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Role of U.N. in Controlling the Imperialistic Tendencies of Globalisation

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ROLE OF U.N. IN CONTROLLING THE IMPERIALISTIC TENDENCIES OF GLOBALIZATION

By: Vimal Mahajan

ABSTRACT

United Nations have played a significant role in the rapid expansion of globalization, despite being seen in a positive light it somehow possesses imperialistic tendencies. United Nations, again have to act far efficiently to prevent these global phenomena of globalization to change into neo-imperialism. This article will try to understand and analyze the relationship between globalization and imperialism while focusing on the new non-state actors which emerged as a capitalist class while discussing the modern concept of faculty's biopower and biopolitics along with comparing the impact of two global phenomena of imperialism and globalization and their relation with each other. There seems an urgent need to put light on the topic as the similar fate that mankind has faced earlier in world wars, could bring back the same catastrophic destruction unless measures are not taken. As modern warfare is capable enough to deplete humans of the earth, as if such an outbreak ever occur, there will be nothing left to be protected. The role of the U.N has significantly become vital in this new world order.

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of this world, there has been a constant power struggle. Ever since human got the capacity to reason it has tried to dominate others with profound efficiency and new techniques of power. Even before, when the concept of the state came into being the principle of fittest to survive was very much relevant. The rationality developed by man and all these technological advancements is the result of these continuous innovations and survival instincts which have led to today's age of technological advancement and know-how. Globalization although very difficult to define and even more difficult to understand the factors leading to this phenomenon. This is a very recent phenomenon where the whole world is converted into a single entity where the concept of the nation-state has been dissolving and geopolitical borders are diminishing at an astonishing rate and the crediting to the intellectual capacities of the man. From being just a part of nature have become the one who can dominate nature.

Historical events and technological advancement in communications and transportations have led to globalization, somewhere down the line it was the need of the hour. There have been many theories that try to understand the reason for the phenomena but unable to derive an accurate conclusion. United Nations although having arrived at the spot after two horrific wars have played a critical role in not just advancement in technical know-how but it has ensured a common dialogue between various nations which have resulted in several conventions and treaties which turn have promoted corporations. Various organs of the U.N. have been working day and night to promote development in various avenues of the world in order to uphold and keep intact human dignity and in order to avoid such horrific wars.

Globalization has brought many developments and it has resulted at the beginning of a new era of media that has glorified the excessive usage of the internet. Although it has boosted every aspect of human activity making life much easier and more ambitious. But some old-world evils have been associated with this global phenomenon, capitalization, and imperialism. Even U.N. has been accused of promoting imperialism and it has been criticized on several events on the label that it supports the capitalist class.

As per the Merriam Webster dictionary, Imperialism refers to the policy, practice, or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation especially by direct territorial acquisitions or

by gaining indirect control over the political or economic life of other areas broadly the extension or imposition of power, authority, or influence¹. Similarly, globalization as per the aforesaid dictionary means the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labour markets².

There has been no stopping of men from the moment it has developed intellectual skills. History has witnessed a large number of battles that have resulted in countless deaths. The bloodshed has tarnished mankind from perpetual times, in order to gain power and influence of territory, there has been a constant battle. With the concept of state come into being many social institutions were established. Trade becomes the lifeline of nations and this, in turn, promoted conquests which aimed at expanding the ground for economic activity and to established their empire. Few of the persons acquire the majority of resources giving rise to the capitalist class which promoted such quest. Roughly it could be understood that capitalism, in turn, promoted which resulted in imperialism, which has, in turn, lead to the formation of colonies in order to siphon off the natural as well as economic wealth.

Whenever there are oppression and suppression there is always a bounce back which happened in this situation as well. There were several battles that were fought to seek independence whereas some of these battles become the precursors of the dreadful world wars which shook the very foundation of the first world countries as the oppressed become the oppressor. In order to control the situation the very imperialist countries which have waged great wars start talking about peace and these peace talks resulted in the formation of a league of nations as well United Nations.

The formation of such an international institution, although the league of Nations was not able to survive because of less membership and capitalistic attitude, had heralded a new era of globalization. These institutions act as the common platform which not only increased the dialogue but economic, social, and political ties were enhanced as well. International law got a fresh breath of air, the concept of global state and global governmentality come into being. This has benefitted third world countries to much extent with the arrival of technology and

¹ Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imperialism>

² Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/globalization>

media, in the last twenty years there has been tremendous growth all over the world. Foucault's concept of biopolitics has emerged which has given way to reveal the darker shade of globalization.

To have a better understanding of the concept, it is important to discuss the theories which have promoted this global phenomenon and its implications in every field. There have been three distinct approaches by which the role of media and technology can be understood in promoting globalization is tried to be understood as proposed by Sklair³.

1. World System theory
2. Global culture theory
3. Global society approach

The main exponent of the World System theory is Immanuel Wallerstein⁴ who suggested that the world is shaped by capitalism and has its division of labour. He divided states into the core, periphery, and semi-periphery which roughly summed into developed, under-developed, and developing nation theory. The core having the capitalistic approach and is most benefitted. Although it has its criticism bundled as it has ignored cultural aspect while focusing on the economic aspect only⁵.

Arjun Appadurai has argued that media and technology played a key role in promoting globalization as it gave a much-needed boost to the flow of ideas, technologies, and finances which have created a new global world⁶.

Another theorist Roland Robertson has given globalization four dimensions that are, Socialization, Individualization, Internationalization, and global consciousness⁷. As per Giddens the institution of modernity include capitalism, industrialism, surveillance, and military power, and hence the globalization is the consequence of it⁸.

³ Journal of world-system research, V, 2-, summer 1999, 143-163

⁴ The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Academic Press, 1974)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Arjun Appadurai Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination

⁷ Available at <http://www.glocalismjournal.net/issues/global-polity-and-policies/articles/beyond-the-discourse-of-globalization-by-r-robertson.kl>

⁸ Available at <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/sociology-essay/giddens-views-on-modernization-meaning-and-characteristics-of-modernity/39915>

After the industrial revolution, there was a drastic change in the society, earlier where the majority of the population was directly indirectly involved in the agriculture now moving towards the factories which have a requirement of vast manpower which in turn lead to urbanization. With communication and transportation machinery advancement various avenues were opened to thrive on. The European nations were very quick to reap the benefit of this industrial era, so do their capital class as well, which were constantly finding this exploitation very profitable. This kick-started the era of colonization and these imperialistic countries exploited the wealth and plunder the resources of the colonies even without any liability. It can be very much interpreted that somehow the roots of imperialism lie in the depth of globalization, and on very superficial comparison it can be easily said that somewhere deep down the line this global phenomenon of globalization faintly resonates with the idea of Imperialism of older times.

The main reason imperialistic tendencies were curbed as they were creating much violent trouble than generating the huge benefits like in earlier times which made the capital class very tensed and this lead to the evolution of the capital class, same imperialist nations now wanted peace and was ready to trade of independence for the shadow dominance.

Biopower is for Foucault specifically the technology that enables the control of populations. It involves techniques as diverse as censuses, ballots, hydrography, and insurance policies, encompassing governmentality. 'Population' is itself constituted by biopolitics: there is no 'population' in the modern sense before biopolitics. Population only appears as such in the 18th century; before that, 'population' just referred to people being present⁹.

Foucault calls 'sovereign power'. Sovereign power was a technology of spectacular and extraordinary physical violence: people were kept in check primarily by sudden, ad hoc interventions by the sovereign, enforcing fealty on pain of death. In contrast to the 'biopolitics' of biopower, sovereign power is 'than to politics', the former controls people through the use of life, through caring for people's organic wellbeing, while the latter uses death, or exposure to the risk of death, to keep people in line. The former has replaced the latter as the dominant mechanism of the state domestically. However, than to politics remains necessary as a tool at the limit of biopolitical regulation: while biopower may reduce the likelihood of a rebellion,

⁹ Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory, Vol. 57, No. 123 (June 2010), pp. 1-26

say, there is still no technology for controlling a rebellion once it has broken out and is threatening state authority other than the use of lethal force¹⁰

It is not wrong to the state despite the U.N who act as the international institution of welfare and maintaining peace have faced criticism on several extents where it has favored the powerful nations and established their dominance as well. This problem will be further discussed in the next chapter while discussing the role and function of U.N. till now and how with this globalization new concepts of biopolitics have taken place which has led to global Imperialism, not by the state rather by Non-state actors.

ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS

After viewing the destruction caused by the world wars the exploratory tendencies of first world countries get a setback. It shook the foundation of the imperialist empire and the trend of liberating colonies comes into being. In order to run the capitalist machinery, there was the necessity of peacetime, but sooner they have realized that they were required to establish a common international institution that could monitor the warring tendencies. League of Nations was first in the line of action but it failed miserably because it has misunderstood and under-estimated the developing countries which ultimately cultivated into the second world war. Post-war all the nation-states that have played the major roles in the wars come together to form again a common platform, but this time they don't repeat similar mistakes rather they give more participation to the developing as well as colonial states. The existence of the United Nations although based and marked with high-end principles but there is no equal participation in taking major policy decisions. The Security Council has been entrusted with the function of maintaining peace. It acts as the most powerful military organization which is controlled by five permanent and ten non-permanent members. This distinction is aggravated even worse when five permanent members have veto power to outdo the decision of others. Still, the united nations have acted as a common platform for every nation, having membership in most nations it emerged as a peacekeeping and welfare institution. These free flow of trade, peaceful times, and advent and sharing of technology and media have become the ground for flourishing capitalism and turning into imperialism again. But unlike previous times there is a slight shift in the paradigm of exploiting and exploited class, earlier state actors played a crucial role in the promotion of capitalism but now these nation-states have been replaced by

¹⁰ Ibid

transnational corporations and they have no territorial jurisdiction neither they have any accountability or liability. Unlike the state, the welfare state concept doesn't apply to them. Here the concept of biopolitics seems very relevant and apt where now there have been no borders geographically that demarcate the extent rather now population itself seems to be a target as discussed earlier. International Institutions have eroded the concept of the sovereignty of nation-states, especially third world nations. They are exploiting the resources even without any accountability and liability, no restriction can deter the monopoly created by these institutions with respect to the economy. World Trade Organization and many other institutions set the criteria for the free flow of trade, freedom of trade on the surface looks very lucrative and liberalizing but in reality, this has been used to benefit the western countries which act as a dominative member of these institutions. Similarly despite efforts made by the united nations for maintaining peace it has failed in many instances such as proxy wars made by the U.S.A in many countries to exploit the natural resources under the cloak of development or to prevent the toppling of stable government. The disarmament policy is one of the most controversial where it prohibits the developing nations to develop nuclear warfare irrespective of the fact that most of the other capitalist members already have those resources. This shows a double standard followed by the United Nation concerning superpower group countries, in turn promoting a new type of imperialism where the world is being fooled by the peace missions, timely aids, democratic ideals, and many other things.

In between these problems there arisen, the transnational corporation has gotten stronghold over the market and have been indulging. The international institutions have played a critical role as well in promoting the new form of imperialism. Although it is being promoted as a global state there have been many complicated problems relating to it, which compromised various other things in the name of development. There has been the loss of autonomy and sovereignty exercised by the small underdeveloped and developing states. The categories are made by them to form structures which allow capitalist to ensure exploitation of the resources of these very nations. United nations have to be held responsible for promoting transnational capitalism.

Even worse about the whole of this scenario is there is no accountability of such international institutions as they cannot be traced back to a single entity. They cannot be punished or captured or held liable or impose sanctions, all the resort end on the closure of such corporation

whereas the capitalist players and states remain in the shadows. Moreover, the sole purpose they have is the exploitation of the resources to enhance their own.

There is a desperate need to organize and restructure the united nation, it needs to be more democratic, the big five states should not be given so much power. There shall be a common consensus if we want to head towards the global state. There should be a more tolerant approach rather than the imposition of the development model proposed by the few countries with vast economic resources. The over domination will leads to conflicts and typical war-like situations which already have been prevalent in the past and have been the truth of today's society as well. The Iraq wars, the rise of the Taliban, Vietnam proxy wars, and many other instances in which the united nations have either turned a blind eye or have not to get into depth which has increased the oppression. There needs to be the use of dialogue instead of guns. For all this to happen the United Nations have to play a fair and just role rather than a partial entity favoring the rich. It should be a common playground for everyone and it should think about everyone, the motto of sustainable development will not carry us much longer but a model of togetherness will ensure a bright future and existence of the global state and giving the true meaning of globalization. Where everyone has their separate identity and appreciation and free will to be given to live their lives rather than controlling every aspect of life. And in all of this process united nations have to play an important role.

CONCLUSION

The whole above discussion has come to the single conclusive theory about the tendency of humans to attain more power to dominate or subjugate the will of others. These tendencies have given rise to the concept of capitalism, Imperialism, and colonization which cumulatively give rise to world domination. In the 15th century, Spanish and Portuguese nation begin the world conquest and ventured out for finding new resources to exploit, other than imperialist tendencies they went there as traders and dominate the regional market extending capitalism which later turned into formation of colonies which served mother nations. In later centuries France, Italy, and Britain too jumped in this race of imperialism which started off the competition to have maximum territories under their control kick-starting various wars which culminated in the success of Britain's Empire which said to acquire most of the region as their colonies. They established full control over the colonies, not just the market but the culture and beliefs as well, the regional red Americans were either killed or died in the diseases brought by

the foreigners, this even boosted the slave trade as they wanted to encash every resource. This was a primitive kind of globalization where singular culture was being imposed without the free will of the population and even they termed it as their responsibility popular phrase 'white man's burden'. This has promoted racism and ethical disparities.

But this scenario of oppressed and oppressor couldn't hold much longer as the people revolted and many other nations in which industrial revolution have come become more aggressive to exploit resources, like Japan, this has resulted in two mega wars and nuclear attack which shook the foundation of the world. The League of Nations and United Nations was another attempt by those imperialistic powers to hold the power without conflict but power never resides without conflict. Proven by the failure of the League of Nations as they try to dominate and resulted in the Second World War. There is nothing much to say there have been instances where the united nations have shown double standards concerning the nations. Powerful imperialistic nations have been given veto power which has given them enough authority to maintain their world dominance.

Globalization was the by-product and an old vine in a new bottle as it encouraged capitalistic tendencies, only difference was that this time the key players were not the states rather they were transnational corporation although this technique is also not new, as parallel can be drawn by the east India company which itself was a joint venture that means a private company who went of expansion on the authority of the state. Similarly, now there have been big five players like Facebook, Google, Microsoft, and amazon venturing into every aspect of the life of an individual. What makes it even more dangerous is the very use of modern technology which has given them the to use biopolitics rather than thantapolitics. The extensive surveys on humans have given them enough data that helps them to regulate the behaviour of mankind. Similarly, the concept of development posed by international institutions is also very vague and suited to their model.

There is not much difference between what was happening in the past three hundred years and what is happening today, only the rate of change is very rapid and instantaneous. A trend that begins in one place can be in another in no time and instead of territories now the focus is on the population. United nations have to take steps in this direction it has to restructure itself to be more democratic and a say has to be given to the developing and under-developed countries. it shall regulate international institutions as well as commercial transnational corporations

which somehow have become capitalist instruments and promote neo-colonialism which not just erodes the sovereignty of the nation but the democratic choice is also corrupted. The results could be catastrophic if not diverted at this very stage.

This case study is for information purpose only. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or interpreted as providing legal or investment advice.