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CONTENT

THE USE OF SOFT POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.
A CASE STUDY: THE HOLY SEE

Melsen Kafilaj

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study Vatican City-State and institution of the Holy See. It focuses on the "soft power," a concept coined and unveiled during the 1990s by Harvard scholar Joseph Nye and the tools, mechanisms or instruments that the Holy See uses to influence various issues of International Relations, whether bilateral or multilateral. For this study, there are used Vatican's websites with a range of official documents, newspapers as: La Stampa, Corriere della Sera, L'Osservatore Romano, America, Monday Vatican, Inside the Vatican, Catholic World Report, Diplomat Magazine, books and also a set of paper-studies by scholars who have researched on this subject, such as: T.Byrnes, J.Troy, J.Haynes, L.Cushley, F.Rooney, B.Cox, D. Philiphot, etc. The conclusions show that the Holy See being an actor of transnational character exerts soft power not only through the Pope as the head of this institution, but also through Secretary of State, Papal Nuncios, Pontifical Council for Culture, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and many Catholic organizations of humanitarian, social and peacemaking character such as: Caritas, Diaconia, Jesuit Refugee, Saint Egidio Community, etc.

Key words: Holy See, faith-based diplomacy, soft power, power of calling, mediation

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Introduction

Since the time of Hydraulic Civilizations (Babylonia, Egypt, India, etc.) religion as an organized, hierarchic and structural form has played a crucial role not only in the daily life but also in kings' and states issues, having so a first-class importance. Religious leaders have served not only as advisors of kings and princes in public, political and diplomatic issues but sometimes they have been decisive in their physical and political fate. Seen in this context, religion has been much nearer politics than every human activity. "But religions, as states

Harvard's professor **Pippa Norris** (2006) through their long influence in time and viewpoints on the world, from the other part have formed also cultural traditions of nations, which are transmitted to individuals in a consistent way." (p.17) The religion which has given shape and identity to the European Civilization is undoubtedly Christianity. Oxford's historian, **Arnold Toynbee** supports this fact when he states: "It was religion and specifically Christianity and its well-organized structure which contributed in the definition and progress of moral principles, distinguishing so European Civilization from Others, pushing it ahead and preserving to not fall into amorality." (Rooney, 2013, p.xvi).When we talk for a Christianity with an established and well-organized institutional structure it's quite clear that we refer to the Roman Catholic Church, as one of the largest religious institutions in the world for centuries. Founded on the *"Saint Peter Promise",* his teachings and the life of first days saints of the 1st century, after the establishment of Christianity as an official religion in Rome and support from some emperors, this religious institution started to recover economically, mostly from the properties and donations. Meantime, the exercise of its spiritual power in Roman Empire territories started to grow enormously .This also thanks to the missionary spirit that characterizes this religion. "But as it points out **Encyclopedia Britannica**, with the weakness of Western Roman Empire and the decline of emperor's authority in Rome during the 5th century, a new phenomenon will be recorded; the increasing of the role and political influence of the Pope in Central Italy. This due to the fact that inhabitants of this area relied on him to be protected from barbaric invasions. Pope Leo I, for example saved Rome from destruction by Attila of Huns, while Pope Gregory I from threats of the Germanic tribe of Lombards." (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, n.d.) Growing of sympathy, wide support and influence in the people would bring about per consequence another claim of Pope with time; the request for temporal power. As the German historian **Leopold Von Ranke** (1887) states in his excellent work *"History of Popes, Church and their State"* with territorial donation of Frank king Pepin III in the 8th century will be raised the foundation of all Popes claim for temporal power." (p.14). Continuing with this century until the year 1870 *"Republic of San Peter"* or called differently "Papal State" not only would gain territorial expansion and be empowered but also would play a key role in European politics arena, crowning kings, overthrowing princes, setting the balance of power and influencing directly on it. Quite differently from some researchers who neglect in their studies the historical context, I think that it is a crucial element in the construction of every analysis in humanistic studies and of International Relations, to talk more specifically. There can be not a clear and a complete painting without the historical context involved in it. To go further! The Reformation Era (1517–1648), Treaty of Westphalia (1648), Illuminist Ideas, Great French Revolution

(1789) but also European Nationalism of 19th century with the creation of State-Nations would corrode, undermine and reduce significantly the role and open influence of Saint Peter Republic. With Risorgimento during the 19th century and unification of Italy, all the territories of St. Peter's Republic would be annexed and be part of the Kingdom of Italy, including here Rome. This ended the existence of Papal State and led to the birth of *"Roman Issue",* a series of tensions and quarrels between Roman Catholic Church and Kingdom of Italy (1870–1929), which would end with the signing of Lateran Treaty between Vatican and New Italian State on February 11, 1929 and would be ratified on June 7 of the same year. "The Lateran Treaty consisted of three separate documents spread over twenty-seven articles and four annexes: an agreement acknowledging the Vatican as an independent state, also known as the Treaty of Conciliation; a concordat on church state relations between the city state and Italy; and a financial convention liquidating the financial claims of the Holy See against Italy. In signing the treaty, Italy ceded 108.7 acres of Rome to the Holy See, thus creating the world's smallest sovereign nation. At the signing, Pope Pius XI was represented by Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the papal secretary of state, while King Emanuel III was represented by Benito Mussolini, Prime Minister of Italy. The Lateran Treaty was incorporated into the Italian Constitution sixteen years later in 1947." (Young and Shea, 2007, pp.589–623)

Form of the government of City-State of Vatican and the Holy See

"List of the members of Community of Nations would be incomplete if it hadn't been included also the City-State of Vatican." (Glahn, 1986, p.66) When the professor of Public International Law **Gerhard von Glahn** holds this attitude, I think he means that Catholicism is not only just a religion but also a civilization and culture and with Vatican as a political-religious actor it is shaped the political history of the whole Europe. In fact, when we refer to Vatican we have to take into consideration and clarify something fundamental; it is about two different subjects, known independently from International Law; City-State of Vatican (*Status Civitatis Vaticanae*) and the Holy See (*Sancta Sedes*). Despite this judicial distinction, City-State of Vatican is not only a symbolical topos of Roman Catholic Church but also a dominion center of the Pope, serving also as a complementary subject in the exercising of his supreme authority, role, mission and function, on Earth. As it clearly defines the United States Department website: "The Holy See is universal government of Catholic Church that operates from Vatican City State, a sovereign, independent territory." (US Department of State, n.d.) The form of

government of City-State of Vatican is a monarchic theocracy, with an absolute leader; the Pope. A specific characteristic of it is that it is not inherited and with the death of the Pope the governmental competencies pass automatically to the College of Cardinals, until the election of the new Pope from the Conclave. "City-State of Vatican has as a legislative body Papal Commission which is composed by 7 members, appointed in the office by the Pope for 5 years. Executive authority is in the hands of President of Papal Commission, who is a cardinal and the State Governor. In exercising central governance he is helped by General Secretary and Vice-General Secretary plus a variety of departments and other offices elected by the Pope for a 5-year mandate. For the most important decisions the President must obtain the approval of Papal Commission and the Pope through State Secretary." (Government body…, n.d.) "As a Judicial body, City-State of Vatican has 4 courts: a) A Unique Court *(Giudice Unico)* with limited jurisdiction, b) Tribunal Court *(Tribunale)* composed by 4 members, c) Appeals Court (Corte di Appello) with 4 members and the Supreme Court (Corte di Cassazione) composed by 3 members." (Government body…, n.d.) When we talk about the Holy See *(Sancta Sedes)* or *"Chair of Saint Peter"* we refer to the Bishop of Rome's Diocese, Vicar of Christ and the head of Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, who exercises his jurisdiction as a spiritual leader over all the Catholic churches in the world. Pope governs the Holy See through Cardinal-Secretary of State and a particular administrative body called Curia. "Curia in itself, as emphasized in Apostolic Constitution of the year 1988 *"Pastor Bonus"* is a complex composed by dicasteries (δικαστής) and other institutions which help the Pope to accomplish his role, function and duties as a Supreme Pastor, in service and for the good of Church but also of other Catholic churches generally. The term "dicastery" includes in itself the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Courts, Councils and Offices, Camera Apostolica, Administration for the Management of Church Patrimony and Prefecture for Economic Issues of the Holy See." (Apostolic Constitution, 1988) Actually, inside Curia included 9 Congregations, 3 Courts, 3 Dicasteries, 5 Papal Councils, 3 Financial Offices and a variety of Papal Commissions and Under-Commissions.

Faith-based diplomacy in function of the Holy See "soft power"

Small states, in the lack of *"hard power"* and ability to impose directly to the bigger one through military force, economic threats or stick and the carrot policy, mobilize a new type of indirect influence on international actors baptized as *"soft power"*. But how to define this

concept and which is its meaning, arises the question?! First, let me clarify briefly that this concept is created and is embedded in the vocabulary of International Relations during the 1990s by Harvard's scholar **Joseph Nye**. "According to Nye, "soft power" is nothing more than the ability to make others to desire what you want, forming so their preferences through attraction and seduction that you transmit as an actor. The sources of this immense power are: influence of ideas, power of arguments, culture, ideology and institutions." (Nye and Welch, 2015, pp.100–101) Vatican does not exercises its political influence as theorist of Realist School of International Relations **Kenneth Waltz** thinks on states; through economic and military power. (Dune, Kurki and Smith, 2010, p.90) Vatican does not possess any of the indicators above but it influences international politics through soft power. This power is exercised through the Holy See. "We have to take into consideration that when we talk about the Holy See, like it is emphasized in the law no.361 of *"Codex Iuris Canonici"* it is not just about the Papal person but also of Secretariat of State, Council for Public Relations of Church and other institutions of Roman Curia. "The fundamental basis of the actions in diplomacy is national interest. (*raison d'etat*) This interest is determined by foreign policy. Directions of an action in foreign policy are conditioned by two action segments: defining of the interests and the manners how to realize those interests." (Kiçmari, 2013, p.27) Despite territorial size, status and it particular nature, as any other state in International Relations, Vatican also has its own interests and priorities. But Vatican's diplomacy is another "type" of diplomacy from what other states use to realize their national interests; it is a *"faith-based diplomacy"*. "According to the scholars **Bryan Cox and Daniel Philpott**, this concept denotes that kind of diplomacy practiced by non-governmental actors, NGO officials, religious leaders and private citizens." (Cox and Philpott, 2003, pp.31–40) Quite differently from other states that have as a central pillar their respective ministries, Vatican does not have a "Ministry of Foreign Affairs". But which institution is responsible for the international affairs of Vatican, raises the question?

1. Secretariat of State

First, let us emphasize that the entity that signs international and bilateral treaties with other states it is not City-State of Vatican but the Holy See. Holy See does this activity through the institution of Secretariat of State. "Cardinal- Secretary of State, actually **Pietro Parolin** is the right hand of the Pope and responds directly for political and diplomatic activity of the Holy See. The Secretariat in itself is divided in two sections: a) Section for General Issues and b)

Section for Relations with States. First Section covers daily life activities of Pope, starting with Roman Church and its affairs, for preparation of Papal documents, appointments with Curia, keeping of Papal Seal and Ring of Saint Peter, etc. Whereas the Second Section is responsible for diplomatic relations of the Holy See with other states, for the signing of concordats and international agreements, attendance of Pope and the Holy See in different conferences and international organizations, et." (The Secretariat of State, n.d.)

2. Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy and Apostolic Nuncios

The second important institution that keeps closed ties with the Secretariat of State is Papal Diplomatic Academy *(Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica).*Founded in 1707 by an Albanian, **Pope Clement XI** (Albani). This institution is a cornerstone for the training, formation and qualification of apostolic nuncios. In International Relations arena, the Holy See represents diplomatically through apostolic nuncios. "Apostolic nuncios are the Pope's own hand outstretched to the world of states. Whereas ordinary diplomats are serving the goals of a territorial unit, the unconventional nature of the Holy See diplomats is nested in the hybrid character of their ecclesiastical role as the Pope's representatives and their legal diplomatic status and commencement to ordinary diplomatic practice. Their papal patron's global perspective renders them unusually dedicated to influencing the conditions beyond their principal's immediate possessions (such as a territory). This standing places them at an advantage in an international society in which such contextual factors are centrally important. This advantage is reinforced by the degrees to which Holy See diplomats constitute a combination of transnational identity and national interest. This difference is obvious when looking at instances of how papal diplomats mediate between a conventional approach and the approach of the Holy See. Between its supernatural mission of salvation and the mundane reality of world politics, the institution of the papacy remains a singular and surprisingly vital factor in the international scene." (Troy, 2018, pp.521–539) "Vatican is one of the oldest diplomatic actors and key-players of the European Civilization. Since the Congress of Vienna (1815) the diplomatic representative of the Holy See is given symbolically the right of pre-session." (Luçi, 1999, p.18) Such a thing remained in power also in Diplomatic Convention of Vienna of the year 1961.This fact is confirmed also by Oxford's professor and career diplomat **Ralph Feltham** when he states: "In the states were Catholicism is dominant, the Holy See representative takes precedence over other heads of missions of the same category as a *dean*

ex-officio". (Feltham, 2010, p.37) Actually, the Holy See has diplomatic relations with 181 states in the world. The papal diplomat is prepared firstly to be a spiritual fighter and an obedient missionary of the Pope in earth and afterwards a diplomatic instrument. This missionary character of apostolic nuncios is emphasized also by Pope Francis during his annual speech addressed to Papal Diplomatic Academy in 2015: "Dear Brothers, the mission to which you will be called one day to carry out will take you to all parts of the world. Europe is in need of an awakening; Africa is thirsty for reconciliation; Latin America is hungry for nourishment and interiority; North America is intent on rediscovering the roots of an identity that is not defined by exclusion; Asia and Oceania are challenged by the capacity to ferment in diaspora and to dialogue with the vastness of ancestral cultures." (Francis, 2015) The main characteristics of the papal diplomat are: sense of measure, discretion and silence. "As it points out **Pope John XXIII**, ex-diplomatic nuncio accredited in France during the Second World War, a papal ambassador should always be obedient and silent…always self-effacing and remain in the shadow. To know how to obey, to know how to be quiet, to speak when necessary, with measured words and with reserve, that is the role of the diplomat of the Holy See, and it is also that of Saint Joseph." (Pentin, 2010) A classic example of *"invisible diplomacy"* of the Holy See is that of apostolic nuncio accredited in Lebanon during the 1990s, the archbishop **Pablo Puente Buces**. In fact, Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East where Catholics (*Maronites*) play a crucial role in the national politics. Since the *"National Pact"* of the year 1943 traditionally the President of Lebanon has been a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Muslim Sunni and the Speaker of the Parliament a Shiite Muslim. During the years 1975–1990 for economic and political reasons this balance was broken and the Civil War began, turning thus Lebanon into a *torn country*. According to Oxford's scholar **Alexander Henley**, Vatican had very little success with its previous diplomatic efforts. But during the papacy of John Paul II (1978–2005), however, Rome came to play on its ecclesiastical strengths to decisive effect. The Vatican initiative in the 1980s imposed strict hierarchical discipline on the Maronite Church, breaking the back of its militant organization and consolidating the supremacy of the patriarchate. By forcing the monks to withdraw from politics in the mid-1980s, therefore, Vatican successfully enabled – but did not compel – the patriarch to exercise his authority to the end of the peaceful coexistence." (Henley, 2008, pp.353–369) "Few also outside Vatican are aware that Archbishop Pablo Puente Buces, a former apostolic nuncio to Lebanon, played a significant role in helping bring to an end the 1975–1990 Lebanese civil war, taking risks to build bridges with militia groups and some of the heads of Muslim political parties." (Pentin, 2011) As the New York Times correspondent, **Ihsan A. Hijazi** states: "The Aoun-Geagea

telephone conversation was also a result of efforts by the Papal Nuncio, Msgr. Pablo Puente, who worked as a mediator on instructions from the Vatican. Both General Aoun and Mr. Geagea are Maronites, members of Lebanon's largest Christian group, were in political conflict interest with each-other." (Hijazi, 1990)

3. Multilateral diplomacy and United Nations

The Holy See is actively involved in multilateral diplomacy and has the status of Permanent Observer in a range of very important international organizations as: the United Nations, Council of Europe, International Agency of Atomic Energy, World Trade Organization, United Nations for Education, Science and Culture Organization, etc. But the main pulpit in which the Holy See exercises its multilateral diplomacy is undoubtedly the United Nations. "In fact, since the World War One the very wise man **Pope Benedict XV** tried in vain to organize a peace conference to give an end to the War and came with the idea for the creation of a permanent mechanism for conflict resolution. An idea for which many scholars believe that even the US President **Woodrow Wilson** may have borrowed from him." (Cushley, 2007) "As it states Jesuit review *"America"* since of his crowning on September 3, 1914 until he died in the year 1922 this pope would be strongly dedicated to the peace issue. Pope Benedict's plan for peace covered ten areas; the main theme of which was the resumption of peaceable relations between nations and the healing of a war-torn world through the assistance of those afflicted by homelessness, hunger and disease. All his pleas for peace were rebuffed; yet he kept trying. President Wilson, however, had other ideas. The American president – it was said – was jealous that the Roman Pope had come out first with a prospective peace plan; Wilson felt that he could do better, hence there are his *"Fourteen Points."* As the wags remarked at the time, Wilson had to come up with four points better than the Pope." (McAuley, 2015) Another fact worth noting is also the meeting *"in camera"* at the Vatican between this Pope and the US President on January 4, of the year 1919. A year later, in the same month (Janus of Rome – the symbolic) would take shape the creation of the League of Nations. With the invitation of the United Nations to take part as a Permanent Observer in the year 1964, the Holy See has always used its role inside this institution where the "great family of nations gathers" (papal term) to influence world politics through its ethical-religious concept of human dignity, love, justice, peace, freedom, human rights, etc. or as **Cardinal Parolin** has defined it: *"human diplomacy"*. Thus to unfold in moral frame a Messianic Order "which walks through a gradual evolution,

founded in truth, built according to the justice, enlivened and integrated by love and applied in freedom, in function of the Common Good." (John XXIII, p.95) Whenever freedom, democracy, human rights and justice have been violated, the Holy See has appealed through the Pope and apostolic nuncios and raised its voice as *"a moral megaphone"* in the Parliament of Nations. The latest cases to be mentioned are those on the immigrants issue, human trafficking, bioethics, climate, etc. To paraphrase the words of the Pope's *grey eminence,* **Antonio Spadaro**: Social Doctrine of the Church *(Gaudium et spes)* and multilateral diplomacy, to engage together in tackling of the most challenging problems of our time are *"Boaz and Jachin"* of the Holy See.

4. The Pope, power of calling and mediation

The Pope is the principal actor of the papal diplomacy. He has earned legitimacy not only as the head of the Catholic Church but also well known for his neutrality. That was made clear after signing of Lateran Treaty of 1929 when the Holy See released a unilateral declaration and explicitly said: "Vatican wants to remain aloof from the worldly rivalries of other states, except when parties to a dispute called unanimously on the Vatican to assist in arriving at a peaceful solution." (Glahn, 1986, p.66) The Pope, as a moral authority with the power of calling but also as a mediator in the modern context has played an important role through his soft power in many European and global issues. Let us illustrate this statement with some concrete examples. For example, only a few persons have knowledge on the role of Pope Pius XII and his continuous callings after WWII for a practical incarnation of a United Europe, on the basis of Christian values and principles. It is worthy to mention here his speech directed to the Union of European Federalists on the year 1948: "That the establishment of a European Union will be difficult, no one can discuss on it. But there is no time to lose. If this Union really has an objective to fulfill its purpose, if you wish to do so to serve the advantages in progress of the cause of European freedom and of the agreement, the cause of economic and political peace between the continents, now it is the time to establish it." (Nelsen and Guth, 2015, p.162) It is also known for the public meetings of this Pope with the Architects of the European Union and Christian-Democrat politicians as: Alcide De Gasperi, Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer for the realization of this Great Christian Project. Let us keep also in mind the fact that in Europe there are many Christian-Democrat parties of the right wing spectrum (Italy, Germany, France, Poland, Ireland, Austria, Malta, Spain, Slovakia, etc.) which gain their political capital thanks

to the soft power that the Pope and his spiritual Pastors exercise on the flock of their vote-believers. Another classical example is Pope John Paul II, his active role and spiritual mobilization for the demolition of Communist System in Central and South Eastern Europe. "This was witnessed by Poland with the political movement "Solidarnost" of Lech Walesa supported by Vatican but also the secession of two states with Catholic majority as Slovenia and Croatia from the former Yugoslavia and immediate recognition of their independence by the Holy See." (Byrnes, 2017) "For example, it is still an unknown fact that during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, Pope John XXII helped establish a back-channel, private communications between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev to de-escalate tensions and avoid a nuclear war. This could be considered an initial attempt at détente." (Rooney, 2017) Whereas Pope John Paul II intervened and mediated between Argentina and Chile in the year 1978 preventing so a possible conflict for three border small islands pretended by both countries baptized differently as the *"Beagle Conflict"*. "Another Papal mediation case is also the intervention of Pope Benedict XVI with the request of British ex-prime minister Tony Blair for the release of a British military staff with 15 persons, captured while they were sailing inside Iranian territorial waters. The Pope in word, wrote personally to the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who immediately ordered for their release during Easter of the year 2007" (The Guardian, 2010) The last case of mediation and of the good services from a Pope that I have taken into consideration in this study is that of Pope Francis as peace mediator between Cuba and the US and the signing of a historical agreement between both countries in 2014 to re-establish their relations. "Even as the Vatican has spent decades building trust in Cuba, and working steadily to break down the impasse with the United States, it was Pope Francis who took the fateful risks – writing secret letters to President Obama and President Raul Castro of Cuba, and then offering the Vatican for a secret and critical meeting between both sides in October." (Yardley, 2014) A crucial actor also that served as a bridge with US was undoubtedly the Archbishop of Havana, Jaime Ortega.

5. *Pontifical Council for Culture*

Another instrument through which the Holy See exercises its soft power is also Pontifical Council for Culture. Founded by Pope John Paul II in the year 1982 this institution is responsible for all cultural issues of the Holy See. "The aim of it is establishing dialogue between the Church and the cultures of our time, so that they could open themselves up to the

Christian faith, which is a creator of culture as well as a source of science, letters and the arts." (Papal Council of Culture, n.d.) This Council organizes scientific conferences, international seminaries, it publishes scientific works and the magazine *"Cultures and Faith",* does meetings with representatives of cultural and religious institutions, with ambassadors of other countries accredited on the Holy See, cooperates with UNESCO and different NGOs and the most important one; keeps direct contacts with Papal Nuncios, preparing instructions and reports for them on every country in which they are accredited as representatives. Another important point that fulfills this institution is "cultural diplomacy". A specific case worth mentioning is also the using of diplomacy of art and the agreement of the year 2017 between the Holy See and China to improve their diplomatic relations. For the first time, forty works of the Chinese collections of the Vatican Museums would be exhibited in China, while forty works of the Chinese state collections would be exhibited in the Pope's museums: the exchange, which took place in the spring of 2018, was announced with a press conference in the Holy See's Press Room, in the presence of the Secretary General of the China Culture Investment Fund - who evoked the project of President Xi Jinping "One Belt, one Road" – and Maestro Zhang Yan, author of two large works that were donated some time ago to the Pope. The Vatican works would be exhibited first in the Imperial "Forbidden City" of Beijing and then in the cities of Xian and Shanghai." (Scaramuzzi, 2017) Sensitive towards Globalism and with a continuous reflection on the actual state of contemporary society this Council has found forms and different postmodern manners to transmit its religious message. An example from which I have been surprised is the attendance of the Holy See in the Biennale of Venice, respectively in the years 2013, 2015 and 2018. And all this vision to communicate with secular world thanks to an only mind, the director of this Council; Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi. "This cardinal not only realized the unthinkable and unimaginable for a Catholic conservative, when he exposed the garments of 40 priests in the Week of Mode in New York and a collection of clothes inspired from this religion ("Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination") but also he aims to open Catholic Church toward the sports, where currently he is in talks with International Olympic Community for the attendance of the Holy See probably in the Olympic Games of Tokyo of 2020. Let's mention here a statement of Cardinal Ravasi when he took this position in the year 2007: It is in the DNA of Christianity to reach out to all aspects of society while keeping in mind its own identity." (Pepinster, 2018)

6. Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

One of the main historical events that had a direct impact in the openness of Catholic Church was undoubtedly the XXI Council of Catholic Church, held by Pope John XXIII and called the Second Council of Vatican. (1962–1965) According to the historian and comparative religions scholar Eduart Caka (2015) "in the reformatted concept of embracing the world by the part of Catholic Church for the first time in its history and documents we will encounter with the term "dialog." (p.92) This dialogue, as it is emphasized in one of the most important documents of the Church *"Nostra Aetate"* was conceived in essence as a communication between Catholics and other Christians, between Catholics and two other Abrahamic Faiths (Judaism and Islam) and the last, between Catholics and Asiatic Faiths (Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism). Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue since the time when it was founded as an institution during the 1960s by Pope Paul IV up to now has played a constructive role not only in the "openness" of the Church toward other religions, in interreligious dialogue on the basis of some principles which unite more than divide them but also has influenced positively also in sensitive and concern issues of our time as: Hate, Prejudice, Antisemitism, Christianphobia, Islamophobia, Violent Extremism, Terrorism, etc. through constructive commitment of religious leaders in their respective communities and the *"diplomacy of Hope"*. "Vatican is deeply interested improving understanding with the Islamic World and currently is working with "the group of 138" – moderate Muslim scholars and clerics – supported by Jordan; Iranian clerics; Al-Azar University in Cairo and Saudi authorities. The Holy See does not believe theological agreements with Islam are possible, but it is convinced that better mutual knowledge will allay suspicions and facilitate peaceful co-existence, which they consider an even higher goal than simple "tolerance." (The Guardian, 2010) A vivid example that shows a successful work realized by this Council was the last visit of Pope Francis in the United Arab Emirates from the dates 3 up to 5 February, 2019, his meeting with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar University, Ahmed al Tayeb and the signing of the document *"On Human Fraternity, for the world peace and living together."* As it states the preamble of this document: "Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of His mercy), believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need. This transcendental value served as the starting point for several meetings characterized by a friendly and fraternal atmosphere where we shared the joys, sorrows and problems of our contemporary

world. We did this by considering scientific and technical progress, therapeutic achievements, the digital era, the mass media and communications. We reflected also on the level of poverty, conflict and suffering of so many brothers and sisters in different parts of the world as a consequence of the arms race, social injustice, corruption, inequality, moral decline, terrorism, discrimination, extremism and many other causes. From our fraternal and open discussions, and from the meeting that expressed profound hope in a bright future for all human beings, the idea of this Document on Human Fraternity was conceived." (Francis, 2019)

7. Catholic organizations with humanitarian, social and peacemaking character

" The Pope is the head of the biggest transnational religious organization in the world that has access in international relations and continues to be interested in International Law; Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the word *"catholic"* means "spread over in the whole world".[1] Being so, Catholic Church is compounded by a wide network of priests, cardinals, missionaries, non-governmental organizations and Christian volunteers that serve in the world and have influence on a plethora of souls. But the increasing of the Catholic Church impact in Modernity does not come by itself. According to the British scholar Jeff Haynes "not only the interfaith dialogue with Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Christianity) and Asiatic Religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) but also interest and concern of the Pope and other Catholic figures for democracy, human rights and social justice started after the Second Council of Vatican. This expression of interest was shown at a marked moment of the world politics; transition from colonial rule to that post-colonial of Africa, decolonization of Asian region and the birth of theology of liberation in South America. Beginning with the 1960s, spiritual and social engagement of Vatican on those countries started to grow up progressively. This explains the other fact of growing up in number of Catholics in these regions from 600 million in 1960 up to 1.3 billion actually." (Haynes, 2001, pp.143–158) From a quick research on the internet it results to me that Catholic Church owns the largest number of the organizations with social, educative and humanitarian purpose that operate actually in the world. "This fact is also confirmed by the research of the scholar Petersen who concludes that from 320 humanitarian e social organizations with religious bases that cooperate with IMF, WBO and other development agencies and registered in UN, 58% of them are Christian." (Herrington, McKay and Haynes,

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[1] The word "catholic" derives from the Greek word "katholou" (καθόλου) = in the whole. Katholikos (καθολικός) means "universal", in the whole world. (Encyclopedia Catholica Online, n.d.)

2015, p.190) For study effect let me enumerate as the most representative some of them: Caritas, Diakonia, Compassion International, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Refugee, etc. The spectrum of their activity is wide and diverse starting with problems like education, poverty, water resources, agriculture and HIV/AIDS in Africa up to civil emergencies, humanitarian crisis, peace and human rights issues, etc. Issues that Pope Francis has included in his newest concept *"culture of encounter"*. On the matter of peace a successful example that is worth mentioning is that of Saint Egidio Community (the biggest peacemaking Catholic organization) and its real contribution on the reaching of a national peace agreement in Mozambique. "On 4 October 1992, the feast of St. Francis, in Rome, the Mozambican president and secretary of Fre Li Mo Joaquim Chissano and Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the Re Na Mo, the guerrilla warfare from independence against the government of Maputo, signed a General Peace Agreement which ended 17 years of civil war (hundreds of thousands of deaths; 3-4 million internally displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries).The signing concluded a long negotiation process, which lasted a year and a few months, carried out at the headquarters of the Community of Sant'Egidio, in rooms that were not large, but welcoming, in a garden where banana trees stand out that remind one of Africa and a large olive tree which reminds us that we can begin to collaborate again after the fiery deluge of the armed opposition. There, in Trastevere, some members of the Community (the founder, Andrea Riccardi and a priest, Matteo Zuppi, today archbishop of Bologna), a Mozambican bishop (Jaime Gonçalves, ordinary of Beira, recently deceased) and a "facilitator" expression of Italian Government (Mario Raffaelli), they had patiently woven a dialogue between those who fought in the name of ideology and power. They had set up a negotiating framework based on the unity of the Mozambican people, in search of what unites and not what divides. With the General Peace Agreement, the delivery of guerrilla weapons to UN forces was established, the integration of ex-combatants into the regular army, procedures for de-mining and pacification of rural areas, a series of steps destined to transform armed confrontation between the parties in a competition based on constitutional and democratic rules. The 1994 elections, the first truly free in the former Portuguese colony, would have sanctioned the success of the entire negotiation process and given to Mozambique in a new season, primarily made of peace." (Saint Egidio Community, 2017)

Conclusions

This paper was a theoretical-practical approach, which through historical context and actuality intended to shed light on the use of "soft power" by the Holy See. Conclusions coming from this paper show that:

1. City-State of Vatican and the Holy See despite the fact that they are known as two particular and divided subjects by the International Law they fulfill each other in a complementary way.

2. Diplomacy of Vatican (bilateral and multilateral), quite differently of the other states is a "faith based diplomacy" which the Holy See realizes through the Pope, Secretariat of State, Apostolic Nuncios and a variety of other helping institutions as: Pontifical Council for Culture, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, etc. Considering the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is a transnational institution it exerts "soft power" through a wide network of individuals, NGOs and Catholic organizations with social, humanitarian and peacemaking character, etc. I mentioned some of them and gave as an example how the Saint Egidio Community, influenced on the reaching of Peace Agreement in Mozambique.

3. The Pope, as the most important person of this kind of diplomacy has used his power of calling and soft power not only as a proposer, supporter and propagator of multilateral projects (Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XII) but also as a successful mediator, as we showed through examples (Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis recently.) "In this context, the Holy See Diplomacy is a kind of diplomacy between the prophecy and realism." (The Pope's diplomacy…, n.d.)

4. Religions, as emphasizes Harvard Divinity School professor **Diane Moore** evolve and change in time.[2] The Second Council of Vatican (1962–1965) and its consequences prove this statement. Social Doctrine of Church (*Gaudium et spes*) and multilateral diplomacy, to engage together in facing challenges and problems of our time are "Boaz and Jakin" of the Holy See but at the same time a real indicator that shows in which ways the Holy See exercises soft power in International Relations arena.

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[2] The phrase above is taken by attendance on the lectures given by the professor **Diane Moore** during the eight weeks course *"Religion, Conflicts and Peace"* in the frame of Religious Literacy Project, organized by Harvard Divinity School.

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The emerging role of Iran in the Middle East

Raja Furqan Ahmed

Abstract

In the contemporary situation of the Middle East, Iran is trying to upgrade its status to dominate the region. On the other side, the major power United States America is frustrated by Iran's behaviour. The changing geopolitical environment has intensified the traditional military threats of the US for Iran's national security.

The research will explain the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and how Iran is playing its part in the disputes. Iran's counterpart Saudi Arabia wants to dominate region and to emerge to become a hegemonic power. Both states are fighting proxy wars in the Middle East. The comparative analysis will examine the position of Iran in these conflicts. The contemporary clashes which includes the Syrian civil war, Yemen crises, Iraqi insurgency (ongoing Iraqi protests), Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy war and the future position of Iran.

The research will also explain the role of Iran supporting Hezbollah, Hamas against Israel. Iran has started to maintain close ties with Russia and China. China has increased its interest in building infrastructure in the region. The research will analyse the future aspects and common interest of both states. The Iranian nuclear deal is also important to understand geopolitics of the region.

Further, this paper explores Iran's behaviour in the Middle East. The research is based on details which will be linked with the past events and established new views.

Iran – officially the Islamic Republic of Iran – is a country located in Western Asia, commonly known as the Middle East. It has a population of nearly 80 million according to the preliminary data from the decennial census conducted in 2016 approximately one-third is rural and two-thirds urban, located in the heart of the Persian Gulf region. (UNESCAP, 2018) It has nearly 1.65 million square kilometres between Iraq and Turkey on the west and Pakistan and Afghanistan on the east. This country has a unique culture and strong identity. Iran has rugged mountain chains surrounding by several basins inside. East of the Central Plateau there are two large desert regions. Lowland areas are located along the Caspian coast, in Khuzestan Province at the head of the Persian Gulf, and at several dispersed locations along the Persian Gulf and

Gulf of Oman coasts. Iran has no major rivers. The only river in Iran for navigable process is the Karun River.

Ali Khomeini is the supreme leader and Hassan Rouhani is the current president of Iran. According to the constitution of Iran, Shia Islam is declared to be the official religion of Iran. (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p.27) Around 90 percent of Iranians are Shia Muslims and about 8 percent are Sunni Muslims. Other religions present in Iran are Christianity, the Baha'i, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism. The constitution recognizes Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism, but not the Baha'i faith, as legitimate minority religions.

Iran is ethnically and culturally different from most other countries in the Middle East. The majority of its population is Persian. It is the only Shia state in the region that does not have diplomatic relations with the US.

Iran has a large amount of oil and natural gas resources. Oil reserves are estimated at more than a 130 billion and natural gas reserves at more than 32 trillion cubic meters (second in the world behind Russia). (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p.26) Mineral resources currently exploited include bauxite, chromium, coal, copper, gold, iron ore, limestone, strontium, red oxide, salt, sulphur, turquoise, and uranium. About 11 percent of Iran's land surface is capable for growing crops and other fertilizers. The most productive agricultural land, bordering the Caspian Sea, makes up about 5.5 percent of the country's total land.

Iran's economy is dominated by the oil industry, which is part of the state sector. In the early 2000s, more than 80 percent of export earnings came from the oil and gas. Iran has a number of large industries. Iran had an estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2017 of US$447.7 billion.

In contemporary world politics Iran has become a major regional player in the Middle East. Iran is trying to upgrade its status to dominate the region. Majority of the regional issues are due to Iran's involvement in the Middle Eastern conflicts to some degree. Following back to the past, since in 3200 BC the territory of Iran became the object of repeated interferences by external tribes and powers until the 20th century. This has strongly affected Iranian perceptions of the outside world as unfriendly and hostile. In 1979, Iran political structure changed. The Iranians deposed the Western backed Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and later fought an eight-year war against Iraq that ended in a military stalemate and essentially pushed the Islamic Republic towards a defensive posture to prevent future foreign interventions. After the Islamic

Revolution, Iran has attempted to increase its role and influence in the greater Middle East region.

After the overthrow of the Shah, Iran was ruled by religious leaders (theocracy) and hardliners on the basis of the revolutionary idea of *Velayat-e Faqih* (the Shia Islamist system of governance that justifies the rule of clergy over the state). (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p.33) Iran's animosity and distrust towards the United States and the West at large has been displayed through public statements by the Iranian leadership as well as official policies that challenge America's strategic interests specially in the Middle East, such as ensuring the security of Israel and US regional allies, protecting the access to regional resources and preventing the Iran from militarily dominating the region.

The Islamic revolution brought a sudden end to the role of Pahlavi dynasty which rule in its last 50 years had been identified with the attempt to modernize and westernize the country. The revolution replaced the monarchy with an Islamic republic, vesting ultimate power in the hands of a clerical leader and the clerical class as a whole – theocratic rule started in Iran.

In the recent years, political tensions in the Middle East have been reached in heights over the intersecting crises stemming from the Syrian civil war, the unravelling of the Iran nuclear agreement, the war in Yemen, Iraq protest, the Israel conflict, Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy and the future position of Iran. The common state participation in the conflict is the direct or indirect involvement of Iran. Iran dominates its hegemonic regime. Since 2012 the intervention in Syria has stoked anger and anxiety in the Gulf States, which fear Iran's regional hegemonic ambitions, as the main element in increasing the tension is due to the hegemonic war between the two major power of Middle East Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Gulf States felt abandoned by the US under the Obama administration, which they believed prioritized the nuclear agreement ahead of pressuring Iran over its regional policies. From the perspective of the Gulf States this has led to Iran's destabilizing influence spreading as which is the evidenced by its support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war, as its military support for the Houthis in the Yemeni civil war as well as the ongoing relationship with Lebanon's Hezbollah. (Vakil, 2018) Iran has also repeatedly been accused of promoting unrest in the region and supporting the principally Shia opposition in Bahrain.

Middle Eastern politics, alliances and interest are complex. The two major regional powers are Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The competing countries have different religion: Saudi Arabia has a population of Sunni majority whereas Iran is Shia majority state. They have created

different alliances as Saudi Arabia receive support and being a long-term ally of United States of America, while the USA has its own political and economic interests in the Middle Eastern region. Whereas Iran has been receiving support from eastern powers.

Hypothesis

The current political environment in the Middle East is forcing Iran to maximize its power through security policy.

Questions

- Why Iran is challenging the status quo?
- How Iran is countering the existing structure?

Theoretical framework

In the contemporary world states maximise power. This research use structural realism to scrutinize data regarding Iran's intensions in the Middle East. Now it is essential to develop proper conversance with basic assumptions of structural realism. Structural realism usually begins with the following assumptions:

- International system is anarchic; that is, there is no credible power above the states that compromise the system.
- States cannot be certain of the intentions of other states.
- At least some states have offensive capabilities.
- That states have preferences which they seek to realize, and that survival is a prerequisite for realizing such a preference.

From above defined premises structural realism guides us towards the following aspects. The Structural Theory composes of offensive and defence realism. The offensive is going for power maximization and the defence one is going towards security maximization. First of all a state requires survival in order to seek its preferences in a global world in which all states seeks to survive. It is because of an equivocal aura prevailing in the international environment. States

are deeply concerned about balance of power and compete among themselves either to gain power at the expense of others or at least to make sure they do not lose power. (Mearsheimer, 2001)

Iran challenging the status quo

After the death of Ayatollah Khomeini the first supreme leader of Iran in 1989 marked the beginning of the transformation of Iran from a revolutionary state into a status quo power. Instead of exporting revolution, Iran begun to focus on the reconstruction and regional stability. A number of factors contributed to this transformation.

Tensions between Iran and the Gulf states are not new phenomena but occurred throughout the recent history. Disagreements have arisen due to internal political developments, ethnic and sectarian differences, and also the strategic and territorial rivalries. Iran is now challenging the status quo to maintain its regional position.

The Arab Spring also plays an important role in destabilizing the region. (History, 2018) The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy uprisings that happened in several Muslim countries, including Tunisia, Iraq Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Bahrain. The events in these nations generally began in the spring of 2011. However, the political and social impact of these popular uprisings remains significant till today.

Iran proxies in the Middle East

Due to the political struggle of Iran in the globalised world, it created proxies to maintain its position in this map. It is a historical fact, that Iran has not been a significant factor in the Yemen crises. (Feierstein, 2018) It has maintained a diplomatic presence in Sanaa, but its influence during the two decades before the war was marginal. During the six Saadah wars between 2004 and 2010, former President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh gave a statement that Iran was supporting the Houthis, but US analysts found little evidence to support his claims. Ties between the Yemeni governments which are backed by Saudi Arabia in Aden have been damaged in the recent years by Iran's support for the rival in Sanaa linked to the Houthi movement.

In 2011 and 2012, Iran's role began to change during the Arab Spring uprising. Tehran's support for the Houthis increased in that period, although Iran was not involved in the negotiations that led to Saleh's resignation. Iran became an important actor in the regional backdrop to the war in Yemen, while Saudi Arabia has made it position clear to support the official government.

From Iran's point of view, the takeover in Sanaa by the Houthis it is the natural consequence of the Yemeni government's repression and external relations. Saudi Arabia justifies its military operation by as President 'Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's call help from Saudi Arabia for the protection of Yemen and Yemeni people. In the same time Iran believes this intervention as illegal and unjust. (BBC, 2019a) On the other side Saudi Arabia sees Houthis as a proxy of Iran. Considering the fact that the Shia Houthis share same religion with Iranians, Iran's assistance was not surprising. Despite that Iran's official government was denying the support for Houthi rebels, Iran has a large influence in reality. According to UN reports, Yemen is considered being in the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with almost 15 million people at risk of starvation and repeated outbreaks of deadly diseases such as cholera, etc. In this conflict Iran is challenging its counterpart Saudi Arabia to maintain the regional hegemony. In the recent year a drone attack was done by Houthis on Saudi Arabia's oil refineries. Iran has been widely blamed by Saudi Arabia and Western powers regarding the attacks, but Iran officially denied those. The attack also proved how much Houthis are influenced by Iran.

Another important conflict in the Middle East is the civil war in Syria which started after the outbreak of the Arab Spring and it is still ongoing. The Islamic Republic of Iran has done vast efforts to keep President Bashar al-Assad in power. Iran had provided significant support for the Syrian government in the civil war which included financial, technical, and logistical assistance as well as training of the troops. The main reason for supporting Assad regime by Iran is to counter US and Saudi Arabia.

There are both domestic as well as foreign factors involved in the Syrian crisis. Mainly four main groups are fighting. Firstly, the Syrian armed forces and its allies which includes Iran, Russia and specially the Lebanese Hezbollah; secondly, Kurds then thirdly, the ISIS, and the fourth group is the Syrian rebels who are supported by the US, the Gulf States, Turkey, Israel and Saudi Arabia. (Pan, 2006) According to reports, the CIA trained nearly 10,000 rebels. In the crisis the main conflict is between the Shia and the Sunni. Assad's regime gets support from

Shia states as well as from Shia militant organizations but on the other side Al-Qaida – the Sunni militarized organization – is backed by the Sunni Gulf States.

It is also a fact that the relations between Iran and Syria do not depend on religious differences as Syria is officially a secular state while Iran has a political system of a religious rule. Instead their bilateral relations were strengthened in political and strategic points. Even when Iran's economy was shrinking and it faced with sanctions, Iran still helped Syria financially.

In a new development Iran has starting new relation with China. Recently China has increased their interest in building infrastructure. (Torfeh, 2019) The new Silk Road project boosts the economy of Iran. As China is a rival of the USA in geopolitical sense, it makes it a natural ally with Iran due to both of them not having close ties with Washington. China and Iran have developed a broad and deep partnership. The increase of their economic ties, arms sales and defence cooperation is against the United States. This partnership also threats the US interest and objectives in the Middle East. Recently China and Russia along with Iran conducted a naval exercise in the Northern Indian Ocean. The three states appear to have primary objectives to protect the security of their shipping routes and countering the influence of the United States in the region.

The main security threat in the Middle East at present is the ongoing efforts by the United States to destabilize the nations that refuse to cooperate with the US in the global system of hegemony. Iran along with its allies are challenging the status quo and forces of US domination. A greater level of cooperation by Russia, China and Iran increases the level of stability and security in the region. However, there is also a greater risk for potential confrontation between the Western and Eastern powers in the region.

The Hamas and Hezbollah are also influenced by Iran. Hezbollah is the Shia Islamic militant and political organization based in Lebanon. Hezbollah acts as a proxy of Iran in the Israeli-Iranian conflict. Hamas is the Sunni Islamic organization working in the Gaza Strip. The group was founded and supported by Iran. Both groups are working for the interest of Iran against Israel in the region.

Iraq also plays a key role in the contemporary situation of the Middle East. After the overthrown of Saddam Hussein and during the Arab Spring, Iranian influence increased in Iraq. In early 2014 when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or Daesh) started to intervene in Iraq's major cities; Iran tried to intervene. After the regime changed in Iraq, Iran could strengthen its

influence in its neighbour. Iran-backed militias assisted to the Iraqi government to fight ISIS. Iran not only sent military equipment and fighters but is supported Iraq financially and logically. Iran creates proxies to ensure their influence. In the current situation, after the death of General Qasem Soleimani who was an Iranian major general in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from 1998 until his death, commander of its Quds Force, a division primarily responsible for extraterritorial military both Iran and Iraq come close to each other. One of the highest rank officers who was killed in Iraqi soil in a drone attack by the US opened threat and challenge to Iran but this action also promoted conflict in the Middle East. As a response Iran could not engaged into conventional warfare but it could attack national interests or fight proxy wars. After the attack it is expected that Iraq is now the place where future war can be predicted or it will be a buffer zone between the US and Iran. A day by day escalation also increases the chance of war in the region and this war will directly affect the Middle East and the wider Asian region.

Iran nuclear deal

Iran nuclear deal also plays a significant role in the Middle Eastern politics. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program. (Vakil, 2018) The deal was finalised in Vienna on July 14, 2015. This deal was made between Iran and the P5+1 states: the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – Russia, France, China, United Kingdom and the United States – and Germany along with the European Union. (BBC, 2019b) The deal was successfully adopted by both parties. The deal took almost 20 months to be finalised. As a consequence Iran had to eliminate enriched uranium stockpiles. For the next 15 years Iran will only enrich uranium up to 3.67%. To monitor and verify Iran's compliance with the agreement, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will have regular access to all Iranian nuclear facilities. In return, Iran will receive relief from related sanctions. But now this deal is in deadlock. On May 8, 2018, President Donald J. Trump announced the United States' withdrawal from the international nuclear pact with Iran. As he stated, the deal was one-sided and it did not bring peace. Other states stayed member of the deal. Recently the US administration puts maximum pressure on Iran and due to the economic sanctions Iran faces a serious crisis. As a response, Iran also plays its game through the proxies as in the recent attacks on the oil refinery in Saudi Arabia by the Houthis Iran gives the message that if they cannot sell

oil and gain the proceeds we will try to ensure that others cannot do either. In present time Iran also announced to end the commitment to the nuclear deal after the killing of General Solemani. The statement said by Iran officials that Iranian government would no longer limit the enrichment of uranium so the new era of conflict will emerge. Iran also announced that it would still cooperate with the International Atomic Agency and re-enter the nuclear deal if the sanctions are removed.

The proxy's war between Saudi Arabia and Iran is challenging the world to participate others in their event. There are allied countries which also participate and support each of the states to show their presence and support toward their alliance.

In the current situation, Iran is going toward maximization of power through influencing others by hook or by crook. The main objective of Iran is the maximization of power in the region in line with offensive realism and then to come towards maximization of security in line with defensive realism. Through this process Iran can ensure its presence in the global system.

Iran is challenging the status quo to maintain its presence in the global map and through fighting and participating in different events Iran put its value especially in the Middle Eastern conflicts such as Yemen. Iraq and Syria moves towards Iran, so Iran is countering the status quo through its hard power as well as soft power.

Conclusion

In the contemporary world there is a paradox myth that Iran is going towards maximization of power. According to Richard N. Haass, the world is in the age of non-polarity. (Haass, 2008) It is important to maintain that states act in their own interest as the world is anarchic in nature, so every state has to make sure their presence in this world. Iran – the core state of the Middle East – is involved in a large number of conflicts in the region. Saudi Arabia – the other core state of the region – is also involved in a vast number of ongoing conflicts.

The US considers Iran as the major threat to the US interests and the Trump administration announced sanctions and withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) that indirectly threat the US. On the other side, Iran also announced to end commitments to the nuclear deal after killing of Soleimani. Iran further announced to take the revenge of Soleimani. As per realist tradition, when the status quo is being challenged, the

conflict emerges. Iran challenges the superpower United States. In the response the US tries to destabilise Iran's position in the region with its alliance such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

It is also fact that Iran is not in better position in conventional warfare but in proxies Iran dominates the region. Iran will try not to participate in conventional war but it can be involved in proxy wars. After the death of General Soleimani, the tensions in the Middle East has been increased and there is a possibility of war.

In the upcoming era, the new war will be started most properly in a form of a proxy war that will define the position and future aspirations of Iran and it will also reshape the map of the Middle East.

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Participation of women in Uganda politics
(liberal feminism theory)

Winner Iyanuoluwa Obayomi

Abstract

This paper tends to examine the increasing number of women in Uganda politics and their effectiveness in policy making and decision making because having women in most political positions doesn't mean that lives are going to improve. This paper also provide answer to: what challenges were faced by women in participating in politics and how was it overcome? It also shows that the establishment of National resistance movement (NRM) in 1986 has helped women in political participation in electives offices. The liberal feminist approach will be used in this paper.

Since early 1990s, Uganda has been among the pioneers African continent as far as women's inclusion in policy-making. Different nations, for example, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), have shown a significant development in women's involvement in decision making following the time of conflict. Women have been given significant political and policy-making areas in Uganda. Nonetheless, women have a decline level of self-rule and control over the advancement of women's rights and gender equality. Gender equality has been numerous international organizations' agendas since the establishment of democratization in Africa. The Beijing Platform for Action 1995 embraced by United Nations (UN) fourth world conference on women's empowerment which aim to remove all hindrances to women active involvement in every aspect of both private and public life guaranteeing women's equivalent and full offer in economic, social, cultural and political decision making, and ensured that power and responsibilities is shared women and men at home, work environment and in the more extensive national and international communities Likewise The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1324 of 2000.

Madiha Mazhar (2003) state that liberal feminism is an individualistic type of women's activist hypothesis, which centres on women capacity to keep up their uniformity through their own behaviour and decisions. Liberal feminism's focus is on making the lawful and political

privileges of women equivalent to men. Liberal feminism is also known as liberal women's activists which argue that the world holds the deception that women are, naturally, less mentally and physically fit than men, along these lines it will, in general, victimize ladies in the school, the environment, and the commercial centre. Liberal women's activists trust that "female subjection is established in a lot of standard and legitimate requirements that obstructs women entrance to and success in the supposed open world." They make progress toward sexual correspondence by means of political and legitimate change.

The notion of political participation

Participation is an advancement approach which perceives the need to include hindrance sections of populace in the plan and execution of policies concerning their welfare. The fortifying of women's participation in all aspects of life has turned into a noteworthy issue in the development speeches and consequently, socioeconomic improvement cannot be completely accomplished without the dynamic involvements of women in the basic leadership level in all society. Then again political participation alludes the dynamic involvement and commitment by people both men and women with a political procedure that influence their lives. The demonstration of active commitment includes casting a ballot which means voting, representing office, joining of political group or to partake in the political crusades of the political groups/parties and to apply impact in the basic leadership process through public debate, and discuss with the delegates they chose or through their ability to arrange themselves, or exercise public power by holding public office at various dimensions of organizations and administrations; indigenous, territorial, national and international. Consequently, political participation is comprehended as an essential for political improvement thus, by enlightening women political participation, given that they establish over a half of the total populace may assist to progress political advancement and improve the value of women's lives. Indeed, without the lively participation of women, and the unification of women point of view at all dimensions of decision making or leadership capacity, the objectives of equality, development and harmony cannot be accomplished.

The importance of women participation in Uganda politics

Haque (2005) argues that the political participation of women is fundamental to convey authenticity to government and set up democracy in its genuine and practical way, as legitimacy and dependability of democracy can be being referred to if women, who are half of the populace, stay underestimated or isolated from the political and public establishments in the community. Notwithstanding this, the degree and dimension of women portrayal in the administration have impressive and noteworthy effects on the lives of the general population in any operational political and public setting. In this way, increasing women's participation and representation in the political and public leadership positions:

(1). Is a question of democracy, self-governing procedure, and equality just as an issue of political and human rights that has been assured by the global organizations (UN) conventions, treaties, pledges and agreements?

(2). Encourages more changes and make ready for more spaces to women: This requires the proficient, maximum and fair use of human, monetary, material and information resources by every single individual.

(3). Avoids the inquiries that would be raised about the authenticity of the democratic procedure and the major leadership experts.

(4). Can permit women to address their essential problems and needs in the public; and guarantees the receptiveness (openness), genuine battle against rent-seeking (basically the current extensive corruption), responsibility, political obligation, political governance, and political responsiveness of the current national, provincial, zonal/regions, and local stages of political democracy, democratization procedure, and administration of the legislatures and political organizations, and advances harmony and democratic improvement in any nation as a whole.

Furthermore, without more prominent representation of women in governmental and decision-making positions as well as in the legal executive, it is hard to accomplish participatory, responsible, and straightforward administration which can guarantee political, social, cultural and financial priority objectives of the more extensive society. Though everybody has the right to take an interest in choices that define his or her life. This right is the basis of the model of equal participation in basic leadership positions among men and women. This right claims that since women discern their condition best, they ought to take part equally with men to have their

viewpoint well incorporated at all stages of major leadership positions, from the private to the public circles of their lives, from the neighbourhood to the international. Equality in political leadership positions performs a leverage function without which it is exceptionally far-fetched that genuine incorporation of the equality dimension in a government organization is possible. In this regard, women's equal participation in political life assumes a crucial role in the general procedure of the development of women. Women's equal participation in leadership positions or policymaking is not just a demand for basic equity or democracy yet can likewise be viewed as an important situation for women's interests to be considered. Indeed, without the lively participation of women, and the unification of women point of view at all dimensions of decision making or leadership capacity, the objectives of equality, development and harmony cannot be accomplished.

The gender politics and changes in Uganda

In the early 1990s, there has been pressure for political change in both local and international and many military governments and dictatorships were displaced and replaced by elected governments across the continent. These political changes had a strong impact on women, as there was open political space in some ways, but also tended to weaken the little protection which had been afforded by the state. However a large number of states crumbled into war and violent conflict in the 1990s, and this war had impacts on women and gender relations, with implications for women's roles in politics afterwards. The war fought was to end colonial rules in the 1970s-1980 but the liberation of wars in the latter case was not only to end colonial rules but also to establish new politics, which also shows the importance for women's equality. Uganda failed to achieve economic potential even after independence, there was political corruption, backed terror and violence which targeted women in particular ways common to other situations of conflict. Political parties were founded on religious and or regional lines and had no obvious dedication to challenging gender inequalities. The women suffering was intense during this economic and political turmoil and were forced to depend on their resources rather than to get support from the state or other formal political structures in providing subsistence needs for themselves and their families. In 1981 the Ugandan conflict took a new turn, with the declaration by Museveni that his National Resistance Movement (NRM) was engaged in a liberation war for the whole country. National Resistance Movement came to power in 1986 during the colonial period and continue to grow after independence they have helped women's

movement to become the strongest mobilized societal forces in Uganda. The arrival of the National Resistance Movement government in 1986, Museveni ensured women's political representation by establishing the position of "Secretary for Women's Affairs" at every level of the Resistance Council hierarchy, from village to the national level. Immediately after the coup, the NRM regime appointed women to key positions in the government such as ministers, cabinet members, permanents secretaries, members of special commissions and other important posts. Uganda was the first to appoint a woman as the vice president in Africa (Tripp 1994) with roughly 18% female representation in local government ensured by the 1995 constitution which makes Uganda the most Africa countries with female political representatives. Women's organizations were active in the process of revising 1995 constitution and there were provisions to enhance women position and also pursued legislation affecting women. The ideology of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took serious steps to fight against discrimination on ethnicity, sex, religion, and education. Where men and women will be treated equally, it also acknowledged that women's contribution to the NRM was vital and should be recognized as such.

Ottemoeller (1999) argues that "women's increased political visibility was partly the result of vote-seeking by politicians who could no longer afford to cultivate traditional sources of patronage. In an era of economic liberalization, they could secure support from women with relatively low-cost symbolic political initiatives" (ibid: 87). With NRM in power, quite a number of men and women were convinced of peaceful changes in the society that will bring out equality. President Yoweri Museveni was among the men that support equality while others were not so convinced, however, because of the experience of being in the army, or war never saw the way forward as challenging gender relations in a profound way. Indeed, as with some people in other liberation movements, the "women's issue" was often seen as potentially delaying the achievement of the bigger political project, even women experienced the distinctive forms of disadvantage typical of a war situation, such as rape and sexual abuse. Furthermore, because of the nature of Uganda's conflicts, many people remained isolated from the types of social change and discussion about gender issues occurring elsewhere in Africa and internationally.

Challenges faced by women participating in politics

The segregation and exclusion of women participating in politics and major leadership positions processes were part of the things inherited by mankind's history. Notwithstanding when democracy had to birth antiquated Athens in the 5th century BC, the exclusion of women from participating in politics and major leadership positions was already existing. With regards to the instance of Uganda, women's status in the public sector and politics is ongoing in some phenomena and yet their participation is very minimal. They are still to a great extent underrepresented in major leadership positions at all stages. They have likewise not gained significant ground in getting political power in administrative bodies. The amount of chosen women agents is still very small. Most Ugandan women are occupied with official employment, however, are underrepresented in both the middle and upper administration positions. The population of women pioneers and policymakers at the different stages of the dispersed government structure is still exceptionally little. Consequently, for a range of reasons and challenges women will, in general be hesitant to participate in politics and some of these challenges are discussed below:

1. Socio-cultural challenges

In many nations, their customs keep on accentuating women's essential tasks as moms and housewives and to limit them to those roles. A customary resilient, male-controlled value system supports explicitly isolated roles and conventional social values which militate against the advancement, participation and the progress of women in any political process. All communities throughout the world are ruled by a belief system of a woman's place. As per this philosophy, women should just assume the job of a working mother, which is commonly low-paid and unopinionated. In certain nations, men even advise and inform women on how to cast a ballot. This is the society, wherein a specific aggregate picture of women in traditional, apolitical jobs keeps on ruling, which numerous women face. In such manner, socialization assumptions make emphasis on character that is gained first in one's lifetime through developmental bodies, with the existence of customary sex function learnt at home, neighbourhood, schools and the work environment. In societies with traditional ethics concerning the role of women at home and in the family, numerous women might be hesitant to run for an office they seek for, they may fail to pull in an adequate party and election and voting support in order to win. In particular, in Uganda, women are viewed as subordinate to

men and below average individuals/residents both in the family and in the community particularly in many regions of the country.

2. Religious challenges

Religion is another significant origin of social convictions in many nations. Contentions about the inferiority of women to men have been existing in every prevailing religion, and religion has for some time been a tool that has been engaged to exempt women from parts of a political, and religious lifestyle in the globe.

Be that as it may, the main religions in the world are differentially traditionalist or male-centric in their perspectives regarding the position of women, both at the religious order and in the community. For instance, the Protestantism advances non-hierarchical spiritual activities and also promptly acknowledges women as pioneers of the religion in comparison with Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism Christianity. Furthermore, Islamic law is regularly translated in a way that compels the activities of women. Consequently, the exemption of women from religious institutes and religious administration may negatively affect women's status in the community and restrict their opportunities in public life, politics and governmental affairs.

3. Economic factors

The women's historical experience of discrimination places them off guard position in terms of economic. The social and economic positions of women to a more noteworthy degree assume a major role in upgrading their participation in political policy-making groups.

Shvedova (2002) contends that economic and the social status of women in the community has an effect on their participation in elected groups and political institutes. It can also be seen as the absence of economic assets which is the greatest hindrances that keep women from partaking in politics. Making it simpler for women to have access to economic assets, subsequently, is a strategic way in increasing women's presence in the political domain. Seyedeh et al (2006) carried out a study which uncovered that the vast majority of women are monetarily subject to their spouses or relatives. So they might not have the things it takes to enter into a political campaign. So women are usually reliant on men economically which is the primary reason for their low participation in governmental matters and politics of the nation.

4. Gender roles – patriarchy:

The family is the major institute of patriarchy, which is a vital concept in the explanation of gender inequity. It normally means the rule of the father which is all the more comprehensively and indicates to a community governed and ruled by men over women. This is innate in most of the Uganda families which gives men a higher economic status over women which has crept into the community lifestyle, which replicates in the state events also. The family plays a significant role in keeping up the order of patriarchy over the ages. The best mental and emotional weapon accessible to man is the time span they have delighted in predominance over ladies, who have underestimated it particularly in the region of politics that frequently keep on stereotyping females and justifying their subordination. In numerous communities, women are seen as frail and incompetent of making clever decisions.

How the challenges of women participation in politics has been overcome

Museveni (1986) made some certifiable move that has been the fundamental political mechanism utilized in Uganda to support females' political participation in the Local Council (till 1996 this was known as the Resistance Council) administration system. This five-level of the system begins from the community, in which Local Councils are straightforwardly chosen. Village Local Council sends delegates to the next level of government, up to the National Assembly in Kampala, every one of the nation's twenty-two (32) areas are partitioned into five managerial regions, with Local Councils at each tier. A unique seat for women which is the Secretary for Women's Affairs is obligatory among the nine seats at every one of the five Local Council tiers. The goal is to regulate the portrayal of women as a unique group. Each region to elect a woman delegate to sit in the National Assembly. Though at first, the presence of this unique seat connected women's participation in indigenous political issues exclusively with women's issues, they have been contending in ever more prominent numbers in local elections in the course of the most recent decade for different seats on these chambers, with a couple of winning the administrator's seat who is the chairperson in the 1992 indigenous and local elections.

Ahikire (1994) makes us understand that the system has brought about an undeniably considerable presence of women in government, since the year 1989 women have about eighteen (18) percent of them in the National Assembly positions, most of these seats are those

reserved through governmental policy as regards minorities in society. In addition, in spite of the fact that there is no unequivocal governmental policy regarding minorities in society arrangement in the civil service, though during the year 1995 women were sensibly well represented by uprightness both of straight appointments and normal or consistent promotional procedures which consist of:

A.   Twenty-one (21) percent of Permanent Secretaries.

B.   Twenty-six (26) percent of under-secretaries.

C.   Sixteen (16) percent of District Administrators.

Though, the president of Ugandan whose name is Museveni has tried placing women in sensitive political positions, amazingly prominent positions, for example, the 1988 arrangement and appointment of a woman called Betty Bigombe as the Minister for the Pacification of the Northern region, where the woman has been the most unmistakable moderator in Uganda's consistent civil war. In a nation whose farming is overwhelmed by women, the president has demanded on delegating women as the Ministers of Agriculture. In the year 1994, the president also appointed a woman whose name is Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, as the Vice President which happened for the first time in the history of Uganda and Africa in general. He has chosen not many women to his Cabinet posts, notwithstanding. There is an extensive discussion among women's activists in Uganda on the benefits of the governmental policy regarding minorities in the system of society.

Tamale (1997) causes us to understand that a few women have treated the governmental policy regarding minorities in society seats as the initial step into competitive politics, with ten of these women who were in governmental policy regarding minorities in society seats in the year 1989 parliament contending against men for district seats in the election that took place in the year 1996 where six of them won the election. The governmental policy regarding minorities in society system has had the incredible benefit of giving space to expanding the numerical representation of women in legislative issues and politics, awaiting the advancement of a women's programme that has the capacity to rally election support for them.

The nonattendance of party divisions has made open doors for women's activists among women legislators or politicians to stimulate others into going about as sincere delegates of women, as is at present being shown in the unified front women parliamentarians are expanding on matters of abusive behaviour at home and basic women's civil rights to land proprietorship. An active

and effective coordinated effort was likewise exhibited in the Constituent Assembly by the Women's Group, which is a non-fanatic association vivified by women's activist legislators, for example, the district seat holder Winnie Byanyima. This group was in charge of the dynamic arrangements on gender orientation composed into the 1995 constitution, guaranteeing that the last Ugandan constitution identifies gender equity under the law, restricts laws, traditions, and customs that demoralize the position of women, provides the foundation of an Equal Opportunities Commission to tell that established standards are authorized and provides a development of the quantities of women agents to at least 33% of the parliament and local governmental groups. This final establishment proposes that despite indecision with respect to the apparent authenticity of access to governmental issues through governmental policy as regards minorities in the society, it is still observed as important in overpowering gender prejudices in the democratic and election system.

Conclusion

There was a cross segment of challenges that prevent women's entrance to political participation in Ugandan. Be that as it may, the administration of Ugandan has announced its duty to gender equity and empowerment of women by specifying the human rights of women in its constitution, issuing the women policy of the nation and National Action Plan for gender equity to put the gender mainstreaming to be active in Uganda and in its districts over the different policies. In spite of every one of these, women are still at the lower position and in the nation they occupy a low position in the community. Their contribution to the formulation of policy and major leadership position processes has been insignificant. Be that as it may if half of the world population stays helpless against financial, political, legitimate and social underestimation, the desire for progressing democracy and affluence will remain in severe jeopardy. Furthermore the dynamic participation of females, on equivalent terms with men, at all stages of major leadership position is vital to the accomplishment of equality, maintainable development, harmony and democracy and the incorporation of their points of view and encounters into the processes of the policy-making and leadership positions can lead to the results that satisfy more people in the community, which possess social advantages, better and increasingly proper political, social, lawful, and financial solutions for their challenges.

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POLARITY. CHINA AS A SUPERPOWER

OR A POSSIBLE CANDIDATE IN THE FUTURE

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China has been oftentimes defined as a fragile superpower – strong aboard but fragile at home – due to the downfall that occurred in 1976 when Mao Zedong, the founding father of People's Republic of China (PRC), died. (Glass, 2016) But is China's chance at becoming a superpower wasted? Does not China's economic growth and the role of being the highest populated country in the world mean anything? To answer these questions, we must go back to what Jacques Barzun stated in April 1965: "To see ourselves as others see us is a rare and valuable gift, without a doubt. But in international relations what is still rarer and way more valuable is to see others as they see themselves." (Barzun, 1965)

Polarity in international relations alludes to the arrangement of power inside the international framework. The concept emerged from bipolarity amid the Cold War, with the international framework ruled by the struggle between two superpowers, and has been applied reflectively by theorists. In any case, the term bipolar was eminently utilized by Stalin who said he saw the international framework as a bipolar one with two contradicting powerbases and philosophies. Thus, the international framework before 1945 can be portrayed as multipolar, with power being shared among Great powers. After the shock therapy economic reform Russia's been through, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that had led to unipolarity giving the United States the role a sole superpower, despite many refusing to acknowledge the fact. The event made it so that they showed no significant growth in the years that came, whereas China has shown significant progress since 1978, despite the authoritarian political regime they were under. China's continuous fast financial growth – the world's second-largest economy in 2010 – respectable international position, and the power the Chinese Government applies over its individuals (comprising of the biggest populace in the world), brought about a debate over whether China is ranked as a superpower or a possible candidate in the near future. However, China's strategic force unable of projecting power beyond its region and its nuclear arsenal of 250 warheads (compared to 7,700 of the United States) could be a deciding factor as of now

regarding China's stepping up as a superpower, resulting in persistence of the existing unipolarity in the policy-relevant future. (Newton, 2019, pp.47–48) Several speculations of international relations draw upon the thought of polarity. The balance of power was a concept predominant in Europe before the Primary World War, the thought being that by balancing power coalitions it would bring steadiness and avoid war. Speculations of the balance of power picked up noticeable quality once more amid the Cold War, being a central component of Kenneth Waltz's Neorealism. Here, the concepts of rising in control to counter another (balance) and siding with another (bandwagoning) are created. Robert Gilpin's Hegemonic steadiness hypothesis also draws upon the thought of polarity, particularly the state of unipolarity. Hegemony is the dominance of power at one post within the international framework, and the hypothesis contends typically a steady arrangement due to common gains by both the dominant power and others in the international framework. This is often opposite to numerous neorealist arguments, especially the ones made by Kenneth Waltz, expressing the fact that the end of the Cold War and the state of unipolarity is an unsteady arrangement that will inevitably change. The case of Gilpin demonstrated to be correct and Waltz's article titled "The Stability of a Bipolar World" (Waltz, 1964, pp.881–909) was taken after in 1999 by William Wohlforth's article, arguing the opposite. (Wohlforth, 1999, pp.5–41) The thesis composed by Waltz can be communicated in a power move speculation that states the fact that it is likely that an extraordinary power would start another hegemon after a certain period of time, resulting in a major war. It proposes that whereas hegemony can control the event of wars, it moreover provokes the creation of one. Its primary advocate, A. F. K. Organski contended this based on the occurrence of past wars amid Dutch, Portuguese, and British authority.

The ceaseless coverage the People's Republic of China gets within the prevalent press of its developing superpower status is incredibly high. It has been recognized as a rising or developing financial growth and military superpower by academics and other experts. In reality, the "rise of China" has been named the best news story of the 21st century by the Global Language Monitor, due to a high number of appearances within the worldwide print and electronic media, on the Web and blogosphere, and in social media. The term "Second Superpower" has been used by researchers to the plausibility that the People's Republic of China seems to develop with worldwide power and impact on par with the United States. (Wood, 2000, p.155) The potential for the two countries to form stronger relations to address global issues is sometimes referred to as the Group of Two. In 2004, B. Buzan declared that "China certainly presents the foremost promising profile of a potential superpower." Buzan

moreover claimed that "China is as of now the preeminent fashionable potential superpower and the one whose degree of estrangement from the prevailing worldwide society makes it the foremost self-evident political challenger." In any case, he watched and noted that this challenge is obliged by the major challenges of progression and by the reality that its rise may trigger a counter solidification of states in Asia. (Buzan, 2004, p.70) In later times, the agreement has concluded that China has come to the qualifications of superpower status, citing the way China's developing political influence and leadership in the financial segments has given the country renewed standings in the International Community. In spite of the fact that China's military projection is still in its first phase and untested, the humiliation gotten by the U.S. authorities in coming up short to anticipate its closest allies in joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2015) along with the Belt and Road Initiative and China's role in the worldwide groundings of the Boeing 737 MAX, (Aboulafia, 2019) was seen as a paradigm shift or an inflection point to the unipolar world arranges that ruled post-Cold War international relations. Øystein Tunsjø, a well-known University Professor, contends that competition between the U.S and China will only increase over the years, leading to the crevice between them diminishing, whereas the crevice between the two nations and the rest of the top ten largest economies will extend. Additionally, economics correspondent, Peter S. Goodman and Jane Perlez, the Beijing Bureau Chief of China, further expressed that China is employing a combination of its financial might and developing military progressions to weight, coerce and alter the current world arrange to suit China's interests at the cost of the United States and its allies. The 2019 Chinese Defense White Paper highlights developing vital competition between China and the United States in spite of the fact that it stops short of the military and ideological encounter that appeared amid the Cold War. Although, concurring to Anthony H. Cordesman, even though the paper mentioned both China and the US as competing superpowers, it was way more lenient in its treatment of the US in contrast its view on Chinese military developments. On August 19, 2019, the United States Studies Centre has given out a report, suggesting that Washington has decided to stop appreciating supremacy within the Indo-Pacific. It stresses that the War on Terror has significantly occupied US response to China's part within the Pacific; that US military power within the region have significantly decayed while Beijing only developed stronger and more competent since 9/11, to the point that China may actively challenge the United States over the Indo-Pacific. That is why a forceful reaction is not beyond the pale. Flashpoints for clashes between China and the United States have increased lately. And in spite of the fact that most Americans have overlooked this, China and the United States came to the brink of war in 1996.

The Chinese propelled enormous military exercises and shot rockets into the waters outside Taiwan's ports to illustrate their anger at how Taiwan's president got permission to visit the United States for the first time since the U.S derecognized Taiwan and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1979.

During the six decades since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has consistently increased the emphasis its military doctrine places on information. (Whitney, Mcnamara and Walton, 2019, p.20) Chinese military thinking has transitioned from seeing data as an enabler of warfare to seeing it as the mainline of military exertion in a way that has reflected DoD's own evolution toward network-centric warfare. Network-centric warfare concepts were first discussed during the 1990s and implemented during U.S. operations since 2001 in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. For example, whereas China's 2004 defense white paper emphasized "Local Wars Under Informationized Conditions," the 2015 version called on PLA units to be ready to fight "Informationized Local Wars." Is it possible we are analyzing the possible clash between the U.S. and China the wrong way? With technology's rise in the past decades, the leaders of the world might have come to the conclusion that the one who controls the cyberspace controls the world. Gouvernements and militaries around the world are all scrambling to control the digital space even as they slash defense spending in other areas, rapidly building up cyber forces with which they aim to protect their virtual domains and assault those of their rivals. But we don't know how much cyberspace matters, at least in security terms. Could this mean that the 21st century's Cold War will be fought online, waged as unseen, and with practically no real-world consequences? Or is it rising as the most critical battle-space of the information age, the critical domain where future wars will be lost and won? As of now, a few states look like they are quite pleased to blunder on the side of intensity when it comes to cyber. This brazen approach to cyber operations – rehashed assaults took after by regularly feeble refusals – nearly proposes a view of cyberspace as a parallel universe in which activities do not carry real-world consequences. This would be a risky assumption. The victims of cyber-attacks are getting to be progressively touchy around what they see as acts of hostility, and are developing more slanted to strike back, either lawfully, essentially, or maybe kinetically. The United States, in specific, seems to have run out of tolerance with the stream of cyber-attacks focusing on them from China – Google and The New York Times being only two of the most high-profile victims – and which President Obama demanded in the past for these attacks to be taken as at least somewhat state-sponsored. In spite of the fact that setting up a cybersecurity working group with China, Washington has moreover

signaled it wants to heighten the U.S. Cyber Command and NSA chief General Keith Alexander signaled this move of approach gears prior this year when he told Congress that of 40 unused CYBERCOM groups as of now being formed, 13 would be centered on hostile operations. Gen Alexander moreover gave unheard of knowledge into CYBERCOM's operational structure. He said that the command will comprise of three groups: one to secure critical framework; a second one to back up the military's territorial commands, and a third one to conduct national hostile operations. As cyber competition intensifies, especially between China and the U.S., the international community approaches a crossroad. States might start to curb in their cyber operations prior to things getting further out of hand, embrace a rules-based framework administering cyberspace, and start accepting one another's virtual sway much as they do one another's physical sway. Or, on the off chance that assaults and counter-attacks are cleared out as unchecked, cyberspace may end up as the setting of a new Cold War for the Web era. Much as the prior Cold War was characterized by backhanded strife, including intermediary powers in third-party states, its 21st-century reboot might end up a story of virtual struggle indicted by shadowy actors within the digital realm. And as this undeclared struggle harms reciprocal relations over time, the hazard of it spilling over into kinetic threats will only increase. The internet is anarchic, and occurrences there span a cloudy range from acts of dissent and criminality all the way to attacks of state sway and deliberate acts of annihilation. It is certainly difficult to characterize the rivalry between China and the U.S. because as Adam Sengal, a senior individual at the Board on Outside Relations, argues, "I tend to remain absent from the term 'cyberwar' since we have seen no physical devastation and no deaths," Segal recognizes that there is a conflict of sorts between China and the U.S. on the internet, in spite of the fact that he says it is "likely to stay below a limit that would incite a military conflict.". Whereas there is no globally acknowledged categorization of distinctive sorts of cyber activity (individual states have shifting definitions), it is self-evident that a few episodes are more genuine than others. China's cyber operations, for all their reputation, have basically been acts of burglary – either offenders endeavoring to extricate favored information, or episodes of state-sponsored surveillance (a few of which, as a matter of fact, had national security suggestions, such as the extraction of blueprints for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter). But since these operations did not look to cause any physical devastation, they would be difficult to interpret as acts of war. This may explain why the U.S. government has been very tolerant of the hacking directed by China until now, seeing it as an irritation instead of as anything threatening. Could this be taken as an irritability all the way through, or will the US take action? This is the battle that could be classified as the downfall of the US and China stepping up, becoming the sole

superpower. Or China being pushed to the ground, assuring the U.S.'s complete control of the world democracy. But, if China does not act harsher than as of now, this research that has been going on for a while could potentially bring China a place at the table of superpowers of the world, and form the Group of Two.

China and the U.S. have agreed that they would like to see a cyberspace based on strict rules, but they do not see eye to eye on how those rules ought to be set up. (Moss, 2013) A costly and potentially dangerous Cyber Cold War awaits if they cannot do better, and agree on some rules of engagement for their rapidly expanding online force. A war between China and the United States is frightening to even imagine. China's Asian neighbors would be on the front line and individuals all over the world would feel the aftermath. So, unless the waters calm down between the current sole superpower and the rising superpower that is China, we are looking at mass destruction in the near future. One must step down to let the other prosper, or work together in providing better diplomacy, as the Group of Two.

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