptions of others, humanity comes before identity, which ensures the impartiality of a peacekeeping mission.

Peacekeeping Identity, Training, and Professionalism

Both veteran and in-training peacekeepers agreed that pre-deployment training was essential for peacekeepers. A veteran peacekeeper argued that more than identity, the mission's success depended on how well the soldiers were trained and prepared for a mission. Professional and properly trained peacekeepers were more likely to find solutions to problems in the mission area that were acceptable to all parties. One of the veteran peacekeepers suggested that to ensure peace in a mission area, peacekeepers must look for win-win solutions to the problems with the locals, which was why professional competence was vital for mission success. An example of this professionalism exhibited by peacekeepers was quoted by a veteran peacekeeper who had worked in Cyprus. She revealed that the Greek and Turkish Cypriots were very accepting of each other while working on the mission and displayed a very professional attitude towards one another and other peacekeepers (IP-4, personal communication, January 2023).

Another veteran peacekeeper opined that appropriate training was mandatory before countries could deploy troops for peacekeeping; this included awareness training for two weeks after the peacekeepers reached the mission area. Building on this, a veteran peacekeeper suggested that instead of sending peacekeepers belonging to the same identity, the troops must be given detailed cultural and religious training to respect locals of different religions and cultures. Some in-training peacekeepers believed that cultural awareness training was unnecessary because peacekeepers were going for their

jobs. If the UN were to introduce detailed cultural training, then the cost would be extremely high.

The Role of Language in Peacekeeping

Language plays a crucial role in effective peacekeeping. Veteran peacekeepers emphasized that language courses before deployment are essential while in-training peacekeepers agreed that language is fundamental to overcoming communication barriers. However, some in-training peacekeepers expressed concerns that deploying peacekeepers based solely on language might lead to mistrust from warring parties or locals, potentially undermining their impartiality. This reflects the necessity for the UN to deploy contingents from diverse countries to address various aspects of peacekeeping missions effectively. Additionally, while language is an important factor, the interviewed peacekeepers also highlighted that the gender of peacekeepers is equally significant in influencing peacekeeping operations.

Gender and Peacekeeping

Gender adds a unique perspective and attitude to peacekeeping. A group of in-training female peacekeepers who believed they could understand things and connect with the victims of conflict better than their male colleagues were interviewed. In their view, local women would feel more comfortable sharing their problems with a female peacekeeper, who would be able to comprehend their trauma in a better way and help them through it. The UN started sending Female Engagement Teams (FETs) because they realized that female victims would be more comfortable talking about their issues with female peacekeepers and that female peacekeepers would be more empathetic towards the local female community. This was evident because the UN was open to amending its deployment policies and improving the probability of the peacekeeping operation's success. The veteran and in-training peacekeepers highlighted that Pakistan was the first country to send a FET and the first to achieve the UN gender quota in peacekeeping deployments. These FETs could provide a treasure trove of information on how a gender-balanced (gender also being an identity) peacekeeping mission could positively influence a conflict-ridden society and increase the chances of an operation's success.

Obstacles in Peacekeeping Missions

Most interviewed peacekeepers, both in-training and veteran, admitted that UN peacekeeping missions do not have many success stories, negatively affecting the UN's image. One veteran peacekeeper was of the view that states with vested interests and other agendas do send their peacekeeping troops to war-torn countries, and this was an issue that could not be mitigated as there were substantial financial benefits attached to the peacekeeping missions. Some veteran peacekeepers also believed that first-world countries deploy peacekeeping missions in selected countries to serve specific national interests. Therefore, the very purpose of peacekeeping fails, and the presence of peacekeepers paradoxically decreases the chances of building peace. One of the veteran peacekeepers pointed out that peacekeeping troops in modern multidimensional missions were not adequately trained for public dealing and needed to learn how to negotiate with the locals and warring parties.

Problematic compositions of peacekeeping contingents have emphasized the need to tackle another critical obstacle to peacekeeping missions: local mistrust of deployed peacekeepers. A deployed contingent from a country suspected of intervening in the host country's internal affairs often faces backlash and public mistrust due to their

alleged political interference. A veteran peacekeeper stressed that this mistrust has such a damaging effect on the mission that it leads to a drawdown of troops. For example, the participation of Chadian soldiers in the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) had been a highly contested issue due to Chad's alleged backing of the Muslim rebel group Seleka. This group was responsible for overthrowing the CAR government at the time (Peter, 2015).

Veteran peacekeepers also pointed out the dichotomy between first-world and third-world representation, arguing that the former were usually the ones in the position of authority for a peacekeeping mission. While the first world controlled administrative roles in the mission headquarters, the third-world countries contributed troops to the missions. In essence, the first-world countries had outsourced peacekeeping to the third world. Since these significant powers controlled these organizations, there would not be any positive change in how the organizations were run; the interests of substantial powers mattered more than the change. The First World also uses the influence of its financial contributions to the UN. The in-training peacekeepers were of a similar view as they believed that local acceptance would not be there for troops from countries with which the locals share a colonial past, and such missions would, therefore, be less effective. One of the veterans highlighted another exciting aspect. According to him, the background of peacekeeping troops mattered. He believed peacekeepers from underdeveloped/developing countries would better understand the issues and problems faced by the locals in the underdeveloped countries where they were deployed.

UN Peacekeeping Troop Deployment

A veteran peacekeeper revealed that countries willing to contribute with troops or funds respond immediately when the UN announces a peacekeeping mission. The in-training peacekeepers added that state interests determine the contribution level to a mission. Another veteran peacekeeper expressed that the UN did take identity into account, particularly in ethno-religious cases; however, most troops were deployed based on the availability and willingness of countries to contribute. In-training and veteran peacekeepers highlighted that a peacekeeping mission should include multiple contingents with a good blend of different countries. They believed that diversity in deployments inculcates respect for diversity among peacekeepers themselves. One in-training peacekeeper believed that neutral parties or a blend of countries in peacekeeping contingents were also necessary to avoid identity being used to prolong conflicts to serve the interests of contributing states.

Therefore, it was evident that the UN should be mindful of political, normative, and cultural sensitivities when sending multiple contingents to avoid problems arising amongst its deployed peacekeepers. A veteran peacekeeper proposed that for more effective peacekeeping, the UN should deploy peacekeepers belonging to the same region of the country in suffering.

Peter (2015) highlights the growing trend of deploying regional actors in peacekeeping operations due to the intertwined nature of regional conflicts. Given their direct stake in the region's stability, these actors are often more willing to engage in high-risk situations.

Identity and its Impact on Peacekeeping

Some of the interviewed peacekeepers believed that the impact of identity varied on an area-to-area basis. The in-training peacekeepers argued that identity as a deployment criterion may increase the chances of a conflict getting prolonged and may also lead to the development of a bias on the part of the peacekeepers. However, most veteran

peacekeepers with real-life experience in the field believed that a peacekeeper sharing a similar identity helped the mission because it made peacekeepers more approachable.

Respondent IP-1 (personal communication, December 2023) opined that "Nigeria, Rwanda, and other Central and South African countries were more effective than non-regional countries in peacekeeping operations because they possessed a deeper understanding of the local cultures, traditions, and tribal dynamics" (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023). As per the respondent's experience, a peacekeeping contingent from a similar region and culture benefitted the mission because these contingents were more cohesive and well-coordinated (IP-1, personal communication, December 2023). However, IP-2 (Personal communication, December 2023) argued that duty outweighed identity, emphasizing that impartiality is a fundamental principle of peacekeeping. According to this perspective, peacekeepers are there to uphold and protect humanity, regardless of shared identity characteristics. Similarly, another respondent who had served in Bosnia acknowledged that sharing a similar identity with the local population fostered a sense of trust. This shared identity made the people feel they could expect sympathy from the peacekeepers and share their problems more openly.

Furthermore, the data revealed that discrimination based on identity was evident in the administration of peacekeeping missions, particularly within the command structure. The treatment of peacekeepers often varied significantly depending on their background. This issue was highlighted by an incident where Pakistani troops suffered losses because a European contingent refused to proceed due to the lack of proper equipment. This incident, highlighted by a veteran peacekeeper, underscores that identity played a significant role in the mission, particularly at the administrative level. However, the same veteran peacekeeper also argued that while identity issues existed, they would not necessarily undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

Other veteran peacekeepers asserted that identity did not pose a significant issue, as mission objectives were paramount and outweighed any identity-based biases. In some cases, the effectiveness of a peacekeeping mission depends on the nature and context of the conflict. For instance, despite the clear identity lines within the conflict, identity was not a concern for the mission's success in Cyprus. The professionalism of the peacekeepers and the fact that the conflict was inactive ensured that identity did not become an impediment. Therefore, addressing racial differences and biases is essential to enhance the likelihood of a peacekeeping mission's success.

Conclusion

Conclusively, this research revealed that while identity impacted the perceptions of the peacekeepers and locals, it had far more potential to be a source of good for the mission rather than harm. Language was highlighted as crucial for positive interactions with the locals. In addition, cultural awareness courses and a globally integrated training regime for peacekeepers were also deemed essential for the success of peacekeeping missions. Both things prepared peacekeepers for their mission and its specific requirements. Ultimately, it came down to the professionalism of the peacekeeping troops, their commitment to upholding the principles of peacekeeping, and their sense of duty in fulfilling the mission objectives. The locals will be more comfortable with troops despite their diverse identities if the troops provide the required humanitarian assistance, are reputed to be professional, and maintain impartiality. Impartiality is the most critical peacekeeping principle, mainly because it ensures that bias and prejudice

do not affect peacekeepers' behavior in a mission area, which helps fuel local acceptance of the mission and its objectives.

Despite religion being a core cause of conflict in many parts of the world, religious differences do not create conflict between peacekeepers and locals. The UN was very much cognizant of ethnoreligious sensitivities while deploying peacekeepers. Regarding deployment, the current policy of multiple contingents from diverse countries was the best way to ensure a balance of identities in the mission area. Diversity in deployed contingents has already been quantitively proven in the literature to be more beneficial to missions. The only problems that occur in diverse contingents are administrative. The fact that decision-making power often rests in the hands of people from the first world, is symbolic of the racial and geo-economic segregation at the UN administrative level. This fuels alienation in the locals and contingents from third-world countries towards Europeans and first-world contingents. Therefore, it would be more accurate to state that identity, a multi-faceted concept, also impacts peacekeeping. The link between peacekeeping and identity is an overall positive one. It is this positivity that research needs to focus on so that peacekeepers in the field can increase their chances of successfully carrying out the mission mandate.

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Organizational Culture and Big-Data: Building Civil-Military Collaboration During Disaster Management Operations in Pakistan

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Introduction

Disasters, as acts of natural chaos, create an imbalance that results in complexity for disaster management teams. They necessitate swift decision-making and resource management, with predictive analysis playing a crucial and irreplaceable role. This underscores the importance of preparedness and planning in disaster management operations, which require a high level of coordination among various government departments, each with its own organizational culture. The response and recovery mechanisms of most nations rely on the collaboration between civil and military institutions. Collaboration necessitates multi-directional resources to meet the challenges of disasters that a single organization cannot mitigate. This leads civil-military leadership and administration to use a collective space in a complex situation involving high decision-making standards. Thus, a mechanism is needed to improve ST (Swift Trust) amongst collaborators with a divergent organizational culture.

Scholars have enumerated various conditions and combinations necessary for collaborative performance (CP). Currently, CP is measured by scholars using different pathways, including institutional designs, incentives, and Big-Data analysis capability, as all these pathways tend to create an ST among organizations with divergent cultures. Different scholarly models present various viewpoints on collaborations, yet all seek to present conditions necessary for attaining CP (Douglas et al., 2020). Collaboration and coordination are the two terms most often interrelated. Coordination can be sharing data, plans, and situational awareness to achieve collaboration, which means working together to create something new (Dubey et al., 2019). Collaborations during national disasters are non-profit and usually hastily formed to react to the chaos. The significance of the created collaboration and the incentives each organization intends to bring into the project is empirically termed collaborative paradox. This paradox is affected by a mix of influences that generate the necessary impetus to get started with

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the project, and understanding it is crucial in managing the challenges of collaboration in disaster management.

Due to the high level of unpredictability and uncertainty, disaster management has attracted much attention among various disciplines for the importance of timely use of information for decision-making in disaster management. Gupta and colleagues (2019) argued that the maximum resources allocated for disaster management are wasted due to poor coordination because there is no platform for Big-Data analysis. Thus, the professional relationship between the organizations becomes adverse. To bring the temporary partners together in the initial stage of collaboration is a challenge, as is efficiently gathering, processing, analyzing, and disseminating relevant and timely information.

Furthermore, interdependence and the substantial perception of uncertainty about the collaborator's organizational behavior need ST to be formulated in the earliest phases (Schiffling et al., 2020; Qian et al., 2020). Big-Data analysis is needed in today's IT-centric operation environment to create ST and a control process throughout the collaborative tenure. The objective of the paper is to present a literature review for an organizational culture-based model where two divergent organizational cultures formed the ST for collaboration during disaster management operations.

Collaborative Dynamics in Disaster Management Operations

The recent research published in AMJ by Slade et al. (2020) suggested future research on collaborators with formal and informal organizational culture in a contextual environment where formal culture organization has a more salient role in the collaboration. More so, (Prakash et al., 2020) presented complexity theory as a potential research area to study disaster management. Nevertheless, few studies have been conducted on chaos, complexity theory, and CP.

Underpinning Theory

R.D. Stacey, the guru for chaos and complexity theory, used this theory to present practical insight and strategic planning to organizational management with an approach to avoid complacency. To elaborate on Stacey`s stance, Ortegón-Monroy (2003) discussed Chaos and complexity Theory to ascribe a paradoxical role to the managers in a framework to think and develop their responses. Features like unpredictability and non-linearity, mutual interaction and dependence, self-organization, and co-evolution characterize chaos and complexity.

According to Klijn (2008), the concept of self-organization can also be found in CP. This means that actors can share specific frameworks of action for interaction, collaboration, and goal achievement and how different decision-making processes influence each other.

Complexity theory analyzes the multiple layers of the system with separate analysis and a methodological framework that describes the interplay between these different layers, that is, co-evolution. Mbengue et al. (2018) concluded that defining such systems has created complexity theory, which collects and analyzes data at different collaborators levels and becomes a practical discipline for mixed methods research.

Swift Trust Among Collaborators

McLaren and Loosemore (2019, p. 981) defined ST as "a unique form of collective perception and relating capable of managing issues of vulnerability, uncertainty, risk, and expectations." Hastily formed networks may not have time to develop and maintain

trust through the traditional activities of familiarity, shared experience, and fulfilled promises. Instead, hastily formed networks, such as humanitarian relief operations, must formulate trusting relationships quickly, a concept termed ST. ST has also been considered in the context of unexpected and dangerous situations, for example, terrorist attacks, avalanches, explosive fires, or mass casualties in road traffic accidents, as those first on the scene in these instances are often strangers who have never worked together before (Schiffling et al., 2020)

Organizational Culture — (Formal & informal)

According to Dubey et al. (2019), organizational culture is a collection of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs reflected in its practices and goals and helps its members understand the organizational functions. Dubey, Gunasekaran, and Papadopoulos (2019) further argue that organizational culture affects how the firm responds to external events and makes strategic choices. Formal institutions are rules readily observable regarding positions, such as authority or ownership. Whereas formal institutions define the 'normative system designed by management' or a 'blueprint for behavior,' informal institutions define the actual behavior of players (Wang et al., 2018).

Mbengue et al. (2018) explained that collaborators also face problems of predominant hierarchies, which create a strong culture of thinking hierarchically, whereas the problems are primarily horizontal. The same is reflected during a crisis wherein management does away with authoritative or competitive strategies before finally turning to collaboration. There is thus a need to find a mechanism to improve ST amongst such collaborators who have a divergent organizational culture.

Big-Data Analysis

During collaborations, decision-making officials must manage conflicting sensitivities and interests and eliminate hostile positions and arguments for resources and information, transforming organizational goals into collective goals. An effective decision-making process requires an adequate environment to harmonize the subjectivities, uncertainty, and inaccuracy that are always present (Mbengue et al., 2018).

Using Big-Data analysis in an organization increases the ST and CP of the employees, along with improving management. (Dubey, et al., 2019).The impact of Big-Data analytic capabilities on organizational culture will further enhance ST's value in civil-military disaster management organizations (Kerdpitak et al., 2019). However, a holistic organizational culture is also a prerequisite to acquiring benefits from Big Data Analytics (BDA). Akter and Wamba (2019) argue that BDA provides all possible solutions to understand any disaster-related issues, while the results from the analysis may assist in optimally deploying the limited resources.

Analysis of Chaos and Complexity in Disaster Management

Chaos and complexity theory demonstrate that a sudden or non-linear change in the system can produce unexpected results for management and administration. Its main features include explaining 'butterfly/puller' sensitivity, mutual interaction, and dependence under non-linear and unpredictable problems (Ozturk et al., 2017). The present study attempts to apply chaos and complexity theory to the study of CP.

To achieve such mutually congruent objectives, military and civilian actors have to be able to form temporarily viable structures that support or enhance inter-organizational cooperation. Such civil-military structures are, though, extremely

complex, with the complexity being induced by, inter alia, the different tasks that need to be performed, differing degrees of time pressure and levels of interdependency between civilian and military co-workers; the non-routine nature of the tasks and their perceived importance; the dynamic context; differing operating cultures, views on leadership, and decision-making processes; and the amount of autonomy available at an operational level (Tatham & Rietjens, 2016).

The management involved in disaster control operations faces the complexity created by the chaos, which is non-linear. Complex problems require an approach that can play around rather than fight against the non-linear attributes of the issue. Joosse and Teisman (2020) presented complexification in management by arguing that complexity is somewhat the management gets actively involved in order to manage complex issues, wherein they do not involve policies as a process of change but rather adopt an interpersonal process of increasing trust and awareness within the newly formed teams. Given the growing attention in management studies on collaborative governance networks and complex service delivery, some of the ideas from complexity theories seem to be very pertinent. For example, the concept of dynamics offers a different perspective on the decision and interaction patterns in governance networks. Also, it generates insights into how complex integrated service delivery can be governed (Klijn, 2008).

Chaos theory has long been affiliated with applied sciences and mathematical equations. According to Begun (1994), researchers studying organizational studies mainly explain and deal with simple and balanced systems, whereas the practitioners, on the other hand, who are the administration officials, are usually committed to complex and chaotic situations. While disaster management operations revolve around civil-military collaboration, it is imperative to highlight that the politics of these relations are as prehistoric as Roman and Greek and are still contemporary (Feaver, 2017).

Therefore, the development of ST among civil-military collaborators in the initial stages is a requirement that is expected to be less in countries where the military has a more influential character and societal prominence (Kalkman et al., 2019). Pakistan is also a country where civil-military collaboration has much apparent cultural friction. However, recent pandemics of COVID and Locust attacks were well handled by NDMA using joint operations. The apparent reason seems to be the information sharing and predictive analysis using BDA.

Prospective Research Avenues

NCOC & NLCC presented a viable working relationship model for civil and military organizations in Pakistan collaborating at the NDMA platform. Systematic Literature Review of Dubey et al. (2019), Prakash et al. (2020), Gupta et al. (2019), Akter and Wamba (2019), Gazley et al. (2020), Modgil et al. (2020), Kamble and Gunasekaran (2020) also present avenues in research to deliberate upon the moderating role of BDA and on the relationship of ST and CP during disaster management in both Formal and informal Organizational culture.

Conclusion

This study presents the inter-relational effect of BDA and ST on CP during disaster management through chaos and complexity theory for both Formal and informal Organizational cultures. The mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between ST and CP and the moderating effect of BDA on the relationship

between ST, organizational culture, and CP is presented in the resource of disaster management. This study shall also present to policymakers and administration officials the importance of Big-Data analysis capability for collaboration. It shall also highlight the importance of creating an ST for the military and civil leadership to achieve the desired collaboration results.

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Assessing the Inaction of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in Myanmar and Gaza

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Introduction

Over the last few decades, the international community has witnessed severe human rights violations, notably the Rwanda Genocide of 1994 and the mass atrocities during the breakup of Yugoslavia. These incidents highlighted the global community's inability to prevent or halt such crimes. Significant efforts have been made to develop doctrines and policies to protect human lives and minimize suffering during conflicts in response to these failures. One such effort is the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) concept, first coined by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) 20 years ago. In 2005, the UN member states adopted the World Summit Outcome Document (WSOD) by consensus, establishing the responsibility of states and the international community to protect individuals under Paragraphs 138 and 139 (UN General Assembly, 2005). One of the doctrine's essential aspects is to protect the population from internationally recognized atrocity crimes such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Its full representation can be summarized in three pillars:

Pillars and Effectiveness of the R2P Framework

The R2P framework is structured around three fundamental pillars, each outlining specific responsibilities and actions to address mass atrocities. These pillars collectively define the obligations of states and the international community to prevent and respond to grave human rights violations.

1. *State's Responsibility to Protect:* States are primarily responsible for safeguarding their populations from mass atrocities, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.
2. *International Assistance and Capacity-Building:* The international community is responsible for helping states fulfill their protective roles through aid, diplomacy, and support.

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3. *International Responsibility to Protect*: Assuming a state is unable or unwilling to protect its population, the international community has a duty to intervene by employing a range of measures (peaceful or coercive) to prevent mass atrocities.

Despite its widespread recognition as a framework for preventing such atrocities, a gap persists in its practical implementation within conflict zones. This can be seen in the historical chain of mass atrocities committed in cases like Myanmar and Gaza. Such cases raise a question on the effectiveness of the doctrine that despite meeting the threshold of atrocity crimes and genocidal violence, the international community is still unable to take any action. The non-invocation of the R2P, despite the clear cases of atrocity crimes in Myanmar and Gaza, underscores the importance of analyzing its effectiveness in preventing such atrocities. This research aims to highlight the importance of Myanmar and Gaza as solid cases for R2P and to provide a bird's eye view of the reasons behind the non-application of the framework in these contexts.

Case Study of Myanmar: An Examination of Atrocity Crimes and International Response

Myanmar has become a noteworthy example of the international community's unwillingness to invoke the R2P doctrine. The inability of the world to control the situation in Myanmar over the past ten years has led to several instances of atrocity crimes and genocidal violence against the Rohingya (Mennecke & Stensrud, 2021).

The roots of the Rohingya crisis date back to ethnic tensions created in the region. Myanmar has a population of 54 million and officially recognizes dozens of ethnic groups—but not the Rohingya (Francis, 2017). This led to an increased crisis that gained momentum through the gradual marginalization of the Rohingya as an ethnic minority, the deprivation of their citizenship, their exclusion from governmental institutions, and, effectively, rendering them stateless.

The year 2017 resulted in one of the grave violations of human rights, where mass atrocities were committed against the Rohingya minority, forcing more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee the country. The situation did not take a pause here; in fact, the conflict was triggered in 2021 by the military takeover in Myanmar and resulted in a more complicated solution and difficult-to-determine solution.

Today, approximately 1.35 million individuals are classified as refugees, people in refugee-like situations, and asylum-seekers, and an additional 2.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The scale of displacement is alarming. Compounding the crisis is the plight of stateless persons, particularly the Rohingyas, with a staggering 657,500 individuals lacking citizenship rights and access to essential services and protection (UNHCR, n.d). There have been acts of arbitrary killings, sexual violence, arson, and severe restrictions on movement and essential services, triggering allegations of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The 2017 UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IFFMM) found clear genocidal intent within the state (Gepp, 2021). This situation was described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" by the UN Human Rights chief in 2017 due to the presence of at least one of the four atrocity crimes categorized under the R2P framework (Gepp, 2021; Syed, 2019). The Myanmar government's unwillingness to protect its citizens has been a significant barrier to invoking the R2P doctrine. Ibrahim and Nordin (2015, p. 1) stated, "Rohingya is facing a serious threat of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity while the government of Myanmar has failed in its primary duty to protect them." Despite meeting the necessary threshold for R2P

intervention, atrocity crimes continue to occur, highlighting the influence of the power corridors and the interests of the actors involved.

Another limitation lies within the structure of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the interests of its permanent members (the P5). While several member states have shown support for action in Myanmar, China and Russia have used their veto power to block any discussion on the Responsibility to Protect. The role of ASEAN also cannot be ignored; it has failed to take adequate action due to its foundational principle of 'non-interference' (Islam, 2020; Kingston, 2015). Although numerous resolutions have been made, efforts to counter atrocity crimes in Myanmar have not yet been successful.

Case Study: Gaza—An Examination of Atrocity Crimes and International Response

At the end of this year, we will enter into an assault that many experts have labeled a clear case of atrocity crimes, particularly genocide. Since then, thousands of missiles and bombs have destroyed civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, hospitals, and schools. The international community condemned the attacks on hospitals and schools, which fell under the category of war crimes. The Israeli actions have led to one of the highest rates of civilian deaths in any conflict of the twenty-first century (Leatherby, 2023).

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian Islamist organization Hamas carried out an unprecedented attack on Israel, resulting in over 1,200 deaths and the abduction of more than 250 hostages into Gaza. In response, Israel initiated a war with the primary aim of destroying Hamas and freeing the hostages. This war has brought tremendous suffering to the civilian population of Gaza, causing thousands of deaths and displacing more than 1.7 million Palestinians within Gaza, unable to escape the horrors of war (Reuters, 2024).

Also, in warfare, Hamas has built an extensive tunnel system beneath Gaza, allowing them to maneuver strategically and carry out robust attacks. However, this tunnel strategy has severe ramifications for the civilian population, who become the primary victims of attacks targeting Hamas. Additionally, the geography of Gaza complicates efforts for civilians to escape the atrocities of war. At the same time, Israel is committing heinous war crimes, neglecting the humanitarian cost of the conflict, including the crime of starvation.

Following the October 7 attack, a statement was given by Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant calling the Palestinians 'human animals' and promising to cut off basic water, food, and electricity supplies there (Karanth, 2023). This statement is very shattering as govt officials are publicly threatening to cut basic supplies to the people of Gaza.

The international community attempted to play its role to mitigate the conflict and reduce humanitarian loss, but these efforts remained largely ineffective. On the issue of Palestine, calls for ceasefires were vetoed. Meanwhile, special sessions were held to pressure actors into pursuing peace efforts. Recently, Israel faced a lawsuit at the International Court of Justice, and more countries around the world are recognizing Palestine. However, the debate continues: Does this reflect the R2P in action, or is there no R2P?

The reason for this situation can be traced back to the self-interest of states, particularly the United States. Israel's powerful alliances, especially with the United States, provide it with support that acts as a deterrent to the application of the R2P due

to significant political and diplomatic hurdles. The United States has vetoed several ceasefire resolutions concerning the conflict. As Israel's relentless attacks on Gaza entered their eighth month, Rafah was the last Gaza city that had not yet been attacked by land. This city, which provided refuge for more than 1.5 million civilians, about half of them children, are significant victims of Israeli brutality and witnessed some of the gravest human rights abuses (Al Jazeera, 2024).

The Dilemma of Inaction: Scrutinizing the Failure to Invoke R2P

The cases show clear signs of atrocity crimes committed there. The people in Myanmar and Palestine, particularly in Gaza, have faced genocide, systematic violence, attacks on civilians, and crimes against humanity. In both scenarios, governments are implicated in committing these crimes. The Myanmar military has been actively engaged in aggression against the Rohingya people, whereas actions by the Israeli military have resulted in a substantial number of civilian deaths in Gaza. Even though these atrocities are acknowledged globally, still the international community finds it difficult to apply the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). There have been numerous calls for action, but they have not been fruitful in terms of interventions. Following this, ASEAN was also deeply divided on the situation and unwilling to handle the Myanmar crisis despite adopting the five-point consensus (Vasisht, 2024). In contrast, the conflict in Gaza is entangled in the Middle East geopolitics and has received global attention due to its geo-political significance. So, what is the future of R2P?

Rethinking R2P

The genesis of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework in 2001 aimed to address human rights violations, with the United Nations' adoption in 2005 echoing the solemn promise of 'Never Again.' However, the recurrence of atrocities begs the question: Why does 'Never Again' continue to happen? In today's landscape, challenges manifest in various forms, particularly within the context of R2P, where obstacles arise from host states, P5 powers, and other external elements. Despite these persistent challenges, invoking R2P becomes difficult. However, this does not mean the international community should give up its responsibility to protect the people.

Theoretical foundations often wane despite power dynamics and vested interests, as evidenced by the cases of Gaza and Palestine. The alignment between the US and Israel underscores this, with the US providing substantial support to Israel, as indicated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's report (Al Jazeera, 2024). On the other hand, in the case of Myanmar, China and Russia have a series of interests, such as military ties, natural resources, energy security, and geopolitical considerations that surpass the need for humanitarian protection in Myanmar.

Among such dynamics, questions arise about the purpose of R2P. Why, despite the clear evidence of ethnic cleansing and genocide acknowledged by the whole world, does the international community hesitate to take action? Is there not a need for a middle ground to ensure the protection of civilians targeted by atrocity crimes, regardless of these challenges? Such instances raise the question of the fundamental validity of the doctrine.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the doctrine of R2P was formulated to protect the population from targeted attacks. However, its practical implementation faces several challenges rooted in geopolitical interests and power dynamics, which raises a question about its

implementation. Despite what was laid down in the theoretical foundations of the doctrine, the mission of protecting vulnerable populations, the persistence of atrocities, and the failure to address them underscore the shortcomings of R2P. In the above discussion, there is a pressing need to reevaluate the framework, strengthen international mechanisms for accountability, and prioritize civilian protection over geopolitical considerations.

The global landscape is marked by instances of atrocities, from ethnic cleansing to genocide, where vulnerable populations endure unimaginable horrors. If the international community does not take decisive and effective action, the world will continue to witness these violations, with lasting repercussions for generations. Now is the time to act and strengthen the framework of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) so that, as a global community, we can work together toward a future where the horrors of war and grave human rights violations are no longer tolerated or accepted as inevitable.

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Assessing the March 2024 Pakistan Airstrikes in Afghanistan

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***Azhar Zeeshan [1]& Syeda Seerat[2]**

Introduction

On March 18, the Pakistan Air Force conducted intelligence-based airstrikes in Afghanistan, targeting alleged hideouts of the Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB) group. According to sources, more than 12 strikes were carried out across three provinces—Paktika, Khost, and Kunar—engaging seven different locations. While the target of the strikes was TTP and HGB militants, most of those killed were family members of the militants. While it is widely believed that the airstrikes were conducted in retaliation to a terrorist attack in North Waziristan on 16 March, carried out by Jaish-e-Fursan-e-Muhammad (JFM) and Jaish-e-Omari (JeO) factions of the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, which claimed the lives of seven soldiers, including a lieutenant colonel and a captain, it is essential to recognize that these airstrikes have a deeper historical context which is worth reiterating here.

The Historical Context Behind the Airstrikes

In August 2021, when the Afghan Taliban took over Kabul, there was widespread jubilation and a sense of victory among the strategists and policymakers of Pakistan. The jubilation was evident from the statements from the country's higher officials. For instance, the country's then Prime Minister, Imran Khan, famously heralded the Taliban's takeover as "breaking the shackles of slavery" (Muzaffar, 2021, para 6). And who can forget the smiley face of the then DG ISI, Lt. General Faiz Hameed, who, while commenting on the growing uncertainty in the aftermath of the Taliban took over, famously remarked: "Don't worry, everything will be okay" (Siddiqui, 2021, para 4).

Pakistani officials' jubilation could be attributed to specific calculations they made about the future of Afghanistan, the Afghan Taliban, and TTP and its impacts on Pakistan, specifically in the context of terrorism. The Pakistani strategists, primarily the country's military establishment, were under the impression that since the US had

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withdrawn from Afghanistan, the armed groups in Afghanistan would lose their legitimacy to fight and would stop fighting.

Consequently, they concluded, the TTP would also lose its ideological legitimacy of fighting the Pakistan state, especially considering its origin as a reaction to Pakistan's siding with the United States after the 9/11 attacks. Moreover, in case the TTP continues fighting Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban, whose return to power in Afghanistan was greatly facilitated by Pakistan, would return the favour by reining in the TTP for Pakistan (Mehsud, 2024).

However, soon, these calculations proved to be miscalculations. Neither did the TTP curtail violence within Pakistan, nor did the Afghan Taliban intervene to prevent these attacks. In contrast to what Pakistani officials had anticipated, TTP in Afghanistan become stronger since August 2021. For instance, when the TTP first appeared in 2007, it comprised around nine groups. However, since August 2021, around 47 groups have announced a merger with the proscribed group. Moreover, the TTP has also gotten its hands over modern weaponry, including the sophisticated M24 sniper rifle, M4 carbines, and the M16A4 rifle with a thermal scope (Kakakhel, 2024).

This newly acquired strength is also reflected in the growing number of attacks from the TTP in Pakistan. Since August 2021, the terrorist attacks in Pakistan have surged, with the majority of the attacks claimed by TTP. For instance, in 2021, 294 terrorist incidents were recorded in the country, a 56 percent rise from 187 incidents in 2020. In 2022, the number of terrorist incidents rose to 380; in 2023, the number rose to 645, nearly double the preceding year. A total of 1907 Pakistanis lost their lives in these attacks (Khan, 2024).

On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban have consistently made clear their unwillingness to act against the TTP. This unwillingness stems from several factors, primarily the profound ideological alignment between the two groups. For instance, when TTP emerged in 2007, it declared Mullah Muhammad Omar, the founder of the Afghan Taliban, as the spiritual leader of the group and committed its members to fight alongside the Afghan Taliban against the US in Afghanistan (Abbas, 2023, p. 182). Also, the TTP was the first militant group to celebrate the Taliban takeover of Kabul officially. Not only did it celebrate the took-over of the Taliban, but the TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud (alias Abu Mansoor) publicly renewed his group's pledge of allegiance to the Taliban emir Hibatullah Akhundzada and pledged to continue unconditional support to the Afghan Taliban.

Moreover, there is another factor driven by pragmatic considerations that prevents the Afghan Taliban from taking action against the TTP. For instance, the Afghan Taliban greatly feared that if they took action against TTP, the group or at least factions of the group might desert to Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), which is already posing a formidable threat to the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan. This apprehension is well-placed, especially because the TTP cadre laid the foundation stone of ISKP in 2014. It is also worth mentioning that when the establishment of ISKP was announced officially in 2015, Hafiz Saeed Khan, a key commander of TTP from ex-Fata's Orakzai Agency, was appointed as its first chief (Abbas, 2023, p. 182).

Pakistan's Response

Confronted with this grave situation, Pakistan initially sought to resolve the issue through negotiations with the Afghan Taliban, who subsequently urged Pakistan to sit and negotiate with the TTP. What ensued was a series of negotiations between Pakistan and the TTP mediated by the Afghan Taliban, specifically by the Haqqani group. These

negotiations resulted in a brief ceasefire in November 2021, which soon proved to be short-lived as the TTP unilaterally backpedaled from the agreement and launched attacks in Pakistan (Gurmani & Khan, 2021).

Following the breakdown of the negotiations, Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan underwent a significant shift. A carrot-and-stick approach characterized the new policy Pakistan pursued. The carrot element of the policy entailed supplying Kabul with humanitarian and economic assistance and advocating for greater engagement with the Taliban in international forums. Conversely, the stick component included the threat of border closures and clandestine kinetic operations conducted within Afghanistan to assassinate key TTP commanders (Ahmad, 2023).

However, the Afghan Taliban were still reluctant to take action any decisive action against the TTP, with the latter continuing its assault all across Pakistan. Instead of taking action, the Afghan Taliban presented their solution to address the issue: relocating TTP fighters away from the border areas with Pakistan, for which they demanded a payment of 10 billion Pakistani rupees (Gul, 2023). The proposal increased the frustration of Pakistan's military establishment with the Afghan Taliban, with many high officials being of the view that paying for TTP fighters' relocation was nothing less than paying a ransom. Thus, Pakistan did not comply with the said demand.

The growing recalcitrance of the Afghan Taliban would drive another change in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan. In this new policy, which is reflective of Pakistan's growing frustration with the Taliban, Pakistan added some more sticks while simultaneously shrinking the carrots. The newly added sticks are withdrawing support for the Afghan Taliban in international forums while simultaneously urging the international community to put pressure on the Afghan Taliban to stop sponsoring cross-border terrorism, the repatriation of 1.7 million illegal Afghan immigrants to Afghanistan, borders closures, and increasing kinetic operations in Afghanistan. It was precisely against this backdrop that Pakistan conducted airstrikes on March 18th as a part of its revised policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan.

Motivation and Goal Behind the Strikes

There are many theories regarding the motivations behind Pakistan's decision to carry out the airstrikes on 18th March. For instance, many analysts believed that the strikes were conducted to avenge the killings of soldiers in the March 16th suicide attack. They further stress that the strikes were carried out to dispel perceptions of a weak Pakistani state among the rivals.

However, these authors placed the strikes in Pakistan's broader strategic calculus. The authors are of the view that the 18 March airstrikes were motivated by the success of Pakistan's earlier air strikes in Iran that restored deterrence for Pakistan vis-a-vis Iran. In January this year, Pakistan conducted retaliatory airstrikes inside Iran in response to the Iranian forces' attack in Pakistan, after which the tension subsided between the two countries. The strikes in Afghanistan were conducted with the same goal as those in Iran: to restore deterrence so Pakistan could focus on other pressing issues, such as economic recovery.

Evaluation

There are multiple approaches to evaluate whether the 18 March operation was a success or failure. One such approach involves evaluating whether the operation has accomplished its intended goals. If the operation has achieved its desired goal, it can be termed a success and vice versa. By applying this criterion to the March 18th

operation, one can infer that the operation failed, as it did not achieve its goal of establishing deterrence and preventing future attacks. For instance, multiple terrorist attacks have occurred in the post airstrikes phase, of which the most consequential one was a suicide attack in Bisham that resulted in the death of 5 Chinese citizens on 26 March (Hussain, 2024).

Similarly, many experts have regarded the operation as counter-productive in the long run, especially in the context of countering terrorism. They argue that the strikes, in which civilians have also been killed, can further fan the prevailing anti-Pakistan sentiments in Afghanistan, which subsequently can be exploited by TTP and ISKP. It is worth mentioning that these concerns are not unfounded, mainly keeping in view ISKP's vehement condemnation of the airstrikes and its pledge to retaliate.

Impact Of Strikes on Regional Security

Regarding the impact of airstrikes on regional security, there is growing concern that they might negatively impact regional security. The immediate concern lies in a retaliatory response from the Afghan Taliban. Already, the airstrikes have been met with strong condemnation from Taliban officials and have prompted artillery attacks from the Taliban regime across the Pak-Afghan border region. Furthermore, there is also a growing concern that the Taliban might give a free hand to the TTP to conduct cross-border attacks in Pakistan. This, consequently, could evoke a harsh response from Pakistan, such as more airstrikes or other sort of kinetic operations inside Afghanistan. Such a sequence of events could create a vicious cycle that could lead to a protracted conflict between the two nations.

If such a scenario emerged, the region would have long-term negative security implications. A protracted conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan could have a destabilizing impact on both countries, especially considering their precarious economic situations. Consequently, it could create a vacuum for groups like the Afghanistan-based Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) to exploit the situation and expand its reach, posing a more significant threat to regional security.

ISKP has already emerged as a security threat to many countries in the region. For instance, ISKP was responsible for the recent attack in Moscow on a concert hall that killed at least 137 people. (Burke, 2024). Similarly, the group was also linked to the January attacks in Iran, which claimed nearly 100 lives, as well as an attack on a church in Turkey. Besides, the group has a rich history of attacking targets in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Maldives (Zelin, 2023). It is pertinent to mention here that ISKP has continued to expand its operations despite active counterinsurgency efforts by the Afghan Taliban, highlighting the persistent threat it poses to regional stability. The potential escalation of conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which could jeopardize the latter's counterinsurgency efforts, could further embolden ISKP and exacerbate security challenges in the broader region.

Pakistan's Considerations and Way Forward

Since August 2021, security considerations have been the predominant factor shaping Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan. These security considerations are likely to continue to shape the country's policy toward Afghanistan in the future as well especially considering the deteriorating security situation of the country and the Afghan Taliban's reluctance to act against the TTP.

In this context, there are several policy options that Pakistan could opt for vis-a-vis Afghanistan in the future. First, there is growing anticipation that Pakistan will likely continue its policy of "added sticks and shrinking carrots" to put pressure on the Afghan Taliban, which means more coercive measures such as more airstrikes and kinetic operations inside Afghanistan, stringent border control, repatriation of remaining Afghans, and using economic leverage over Afghanistan. Notably, the Pakistani government has already devised a plan to initiate the second phase of repatriation after Ramadan, which entails the return of approximately one million documented Afghans to Afghanistan (Khan, 2024).

Secondly, Pakistan can also engage regional countries, particularly China, to put additional pressure on Kabul. China can be taken on board because the terrorist attacks in Pakistan are also harming Chinese interests and investments in the country. For instance, just a week ago, 5 Chinese were killed in a suicide attack perpetrated by TTP in the north-western part of the country. The incident happened when the convoy, carrying 5 Chinese, was on its way to Dasu, the site of a critical hydroelectric dam being constructed by a Chinese company. Moreover, TTP actions in Pakistan can also inspire Afghanistan-based anti-China groups, such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), to carry out terrorist attacks in China. It is worth mentioning that just like in the case of TTP, some segments within Afghanistan's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) enjoy close relations with ETIM (Firdous & Mehsud, 2024).

China can also be involved for reconciliatory purposes with the Afghan Taliban, especially considering that reconciliation between Pakistan and Afghanistan aligns with Chinese interests. For instance, China has recently made substantial investments in both countries. The protracted conflict between the two countries could jeopardize these investments, particularly its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, China can also be involved in such a role because it has a history of playing it. For instance, in 2017, when relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were at a bottom rock, China played the role of mediator and helped thaw the relations between the two (Gul, 2017).

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Violating Peace: Sex, Aid, and UN Peacekeeping

by *Jasmine-Kin Westendorf*

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***Maira Safdar** [1]

'Violating Peace: Sex, Aid, and Peacekeeping' provides insights into the crucial yet understudied notion of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) prevalent in UN peacekeeping operations. Jasmine-Kin Westendorf deconstructs SEA practices and critiques the lack of accountability despite a decade of UN policy development designed to prevent them. She highlights the profound implications of SEA on the outcomes of peacekeeping operations and its credibility. Her book contributes to the scholarly and policy discussions about the challenges undermining peacekeeping and peacebuilding in conflict-ridden societies where SEA is at its apex.

Using SEA as a focal point, she has organized her book into four chapters. Chapter One underpins the historical traces of SEA that are often blurred due to the issue of 'consent' within the UN humanitarian code of conduct and the host state's legal framework. She asserts that a lack of understanding of concepts and subsequent practical difficulties pave the way for the existing grey area of crime. This leads to a lack of appropriate responses to SEA. Therefore, the author suggests understanding the contexts within which the peace operations are deployed. She has stringently criticized the UN zero-tolerance policy, which has been viewed as defective by the staff, leading to further sexual exploitation cases. She further attempts to distinguish the variety of sexually exploitative behaviors to clarify the complexities attached to the consent factor, thus stressing the understanding of the overlapping challenges of peacekeeping missions to allow exploring appropriate solutions to address them.

Chapter two presents case studies of SEA in Bosnia and Timor Leste, revealing that the SEA was less related to the peacekeepers and more grounded in the consensual relationships, historical experiences, cultural practices and norms, material deprivation, and conflict-related sexual violence, which further blurred the line between the appropriate and inappropriate sexual exploitation. It is to be noted that the author has used decades-old case studies, which may not be relevant for academics or policymakers. Firstly, researching two distinct cases for revealing SEA issues requires extensive and context-specific investigation into aspects like the reported numbers,

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their fluctuations, etc.; only then may one draw comparisons; otherwise, the results can be misleading. Moreover, the author could have provided context-specific mission data interpretation and investigation before reaching generalized conclusions. Also, the relevance of anti-SEA policies seems outdated, as policy upgrades at the UN and its relevant agencies like UNHCR have been remarkable. For instance, the Victim-Centered Approach in UNHCR's response to SEA and sexual harassment was developed several years before launching in 2020.

Furthermore, the third chapter of the book zooms into a previously unexplored domain in research, that is, the longer-term impacts of SEA on the relationships between the civilian populations, troops-contributing countries, the UN, and the international community overall after using insights from the UN report that ruled out SEA as the highest risk and threat to implementing zero-tolerance policy.

The fourth chapter emphasizes the global implications of SEA beyond the special missions, highlighting how SEA can diminish the trust in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, create financial strains on UN projects and operations, and undermine moral authority, thus affecting UN credibility and capacity. Accordingly, she recommends that policymakers create robust rule-based plans, committed leadership, integrated policy between Women, peace and security, and SEA, and integrated training of peacekeepers.

However, it must be noticed that the UN's capacity and credibility are not at stake solely due to the SEA practices but the power politics of the UN veto members and their selective actions for global or regional conflicts and interventions. Hence, correcting the SEA-related accountability might not drastically lower the chances of already affected UN credibility. A more effective policy recommendation to ensure accountability involves avoiding UN involvement as a lead investigator or judge when peacekeepers face accusations. Therefore, including external actors to oversee it could have been suggested to ensure fairness. Similarly, it would have been better to suggest using advanced technologies for data interpretation or creating systems that could derive calculations on the SEA and its variants for policymakers to probe further.

The book serves as a valuable resource for understanding the impacts of SEA perpetrated by interveners. However, it must be noted that the author has profusely neglected the SEA perpetrated against men, which shows that her primary approach to SEA has been selective. She has stated that 'underreporting of cases of men' is the main reason; however, underreporting in the case of women has also been recognized as a practice.

Overall, the book uniquely sets an approach to addressing the issue of SEA by solely focusing on the impacts, which have been lacking in any other domain. Hence, it provides insights for policymakers to address the challenges that come along with peacekeeping operations.

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The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan: The UN, Bias, and Peacekeeper's Mind

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***Areesha Amer**[1]

South Sudan is in the heart of Africa's turbulent landscape, plagued by decades of conflict and instability. In "The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan: The UN, Bias, and Peacekeeper's Mind," author Mark Millar allows the readers to embark with him on a journey that unveils the intricacies of maintaining peace in one of the most challenging settings in the world. Millar examines the complexities of the UN's attempts to promote peace in South Sudan, shedding light on the reasons for their failure via painstaking investigation and perceptive analysis. This book provides a thorough analysis of the difficulties and shortfalls that have influenced peacekeeping efforts in the South Sudanese context, ranging from examining the psychological prejudices of peacekeepers to closely scrutinizing the structural constraints of the enactment of UN peacekeeping. Millar's work is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the literature on peacekeeping and international intervention as the international community grapples with the several strands that entangle and exasperate the conflict. Through its rigorous analysis and thought-provoking content, 'The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan' invites readers to reassess their assumptions and perspectives on peacekeeping practices, offering valuable insights into the nature of such operations.

The author relates the impact of the biases within the UN, how bounded rationality infiltrates the halls of the organization, and later translates on the tactical level of peacekeeping operations, as the title suggests. He suggests that such biases, constraints due to bounded rationality that later reflects in organizational behaviour, undermine optimal decision-making. A significant reference in the book is the satirical mention of Richard Gervais's show 'The Office' and the way it complements the functional bureaucracy of the UN, typically in how people in the office are overcome by petty issues such as 'who gets the bigger chair' instead of focusing on the grave nature of the task at hand. Thus, in its essence, the book provides a thorough analysis of UN peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan, unveiling the causes of their failure. The personal recounts given by the author, while aptly relating the internalized practices of the UN to possible international relations theories and later choosing aspects of the

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international organization that resonate with them, enhance the expression of his point of view. All his insights shed light on one result alone: the failure of the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

Upon probing further into the thoughts conveyed by the author, one finds that several reasons are contributing to the failure of UNMISS. The author deftly dissects the institutional and structural flaws in the UN's peacekeeping structure, proving its poor administration. He emphasizes problems within the institution, such as prejudice, lack of resources, insufficient funding, understaffed staff, institutional limitations, and even lack of specialization of authority figures within the mission that reduced the force's efficacy. Similarly, the ignorance of those in power towards the recent developments in the concerned territories significantly contributed to resistance from the local populations and their inefficiencies and ineffective peacekeeping. A significant drawback, however, was the inability of UNMISS to define its mandate for the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in practice and establish a strict separation from its predecessor mission.

The book uniquely emphasizes the psychological aspect of peacekeeping. Through an in-depth examination of peacekeepers' perspectives, thought processes, and what influences them, the author provides necessary information about the human element contributing to peacekeeping shortcomings. The reader's comprehension of the hindrances encountered by peacekeepers in the field and the problems involved in handling conflict in unstable situations is deepened by this comprehensive approach. Later, the book offers a convincing assessment of how the international community has handled peacekeeping in South Sudan. What makes the book specifically interesting is how Miller's expertise as a conflict analyst on the ground helps readers put the happenings into perspective. It highlights the shortcomings of traditional peacekeeping tactics and advocates for a more complex, situation-specific method of resolving disputes. He criticizes the UN's attempts at implementing a 'one size fits all' solution for most peacekeeping missions. The author shows how political agendas and preexisting biases have made it more difficult for the UN to effectively address the underlying causes of conflict in South Sudan through case studies and personally collected data that translates into evidence of his claims.

While the book offers a comprehensive analysis of peacekeeping failures in South Sudan, it also provides valuable insights into broader issues related to peace and security in the African context. By situating the South Sudanese case within the broader discourse on peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the author invites readers to reflect on the more considerable systemic challenges facing the international community in addressing conflicts on the continent. The book gives a thorough examination of South Sudan's peacekeeping deficiencies. However, it also offers an intuitive stance on the successes of its predecessor mission that aptly worked towards the 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement.' The author also encourages readers to consider the more significant structural problems the international community faces in resolving conflicts on the continent by placing the South Sudanese situation within the larger discourse on peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

While the book has succeeded immensely in what the author has tried to convey, a few aspects need to be addressed. First, the book focuses on the UN's peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, which can draw criticism. The book does not heed the broader contextual elements that fuel strife in the area, even though the UN's misdeeds and actions are essential to comprehending South Sudan's failings. Inadequate attention to elements like ethnic tensions, historical grudges, and the

presence of regional actors may result in an inaccurate understanding of the conflict's underlying roots. Secondly, once you overlook the informative aspect of the book, you find that the book's focus on the psychological aspect of peacekeeping oversimplifies the difficulties involved in making decisions in conflict areas. Personal prejudices and preconceptions certainly influence peacekeepers' actions, but other essential variables, such as political pressures and strategic considerations, are at play. Strictly concentrating on the psychological component leaves out these more prominent structural elements that influence peacekeeping efforts.

This particular work of Mark Millar is also subject to doubt for its reliance on personally collected evidence and lack of empirical support. Case studies and qualitative analysis are valuable tools, but they might not always give a complete picture of the intricate dynamics at work in South Sudan. A more thorough empirical examination incorporating comparative studies and quantitative data could bolster the book's claims and increase its legitimacy. Furthermore, by criticizing traditional peacekeeping tactics, the book might ignore the real-world difficulties and limitations that peacekeeping operations in conflict areas must overcome. Not only is it critical to point out the flaws in current strategies, but it is also critical to acknowledge the practical constraints and compromises that come with peacekeeping work. A more nuanced and comprehensive approach that considers broader contextual factors and engages with diverse perspectives could enhance the book's impact and relevance instead of placing all the blame on the workings of the UN.

The book could include a greater variety of viewpoints in the analysis, such as those of regional and local players and communities. Examining alternate peacekeeping strategies, including community-based programs and transitional justice procedures, would provide readers with a more sophisticated understanding of resolving conflicts. There is also a need to incorporate quantitative data that complements the author's arguments. Furthermore, incorporating a comparative analysis with other conflict-affected regions would enhance comprehension of the elements that influence the success or failure of peacekeeping operations. The analysis would stay current and relevant if it engaged with recent advancements and included more perspectives from the area, such as peacekeepers and practitioners. By making these suggestions, there is a chance to improve the book's contribution to the body of knowledge on peacekeeping and conflict resolution combined.

Overall, the book critically examines bias within the context of UN peacekeeping since it adds a deeper degree of complexity to the examination. Rather than attributing all mistakes to operational or institutional flaws, the author looks at the underlying biases that shape peacekeeping strategies and solutions. This critical point of view challenges conventional wisdom and makes readers reevaluate their assumptions about the workings of peacekeeping in South Sudan and other conflict zones. Notably, the author's unique experience in the field, professional contacts, and associated assessments bolster the veracity of his assertions regarding the UN and its operations. The book adds something timely and thought-provoking to peacekeeping and conflict resolution knowledge. Millar, quite well-versed in the voluntary task, highlights the necessity of recalibration and creativity in peacekeeping techniques by providing concrete instances of the real-world consequences of peacekeeping failures while establishing his arguments in careful analysis. His thoughtful observations and suggestions allow legislators and practitioners to get acquainted with the tricky terrain of conflict resolution, its contextual problems, and varying issues depending on the geographical proximity. The book underscores the critical need for reflection and

adaptation in international peacekeeping efforts in a world of ongoing war and instability. Millar's work undoubtedly stimulates critical thinking on the morality and efficacy of peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and all the current international interventions, in addition to advancing scholarly discourse. It is a must-read for academics, decision-makers, and professionals who want to comprehend the dynamics of war and peacebuilding in contemporary Africa.

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United Nations Peace Operations and International Relations Theory

Edited by *Kseniya Oksamytna and John Karlsrud*

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***Tehreem Tariq**[1]

A comprehensive review of the book United Nations (UN) Peace Operations and International Relations Theory, edited by Kseniya Oksamytna and John Karlsrud, helps analyze the challenging notion that International Relations (IR) theories are impersonal and abstract. The book offers insights into international conflict resolution through the practical application of various IR theories. The book explores three main themes of peacekeeping, which are mentioned as follows: (i) the reasons behind state participation in missions, (ii) the results of peacekeeping efforts, and (ii) the relationship between international and local peacekeeping players. By examining several theoretical frameworks, such as constructivism, critical theory, feminist institutionalism, liberal institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and complexity theory, each chapter provides insights into the actors, motivations, and mechanisms influencing UN peacekeeping.

In chapter one, Philip Cunliffe explains the conceptual differences between the realist theory of international relations and peacekeeping operations and highlights the similarities between their views on world order, war, and peace. He argues that peacekeeping seeks to sustain peace through international cooperation and institutional structures in contrast to realism, which usually focuses on the geopolitical conflict between powerful nations. He critically examines the potential applicability of three forms of realism, structural, neoclassical, and classical, to peacekeeping research.

Carla Monteleone and Kseniya Oksamytna's arguments in chapter two around liberal institutionalism stem from the significance of international institutions that pave the way toward international partnership and collaboration while alleviating uncertainty in an anarchic system. They thoroughly explored the applicability of liberal institutionalism on UN peacekeeping while arguing that regardless of the close association of theory with UN peacekeeping, it has only been applied to negotiations by the Security Council and troop contributions.

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In chapter three, Reykers emphasizes 'Rational Choice Theory' and explains the politics of control and command as one pertinent issue UN peacekeepers face. His principal argument, therefore, pertinently revolves around the challenges of UN peacekeeping control procedures and mandates, and he strongly affirms the usage of the principal-agent model of rational choice theory in understanding these difficulties.

Sarah Von Billerbeck explains the central idea of sociological institutionalism and its application to UN peacekeeping in chapter four. She interprets the impact of sociological institutionalism on standards, norms, and culture in influencing the behavior of an organization, which signifies UN peacekeeping. The author's argument about local ownership in UN peacekeeping stresses institutional norms, the reputation of UN staff, and the importance of considering local ownership as an innovative policy option.

Marion Laurence and Emily Paddon Rhoad, in chapter five, thoroughly examined the discussion around constructivism and explained how constructivism gives a useful understanding of peacekeepers' interpretative processes and the effect of norms on their daily actions and activities.

In chapter six, Ingvild Bod argues that practice theories provide a profound perspective that paves the way for examining the dynamics of peacekeeping, along with implementation and relevant challenges. He focused on the relatability of social hierarchies and power dynamics in affecting the workings of peacekeeping standards.

In chapter seven, Lucile Maertens makes an argument by explaining the perspectives of Critical Security Studies (CSS) around UN peacekeeping and the inclusion of environmental concerns into peacekeeping operations. For instance, the exemplification of the cholera outbreak in Haiti and the environmental/ecological rules adopted by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations shows the concurrent link between security and environmental challenges.

In chapter eight, Georgina Holmes highlights Feminist Institutionalism as an essential theoretical framework for the comprehensive study of gendered dynamics and functioning within peacekeeping organizations and international security at large. She aptly argues that feminist institutionalism emphasizes the need for institutional change to enable women to engage in peace operations meaningfully, rationally, and successfully. The explanation given by the author around the execution of *UNSCR 1325* and the inclusion of female military peacekeepers into Ghana's Armed Forces seconds the related empowerment.

Moreover, in chapter nine, Charles T. Hunt's explanation of complexity theory and its applicability to the study of UN peacekeeping enhances our understanding of its interconnected features. Focusing on feedback processes, unexpected systemic outcomes, and emergent order, he effectively highlights the challenges faced during peacekeeping missions. Hunt's emphasis on these issues provides valuable insights into the complexities of peacekeeping operations. In the concluding chapter, Mats Berda very accurately explained IR as a crossroads by pertinently stressing its multifarious character to analyze complicated peacekeeping scenarios.

While the chapters centered around different theories, there is still space to integrate practical challenges and ethical concerns that are a part and parcel of peacekeeping missions. The book should also inculcate discourse about the unpredictable impact of peacekeeping missions on local communities and the environment, as well as cultural rules, norms, sociopolitical issues, and economic challenges. Incorporating these elements would have provided a more complete picture of peacekeeping missions and their effects on various populations in the current context.

In summary, the book offers valuable insights into applying international relations theory to UN peacekeeping missions. It effectively illustrates the evolution of peacekeeping missions and the relevance of various theoretical frameworks. However, it falls short of addressing the practical issues and ethical dilemmas inherent in peacekeeping. Despite this, it remains a significant resource for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of modern peacekeeping operations from multiple theoretical perspectives, aiding in navigating the complexities of peacekeeping practices at any time.

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