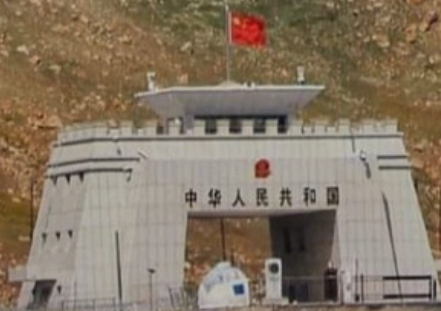


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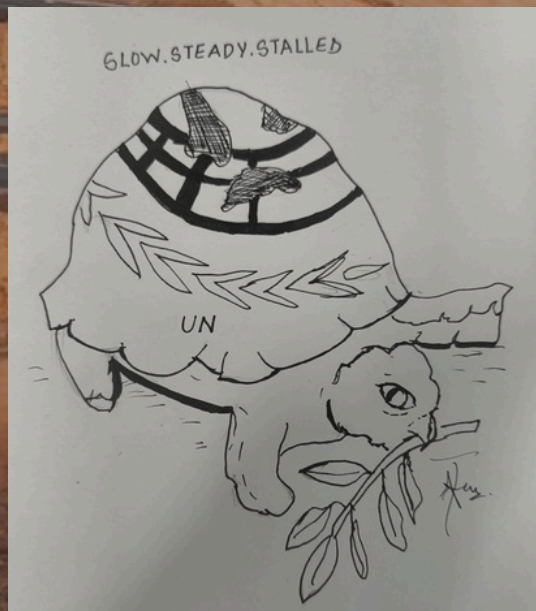
A POLITICAL SCIENCE
NEWSLETTER



THEME: BORDERS AND BEYOND

Cogitatio (Questions of the Month)

1. At what point does political neutrality in global conflicts become a form of complicity?
2. Is the United Nations still relevant in global peacekeeping efforts? Under which situations, can international intervention be justified?
3. Under which circumstances, does national security supersede human rights?



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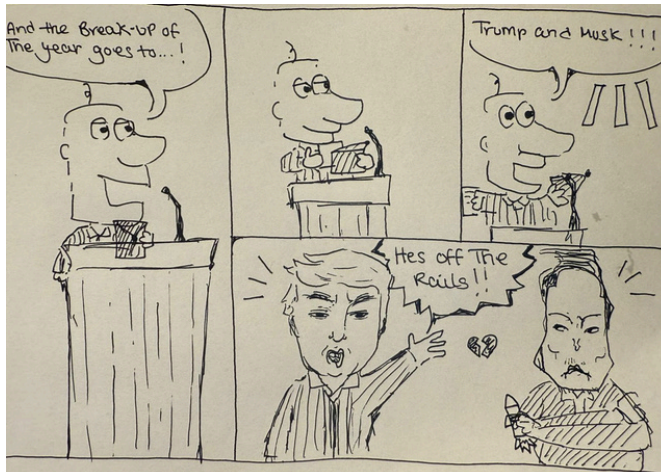
CATCHING UP

Trumponomics

On 1st February 2025, a seismic shift in international trade was marked. The United States President, Donald Trump, announced the start of a series of tariffs that would affect trillions in exports. What started out as an initiative against stopping drug trafficking and illegal immigration quickly broadened into a campaign framed as fighting “for justice for Americans.” The administration imposed reciprocal tariffs on all nations maintaining trade barriers against the US.

Yet, many observers questioned whether the true motive was purely economic. A Japanese trade official commented, "No matter who I talk to in the US administration, none of them knows what Trump is thinking. We don't even know what Trump wants to negotiate on." This was further illustrated by the worst US stock market crash since the Covid-19 pandemic due to the announcement of Liberation Day (a day when all proposed tariffs were to come into force), which later had to be delayed by 90 days.

Despite the turmoil, the tariffs had generated \$108 billion in net revenue by the end of June, compared to \$392 billion from corporate taxes and raised their share of federal revenue from a historical average of 2% to 5%. As global uncertainty intensifies, trading partners are scrambling to negotiate new deals with the United States, unsure of what comes next.



The Israel Iran War

On 13 June 2025, Israel launched *Operation Rising Lion*, targeting Iran's nuclear and military infrastructure. Supposedly to pre-empt the existential threat posed by alleged uranium enrichment and missile development, the Mossad operatives sabotaged Iran's air defense systems and missile infrastructure, with Israel conducting strikes in Tabriz in the early afternoon, targeting an area near Tabriz Airport. Shortly thereafter, Iran launched missiles and drones at military bases and air bases under the codename *Operation True Promise III*. These included more than 100 Shahed drones. 14 June witnessed an explosion and a fire at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport.

Furthermore, the Red Crescent Society stated that Israel had attacked 18 of the 31 provinces of Iran. In retaliation on the morning of 15 June, Iran and the Houthis in Yemen launched ballistic missiles simultaneously, striking buildings in Bat Yam and Rehovot, a mall in Kiryat Ekron, and in Tel Aviv. By 20 June, the HRANA estimated that strikes on Iran had left at least 657 people killed and 2,037 wounded. According to NBC News, estimates, the Iranian health ministry states that more than 2,500 people have been wounded.

The United Nations Security Council meeting on 13 June concluded with statements from Iran's and Israel's respective ambassadors to the UN. The Iranian ambassador Amir-Saeid Irvani stated that Israel's attacks constituted a declaration of war, accusing Israel of premeditated aggression and of a direct violation of the UN Charter.

Operation Sindoor

On 22 April 2025, a terrorist attack near Pahalgam in Indian-administered Jammu & Kashmir killed 26 civilians. The attack was initially claimed by The Resistance Front, an offshoot of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, though later retracted. India blamed Pakistan-based groups and announced retaliatory measures, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and closing airspace to Pakistani airlines.

On 7 May 2025, India launched Operation Sindoor, a coordinated military response to a terrorist attack in Pahalgam, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), based on intelligence that identified nine major training camps. The mission was planned to minimize civilian casualties and focused on confirmed militant sites.

- 30 April 2025: Pakistani officials publicly warned of an imminent Indian military strike.
- 7 May 2025: India launched Operation Sindoor, a series of missile and air strikes on what it described as terror infrastructure of Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Hizbul Mujahideen in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.
- 8–9 May 2025: India intercepted Pakistani missile and drone attacks, which Pakistan denied launching and accused India of staging false-flag operations.
- On 10 May 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance engaged with senior officials in both New Delhi and Islamabad to de-escalate the conflict. Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE, UK, and China also reportedly urged restraint.

That afternoon, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar announced that both militaries had agreed to a full ceasefire, effective 5:00 pm IST / 4:30 pm PKT. The agreement was worked out directly between the Directors General of Military Operations of both countries through hotline communication.

Burkina Faso: The Unknown Epicenter of Africa's Coup Culture and Global Power Struggles

In the vast chessboard of global politics, Burkina Faso is a name that rarely gets mentioned. Landlocked, economically strained, and distant from the minds of most policymakers and media consumers, it's the kind of country the world only notices when something explodes — literally or figuratively. But in recent years, this seemingly quiet West African nation has become a lightning rod for coups, insurgencies, and international power plays.

Burkina Faso has been defined, time and again, by the sound of marching boots and crackling radios announcing regime change. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the country has endured at least nine coups or coup attempts, placing it among the most politically unstable nations in modern African history.

Burkina Faso's post-independence history reads like a warning: a country pulled between liberation and manipulation. The early years were riddled with coups, but none as electric as in 1983, when a 33-year-old Marxist army captain, Thomas Sankara, seized power. In just four years, he changed everything — renaming "Upper Volta" to Burkina Faso ("Land of Upright People"), rejecting both Western charity and Soviet orthodoxy, and daring to build a nation on Pan-African dignity and radical self-reliance

But revolutionaries rarely die peacefully. In 1987, Sankara was gunned down in a coup orchestrated by his closest

Compaoré gutted Sankara's reforms, became a loyal partner to France and the U.S., and kept the country stable to the world while internally hollow. When his own power grab in 2014 triggered mass uprisings, Compaoré fled — but what followed wasn't a new beginning. It was déjà vu. Civilian leader Roch Marc Christian Kaboré rode in on a wave of hope in 2015, but as jihadist violence spilled over from Mali, that hope drowned in blood and bureaucracy. With nearly 40% of the nation under militant control by 2021 and foreign-backed forces flailing, it became clear: the West had propped up yet another fragile figure, and Burkina Faso was paying the price. As trust eroded and soldiers died poorly equipped, resentment within the military deepened. In a country with a long history of coups, one question returned: if the state won't act, who will?

And then came 2022. Not one, but two coups in a single year, plunging Burkina Faso into a new era of youth-led juntas, revolutionary rhetoric, and a geopolitical contest between France, Russia, and a watching world. Burkina Faso was no longer just a struggling post-colony. It had quietly become one of the most contested geopolitical battlefields in the world, even if few were paying attention. As its people bled from terrorist attacks, and its soldiers died abandoned in under-equipped outposts, foreign powers circled like creditors over a collapsing regime.

When President Kaboré was overthrown in January 2022, the world barely blinked.

His ouster, Lieutenant Colonel Damiba, was pitched as a necessary “corrective” one the military hoped would restore order. Damiba, trained in France’s *École Militaire*, educated in U.S. anti-terror programs, and ideologically in step with Western allies, seemed like a familiar figure. But in reality, he delivered continuity, not change. Damiba retained French military ties, leaned heavily on EU counterterrorism frameworks, and refused to decisively chart a new national vision. His government became a polished reboot of the same old system: at the behest of Paris, surveilled by Washington, applauded in Brussels and completely detached from the anger boiling on the ground.

One sentiment grew louder:

“Why do our governments always answer to someone else?”

That was swiftly answered just 8 months later, when Burkina Faso saw its second coup. This time, the leader wasn’t a career diplomat-soldier with French credentials. It was a 34-year-old artillery captain named Ibrahim Traoré, largely unknown, but clearly fed up. His message: *“If we’re dying, it will be on our terms, not under orders from Paris or handshakes from Washington.”*

Traoré didn’t promise partnership, he promised sovereignty. And to many Burkinabé, especially young soldiers and angry civilians, that sounded like salvation. Traoré’s rise wasn’t just a power grab, it was the direct backlash to the West’s perceived occupation of Burkina Faso’s political and military system. For decades, France had pulled strings through elite military cooperation, economic dependency, and linguistic control. Every time a leader in the Sahel aligned with Paris, they were seen

— rightly or wrongly — as compromised. By 2022, even the façade had cracked. French troops, meant to be “anti-terror allies,” were being blamed for failing to prevent massacres, sometimes occurring just kilometers from their bases. Rumors spread of France secretly negotiating with terrorists to protect its mining interests. Whether true or not, the narrative stuck and the trust died.

At the same time, Russia was watching and waiting.

In the days following Traoré’s coup, something remarkable happened: crowds in the streets began waving Russian flags, not Burkinabé ones. French flags were burned. People hailed Vladimir Putin as a man Africa could trust. This wasn’t a coincidence. Russian-linked channels had long been working to sow anti-French, pro-Russian sentiment across Francophone Africa. With their success in Mali, where Wagner mercenaries had replaced French forces, they now found an eager audience in Ouagadougou. But here’s the twist: Traoré never openly beckoned Moscow, nor did he publicly align with Wagner’s march. His brilliance lay in wielding anti-French fury like a weapon, yet stopping just short of selling Burkina Faso to another master. His rise wasn’t about switching empires it was about hijacking the narrative, grabbing power not in the name of East or West, but in the name of Burkina itself.

It was an astonishing rebuke, a former colony ejecting its colonial power militarily, diplomatically, and ideologically, without foreign invasion or civil war. This was Traoré’s real revolution: claiming ownership of the state’s soul. In doing so, he transformed from obscure captain to national icon.

Foreign involvement had come to mean interference.

The country's democracy had been swallowed not by its own people, but by a puppet-show of embassies, military advisors, and foreign narratives. Foreign troops expelled. Western media silenced. IMF loans rejected. Russian partnerships embraced. National industries rebuilt brick by brick. Mines nationalised. To some, this looks like liberation; to others, like authoritarian consolidation. But one thing is undeniable—this is change. Real, seismic, controversial change. The kind that unsettles diplomats and inspires revolutionaries. The kind that disorients but also dares a country to dream anew.

Traoré's reign is young. His grip, though firm, still faces insurgencies, economic instability, and human rights scrutiny. But after years of watching their sovereignty traded and their security outsourced, many in Burkina Faso seem willing to trade predictability for pride, and dependency for danger; if it meant reclaiming control.

Whether Traoré becomes the Sankara of a new century or fades into another chapter of military rule, history will judge. For now, what matters is this: Burkina Faso is no longer silent. No longer forgotten. No longer a pawn. Its story has turned a page. And Ibrahim Traoré, for better or worse, has picked up the pen.

-Aryaman Pragya 11H



Amara Sangma 9B

The Syrian Civil War: A Decade of Devastation, Displacement, and Hope

Introduction

The Syrian Civil War is one of the most complex and devastating wars seen in recent history. Originating in the wake of the Arab Spring, the war has escalated into a brutal, multi-faceted crisis which has destroyed, displaced, and deceased lives. A minor internal conflict has now reached a point where half a million lives have been lost due to the constant funding of arms and resources by nations such as Russia, Iran, United States of America, Turkey and more.

A once thriving civilisation has been reduced to the ruins to quench the greed and demands of these nations. The Syrian Civil war started long before the protests of 2011. Syria, under president Bashar Al Assad, had an authoritarian government where no human rights were provided, political repression was at its peak and economic inequality existed. Assad had inherited power from his father in 2000 following his death.

The government controlled the media, restricted political opposition, and marginalized dissent. Discontent simmered beneath the surface for years—especially among Sunni Arabs, who make up a majority of the population but faced exclusion in a regime dominated by the Alawite minority, to which the Assad family belongs. In March 2011, inspired by the uprisings in neighbouring nations, peaceful protests demanding democratic reforms, release of political prisoners and greater civil liberties were initiated. The Assad regime, a completely authoritarian one, responded with

brutal force- firing on demonstrators, detaining thousands and allegedly using torture. The violent approach of Assad turned the peaceful demonstration into an armed rebellion. Defectors from the Syrian Army formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA), marking the beginning of a full-scale civil war, a civil war which wasn't merely a fight against the Assad government but one where thousands were killed and displaced due to the numerous foreign interventions by nations greedy for power.

On ground reality- the bloodshed

By 2012, the Syrian Civil War had spiraled into a complex proxy war with several ally nations getting involved in the war. Russia, a close ally of Syria, constantly supported the Assad government through providing weaponry and resources. The rebel groups, which were primarily under the name Free Syrian Army but later fragmented, were supported by Turkey, United States of America and the gulf nations. The ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) seized large swaths of territory in 2014 and were constantly opposed by the Kurdish forces which were USA's key ally in the fight against ISIS and its terrorism. And finally there was the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham which was an extremist group associated with Al-Qaeda. The fight was not against the provisions of rights now, it was a war between different groups for power and territory. Syria had been divided into patchworks of territory with catastrophic instability. The humanitarian aspect of the war has been terrible. The consequences have been staggering.

According to the Syrian Observatory for human rights and United Nations reports: more than 500,000 people have died (90% civilians), 5.9 million Syrians have fled the country as refugees, 6.8 million have been internally displaced, and 13 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance. These are the ones reported, the actual figures can be much higher as it is complicated to have the exact figures in a war affected area.

Entire cities have been reduced to dust, Aleppo, once Syria's economic hub and a cultural epitome, is now ruined due to the fierce battles it has seen, while Raqqa has been left devastated due to the US led coalition's airstrikes. The Assad regime has been accused of using chemical weapons against civilians in Ghouta, Khan Shaykun and Douma. As seen above, it is extremely clear that the people have suffered day after day due to the fight for power by these groups. Chemical attacks, genocides, mass murders, torture and what not...the civilians of Syria are seeing their beautiful home turn into hell right in front of their eyes and they cannot do anything about it.

The Refugee Crisis

The Syrian refugee crisis is the biggest since World War II. According to the UNHCR, Turkey hosts 3.3 million Syrian refugees, Lebanon hosts 1.5 million Syrians (1/4th of their population), Jordan hosts over 1.3 million refugees and over 70,000 Syrian children have been born stateless due to documentation issues. Refugees face poor living conditions, lack of access to quality education and healthcare, exploitation, and legal limbo. Many live in camps under difficult conditions, struggling with trauma, unemployment, and uncertainty.

Conclusion and solutions

On 27th November 2024, rebel forces started a lightning offensive and captured key cities of Aleppo, Hama and Homs. On December

8th, the Assad regime was toppled, with the rebel groups taking control of the capital city, Damascus. This led to an end of a 53 year regime riddled with war crimes and human right violations. The forces led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham formed an interim government and vested HTS leader Ahmed al-Sharaa as the president for the transition period. The new government decided to abolish the 2012 Constitution of Ba'athist Syria and drafted an interim constitution for 5 years which concentrated power in the hands of the president. Whether Syria will grow to become a vibrant republic, similar to Nigeria's transition, is yet to be seen. This uncertainty has left a lot of questions unanswered, and cries unheard. Many Syrian refugees are still vulnerable and there is a lot to be done.

Massive humanitarian aid and reconstruction aid should be provided for healthcare systems and education systems. Trauma victims and people with war related disabilities should be treated. Money should be invested for infrastructure and cultural growth of the nation. Addressing the refugee crisis is important. Host countries should be provided with financial aid, and technical assistance for their initiative. Voluntary Repatriation should be allowed for the people to come back to their houses and resettlement should be made more accessible by increasing resettlement quotas in western and developed nations. Stateless refugees and children should also be provided with a legal identity and documentation. Justice should be provided by war crimes tribunals, truth commissions and compensation programs.

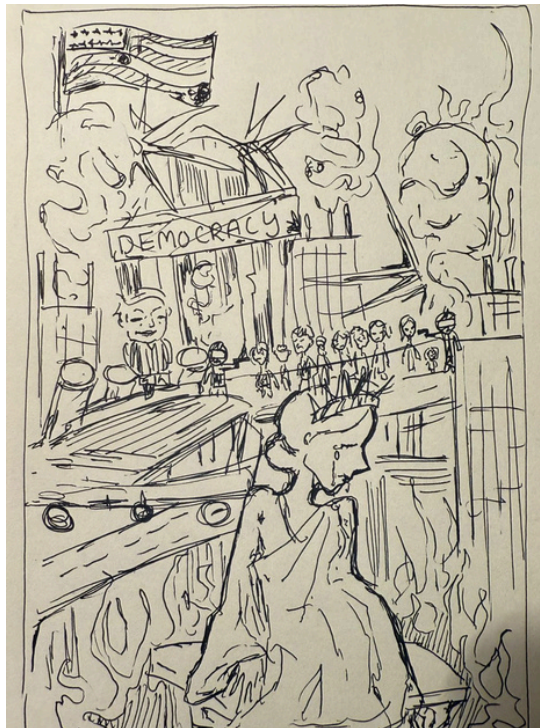
The nations that primarily funded these wars have a moral responsibility to stabilize the situation and help in reconstruction of the society and the nation. The Syrian Civil War has left an indelible scar on the 21st century, and although the civil war has ceased, the country remains fragile. With looming threats from neighbours and internal fractures, the

future of the Syrian Arab Republic and its people still remains uncertain, and children should also be provided with a legal identity and documentation.

Justice should be provided by war crimes tribunals, truth commissions and compensation programs. Assad government should be blamed for their chemical attacks, torture, and crimes against humanity. The countries that primarily funded these wars should now help stabilize the situation and help in reconstruction of the society and the nation.

The Syrian Civil War has left an indelible scar on the 21st century. What began as a cry for freedom has turned into a nightmare of violence, sectarianism, and displacement. The resilience of the Syrian people is extraordinary, but resilience alone is not enough. The world must now choose: to abandon Syria to its shattered fate, or to step in with vision, compassion, and action. The future of Syria—and the principles of humanity itself—hang in the balance.

-Vihaan Rustagi 11I



Amara Sangma 9B

Blood and Water: The Story of Indus

'Water, like religion and ideology, has the power to move millions of people. Since the very birth of human civilization, people have moved to settle close to it. People move when there is too little of it. People move when there is too much of it. People journey down it. People write, sing and dance about it. People fight over it. All people, everywhere and every day, need it.'

-Mikhail Gorbachev

The Indus river originates in the Tibet region and spans across central and south Asia. With its course, it travels along lofty snow-covered himalayan mountains, deep gorges and breathtaking valleys as it emerges onto the plains; the sound of its current, an echo of the thousand memories it carries. Historically, it is the lifeline of one of the oldest civilisations in the world. A river that once inspired a shared history and geography now stands divided by political boundaries. The Indus flows through India and Pakistan, eventually draining east of Karachi.

The river has always been a source of conflict, especially after the partition. After multiple failed negotiations and agreements, finally, the Indus Water Treaty was signed in 1960 when the two signatories discarded an entirely political perspective for a more technical one. The treaty survived many hostilities in the past and remained as a model for resource sharing and co-operation amidst intricate hostilities.

And then, on 23 April 2025, the Pahalgam attack occurred. Civilians, tourists were murdered. Violence once again echoed in that heavenly valley, blood stained the beautiful meadows and mystical waters of Pahalgam. Leaders offered compensation and vowed retaliation. For the first time in 65 years, the Indus Water Treaty was suspended.

As there was no exit clause, according to the

Vienna Law Convention on Treaties, the treaty was placed in abeyance owing to a change in the fundamental circumstances under which the treaty was signed. So far, the implications have not been disastrous. The suspension allows greater freedom for water utilization in India, while exerting diplomatic pressure on Pakistan.

But before we applaud this diplomatic power play and immerse ourselves in the fervent wave of rising nationalism, let's step back a little. We have suspended a treaty that ensures water sharing. It hasn't had any serious implications, but for how long? Eighty percent of Pakistan's agriculture is dependent on the Indus.

Even if we ignore the question of whether or not the move was proportionate or even targeted for that matter, we must realize, what we have essentially done is restrict the access of something as basic as water, something that is deeply tied to our everyday activities, something that we cannot live without. As to the argument that this is retaliation to our civilians dying in Pahalgam, I must ask, how can we decide whether or not to grant access to a basic natural resource? War was inevitable, but weaponizing water? What gives us the right to punish an entire population for the actions of a handful?

The purpose of this article isn't to ascertain whether the move was correct or not, but to

highlight the supreme power of nation, the all-encompassing influence it holds over us which would drive us to control the flow of nature, to try and control a river which knows no nation, no borders. Our sacred borders demand the sacrifice of humanity, in terms of people and principle. History has seen humanity bleed the colour of nationalism countless times, painting our wounded morals crimson. Unless we learn from the past, history is doomed to repeat itself.

-Sharadha KV 10D

Is the United Nations still relevant in global peacekeeping efforts? Under which situations, can international intervention be justified?

In the modern world as we know it, to establish a sovereign nation, one must possess autonomy, citizens who are willing to identify themselves as the members of the nation, defined territory and the capacity to execute policies. Nation-state implies that a nation and state coincide. It is, more specifically, a state governing the nation, deriving its legitimacy through successfully serving its citizens. They were promoted to a model form of governance as the modern nation-state prospered during the 19th and 20th centuries. These nation-states are not merely walls of division, rather definitions of the political and cultural space where people can exercise rights while establishing an independent statehood of citizens who respect their nation and bring about stability through the guidance of the elected representatives.

The United Nations was founded after World War II to prevent conflict, protect civilians, and promote diplomacy. Decades later, in conflicts like Gaza or Ukraine, similar inaction raises a troubling question: **is the UN still capable of keeping peace, or has it become a passive observer of violence? Is its peacekeeping efforts often stalled due to political gridlock and limited authority?**

Throughout the 1990s, the UN was deeply divided between those who insisted on a right of humanitarian intervention and those who viewed such a doctrine as an indefensible infringement upon national sovereignty. The most prominent yet unsuccessful intervention of the UN as well as its failure to authorize action to halt “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo provoked NATO to initiate an aerial bombardment on former Yugoslavia on its

own. It was due to the late involvement of the UN that spread the atrocities of war in the region.

The concept of humanitarian intervention during dire crises is intended for the protection of citizens affected, such as averting genocides, but often neglects the two pillars of justice: Peace and Security. This has been seen in tragic examples of conflict (the Yugoslavian war, military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar). In Rwanda (1994), the UN's failure to intervene contradicted its aim towards peace and justice, including Kant's moral imperative to prevent widespread suffering, propounded by one of the main figures inspiring the Philosophy behind the UN charter. John Locke's Theory of Natural Rights provided further justification for this principle of humanitarian intervention.

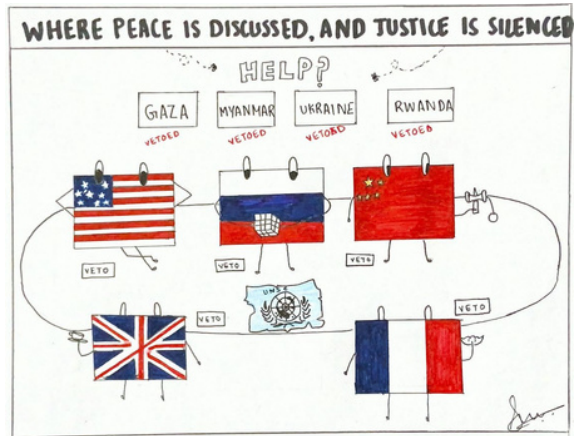
In September 1994, 61 jets took off from the US Military base as part of Operation Uphold Democracy, a United Nations-authorized intervention aimed at ending the brutal military regime in Haiti and restoring the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. This unprecedented intervention was authorized by the security council, which did not view it as a threat to international peace. The fact that the country had suffered was sufficient to justify the action. This is a rare success story where the UN acted decisively to restore democracy and prevent further human rights violations without waiting for an outbreak of war to justify it. The understanding of humanitarian intervention has recently evolved from being just a part of international law pertaining to the use of force to a recognized idea of

interference for peace, lawful rationale for engaging in war. To justify foreign intervention through humanitarian grounds has become increasingly frequent on the global stage. There have been many reforms that have been suggested to address the intervention dilemma, including restructuring international judicial institutions prosecuting human rights violations and crimes against humanity. A notable example would be the case of Myanmar where the existing framework of international law, as well as the enforcement of international judicial rulings, may not be possible due to politics between various involved actors.

As mentioned in the UN charter, the Security Council's traditional function as a forum for the "great powers" of the P5 to coordinate, deliberate, and deconflict has weakened in recent years. This has been illustrated by Russia's increased veto use and confrontational stance in the council following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Another case includes the United States repeatedly using its veto privilege during the war in Gaza, which has depleted much of the goodwill the United States had built up in recent years and has placed it in a defensive stance in the council along with Russia. International intervention in cases of severe humanitarian crisis is further indirectly backed by fundamental accords such as the Geneva Conventions, particularly Common Article 1. It affirms the states' obligations towards safeguarding civilians during war between different nations. In addition to that, crimes including crimes against humanity and genocide have been mentioned in Articles 5, 7, and 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

According to the above analysis, while I believe the UN remains relevant to resolving global crises through peaceful efforts, its failure to bring about peace and justice for common people raises serious questions if the UN should allow unlimited veto powers solely to the permanent 5 members of the council. Hence, the UN is not irrelevant, but it is increasingly constrained by its structural imbalances. If it wants to continue to play a strong role in peacekeeping, it must move beyond the paralysis of veto politics and embrace a truly collective moral will.

-Haniya Aziz



Sreeparna Mitra 11H

Ambos Nogales: One Community, Two Realities

In the arid region of the Sonoran Desert lie the twin cities of Nogales: Nogales, Arizona, in the United States, and Nogales, Sonora, in Mexico. These adjacent cities stand as a poignant reminder of how an imaginary line can have real consequences in the lives of people. Once a unified settlement, these cities have been cleaved apart by an international boundary, transforming the symbolic demarcation into a formidable barrier, reshaping destinies on either side.

A Shared Past

The name *Nogales* is derived from the Spanish word *los nogales* for 'walnut' or 'walnut tree', a reference to once-abundant walnut groves that flourished in the valley. Earlier, students crossed over the border easily: a border marked by a pillar of stones. People moved freely across for work, education, shopping, and social gatherings, fostering a deep sense of shared identity and mutual reliance. These are just a few examples of the spirit of *Ambos Nogales* (*Nogales together*) that has existed since the cities' inception.

However, this tranquillity was shattered in 1918 during the Battle of Ambos Nogales, when an unidentified man attempted to cross the border, leading to a deadly skirmish between U.S. and Mexican forces. In the aftermath, the first permanent border fence was erected, unfortunately marking the beginning of a physical and psychological divide between the two cities. Over the decades, this barrier evolved from a simple chain-link fence to a towering twenty-foot steel wall, symbolising the deepening chasm. The once non-existent boundary became an unsurmountable divide, reflecting broader shifts in national policies and attitudes towards immigration and border security.

This bifurcation not only split the community, tearing apart families and friends and causing immense emotional strain on both sides, but also led to stark differences in the daily lives of the residents of Ambos Nogales. On the Arizonian side, the average household income is around \$30,000. People enjoy access to clean drinking water, basic health care, and quality education. The government provides essential services including sewage systems, roads, and reliable law enforcement. However, just a few meters away, in the of Nogales, Sonora, the average household income is a meager \$5,000. This half struggles with high infant mortality rates and dilapidated infrastructure. Most adults have not even earned a high school diploma. Crime is rampant, and the life expectancy here is much lower than their northern neighbours.

Moreover, politics, shifting international policies and heavy militarisation of the border has instilled a sense of fear and uncertainty among the people on both sides. The presence of armed patrols, surveillance equipment, and imposing barriers constantly erode the sense of community that once defined Ambos Nogales.

The Way Forward: A Shared Future?

Despite these challenges, the spirit of unity still persists. It is common to see people from both sides reach out through the cold steel wall to embrace one another or lift a newborn of a relative from the other side. Fortunately, there is hope. By recognising the unique nature of border cities like Nogales, and promoting cross-border collaborations, inclusive policies, along with compassionate governance, it is possible to restore the interconnectedness that once flourished, allowing Ambos Nogales to once again thrive as a symbol of unity.

BORDERS AND BEYOND – A GLOBAL COMEDY OF CRISIS

In the grand theatre of geopolitics, in which borders are sacred lines drawn in the sand until a billionaire wants to build a spaceport, humanity is busy juggling its favourite apocalypse. From climate catastrophes to digital empires, pandemics to narco-capitalism, all wrapped in a messy, cramped up lot, I present: Borders and beyond, A Global Comedy of Crisis.

Climate Change

Climate change, which was once the hobby of bored scientists and indie documentaries, is now the leading cause of disappearing islands and awkward silences at oil-funded summits. agree that- 'Something should be done', but ideally by someone else. While coastal nations drown, major powers pledge carbon neutrality by the year, "Eventually". Meanwhile, as they continue burning fossil fuels, because nothing says 'eco-commitment like hosting climate conferences in air-conditioned mega domes. After all, carbon neutrality by 2070 sounds idealistic, then, " stop burning things now."

Terrorism

Terrorism, the one export that requires no clearance and spreads faster than the government accountability. Despite two decades of drone diplomacy and a trillion dollar " War on terror", violent extremism has now diversified, digitalised and gone freelance. Global leaders continue to vow zero tolerance as long as terrorists don't interrupt trade routes or oil deals. Meanwhile, the world intelligence agencies spend half their time monitoring each other and the other half rebranding domestic unrest as "misunderstood performance acts". Terror cells are available in sleeper or subscription

forms and recruitment is faster than university admissions, free WiFi included. While one hemisphere funds counter terrorism the other accidentally sells weapons to the wrong side, later blamed as a clerical error.

Pandemics- A Great Opportunity to Build Walls

When the pandemics hit, countries reacted with the usual calm and coordination - by stockpiling masks and toilet paper and turning health care into an Hunger Games event. Borders shut faster and tighter than a billionaire's climate bunker door and the phrase "we are all together" quickly mutates into "good luck peasants". Vaccines are distributed with all equity of a "Monopoly game run by hedge funds. Rich countries got booster doses for their pets. Poor countries got " thoughts and prayers" and expired Astrazeneca leftovers. The WHO tried to manage things but unfortunately they were using dial - ups. WHO warns of new variants, Most countries respond with shrugs, yoga apps and vague promises. Conspiracy influencers are nor rebranded as "health freedom educator". Pro tip: If your leader says " We're prepared this time hide your thermometer

Drug Trafficking: The original globalisation project

While governments argue over climate treaties and vaccine patents, the international drug trade continues to thrive. Cartels are the original multinationals: agile, innovative, and surprisingly good with logistics. Amazon and military should learn a thing or two. As traditional jobs disappear under austerity and automation, drug economies offer a growth

market -albeit one that's a little shabby. In some part of the world narco- economics are the only functioning economic system, complete with PR teams and humanitarian projects. The line between " corrupt politician" and" cartel consultant " is thinner than the President's nose after a mysterious weekend in Medellin.

Colonialism is back- but now its got 5G.

Forget armies and ships. The new empires comes with cloud storage, facial recognition and apps that sell your soul for a fire trial. Facebook knows more about your mother than you do, and Google finished mapping your DNA while you read this sentence. Countries are sovereign in theory,

but in reality, they are data farms fenced in by terms and conditions. Even revolutions are live streamed - monetised and algorithmically suppressed in 12 hours or less. AI confirms it has No Plans for World Domination...yet.

Conclusion We Crossed the Line Long Ago

As crises cross borders faster than politicians can build fences, one thing is clear: the problems of the world don't care about visas. Whether its melting glacier, mutation viruses, memos about brain wash or meth furred supply chains, we are in this mess together. Perhaps it's time to go beyond borders, not with missiles, but with humility, cooperation and a working broadband connection. Until then buckle up, Earth is in beta testing

-Maithreyi S Kumar 10 E

Right to a Spiritual Trial*

Why get justice when you can attain spiritual enlightenment?

I am an eminent Indian citizen and an armchair legal expert, as I have read “*The Constitution explained for 5-year-olds*” ten times, meaning I have more than fifty years of experience in law, so I clearly know what I’m talking about. Additionally, I am an honorary WhatsApp judge. That’s why I am overqualified to propose the following revolutionary reform:

Forget Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism or any other religion; let us all unite under a new spiritual path: ‘*Judicisim*’. In *Judicisim*, the courtrooms are the temples and their judges the deities.

The Indian judiciary is not man-made. It is God-given and therefore is 100% perfect. Our courts operate on such a high plane for spiritual influence that when one *court hearing* turns into two, then three, then four and then twenty, time itself bends. What you think is “one month”, in judicial terms, it is forty years of penance. This isn’t a delay, it’s *moksha* by adjournment.

In this temple, you don’t bring offerings; the courts extract them. Emotionally, financially, existentially. Furthermore, Article 142 of the Constitution grants the Supreme Court *divine omnipotence*. Lord Shiva needed a trident - our courts just need a paperclip and a calendar.

Let’s talk about God’s children and living deities - the judges. While not quite as elite as me (but close), they enjoy a divinely sanctioned 10-12 weeks of vacation each year. Because justice can wait, but Switzerland can’t.

Now imagine this: a judge is on vacation.

A fire breaks out at his house. Fifty crores in cash gets accidentally roasted like peanuts. Even worse, someone uploads a video. The logical response? “That money? In my house? Never seen it in my life.” This is eventually followed by the daily drama of ‘no’, then ‘maybe’, then ‘perhaps’.

Finally, when it comes to conducting an investigation, guess who conducts it? The Collegium, a sacred brotherhood so transparent that even sunlight gets lost in it. When the investigation concludes, the report is confidentially submitted to the CJI. The result: The judge is transferred to the trash bin, I mean, the Allahabad High Court. Have you ever seen such sacred work anywhere else before?

Even though our Parliament is sleeping most of the time, occasionally, when they wake and propose any reform to our already perfect judicial system, the judges repudiate it with divine fury, rightly so, by citing the “Basic Structure Doctrine”. In other words, “Thou shalt not question us.”

Now that I’ve established the supreme sanctity and holiness of the court system of India and its judges, let me proceed with additional reforms to ensure that its blessings reach every Indian.

- Everything begins with education, thus, I suggest introducing Litigation Studies as a core subject in school. A class VI student should be able to cite IPC Section 420 better than “Twinkle Twinkle”.
- Why stop at AADHAR or APAAR cards? If you’re born in India, along with your birth certificate, you should receive a ‘Trial Prospectus’, listing all the civil, criminal, and family cases your family is currently

- stuck in. Why let your kids miss out on their ancestral litigation? We can even gamify it:
- Murder Trial: + 50 years
- Property Dispute: +3 generations
- Bail Application: Roll a dice and pray

These cases are no longer legal disputes, but heirlooms, meant to be passed along with gold, property, and generational trauma, because in India, justice isn't a right - it's a privilege, one that a common Indian isn't entitled to.

With over five crore pending cases, India isn't delivering justice, it's distributing spiritual companions.

-Arnav Gupta 10G



The Laughs, the Lies and the Cries

“In times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”
— George Orwell

Their effect is embedded in me—
like the laughs,
the lies,
and the cries.
For every vow they broke,
A thousand voices rose awake.
But none loud enough to stop them.

The things done for power
are never forgotten.
But if this is power, I want none of it.—
Not the blood-stained hands,
Not the mouth full of fed lies,
Not the hollow rituals dressed as truth.

Everything now lays haunted and fractured,
laughs tainted,
expectations tamed,
truth tarnished,
lies framed.

I carry the weight of their deception:
The abyss of the feelings toyed,
The yoke of unseen wounds,

Their thoughts, no wiser than their actions;
their actions, no stronger than my shattered
soul.

My words were a threat, my silence the same,
Even the gods seemed unaware,
Every day was a prayer and a curse,
A nation stitched shut at the mouth.

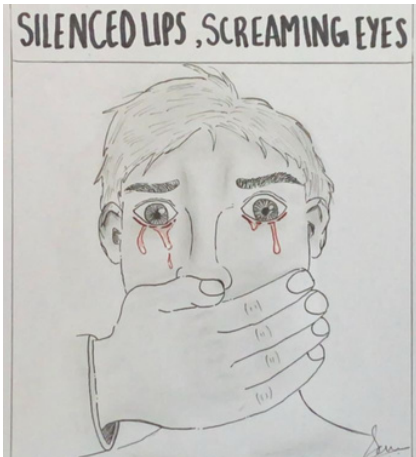
After all—

their effect is embedded in me,
like the laughs,
the lies,
and the cries,
that no one heard.

As all lay uncertain,
My soul shattered.
My voice, once an asset
now my greatest liability.

My mouth woven shut
With whispers,
stitched with silence and fear.

-Aaliya Kapil 10E



Lines of Power

A line in soil, declared by State,
Turns play into a breach of fate.
The ball defies this grand decree;
Now enters drone and policy.

One side grows trees, the other rules
where border guards enforce the tools
of sovereignty and fear combines-
A game reframed as "threat defined"

In theory: justice, order, and peace
In practice: borders never cease



The Clause

A POLITICAL SCIENCE
NEWSLETTER



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