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Global Peace Amidst War and Conflict

By Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee
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Gen Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI (M) joined the Pakistan Army in 1976. He has varied experience of Command and Staff assignments. He is a graduate from Fort Sill Oklahoma, USA, Command and Staff College Camberley, UK, and National Defence University, Islamabad. He is a recipient of Humanities Gold Medal, Master Gunner award and Master Warfighter award. His command assignments include command of an Artillery Regiment, Divisional Artillery of a Mechanized Division, an Infantry Brigade, an Infantry Division and a Corps

General's staff assignment include Brigade Major of an Infantry Brigade, Assistant Military Secretary in Military Secretary's Branch, Army and Air Advisor United Kingdom, Chief of Staff of a Strike Corps, Private Secretary to the Chief of Army Staff, Director General Staff Duties at General Headquarters, Director General Strategic Plans Division (responsible for Pakistan's Nuclear Program), and as Chief of General Staff of Pakistan Army. His instructional assignments include Instructor at School of Artillery and Pakistan Military Academy. On 27 Nov 2016, he was promoted to the rank of General and appointed as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. The General was appointed as 3rd Colonel-in-Chief of Regiment of Artillery on 10 Nov 2017.

Introduction

The theme of this conference, focusing on global peace in a world of conflict and turmoil, compels an analysis of the context of peace to include its nature or character within a broader spectrum of conflict. Ultimately, however, the focus must be on the projection of peace transitioning through conflict, conflict prevention, and finally towards a trajectory of resolution. In a world as volatile and constantly evolving as ours, it is crucial to constantly work towards building stable and robust institutions that adopt a grassroots approach towards building a stable, manageable government.

In South Asia, the overall volatility of the region can be largely attributed to the unstable nature of the Line of Control and Working Boundary with India – the main cause primarily being the unresolved Kashmir crisis with its eastern neighbor. The issue of Kashmir can be the route to a global panacea that must be at the forefront of world politics and influential nations' agenda to promote global peace. Pakistan has reiterated continuously that without the resolution of the Kashmir conflict, it will be almost impossible to achieve lasting regional peace in South Asia.

Concept of Peace in the Current Global Political Landscape

The wider global political landscape in the last few decades, since the 1948 UN Partition Plan for Palestine, has bred conflict in various parts of the Middle East, North Africa and has continued to impact West Asia including Afghanistan and Pakistan in the South Asian belt. Unrest in Egypt, Libya and a full-scale war in Syria post the Arab Spring has had devastating consequences for regional stability.

Peace is an idealistic notion grounded in unfounded realities and promoted by global agendas and policies. A more critical argument would perhaps envision the concept of peace as the cessation of war appearing to negate the existence of violence. However, as already mentioned today, the absence of peace may not necessarily translate into the absence of war. The process of achieving peace is far more dynamic and in the long term – a process based on universal values.

Prevalence of Peace around the Globe

In order to contextualize this, the overall prevalence of peace around the globe must be studied. In the year 2018, seventeen years after the War on Terror was unleashed – crises, conflict, and tensions continue to actively pervade various regions of the world. According to the Global Peace Index, Syria is the least peaceful country in the world followed by Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Iraq. Unfortunately, 62% of these countries have recorded increased levels of terrorist activities.

There is also a proven economic impact of this deteriorating peace. The economic impact of violence on the global economy in 2017 was 14.7 trillion in purchasing power parity terms. The figure is equivalent to 12.4% in world economic activity. Furthermore, since 2012 the economic impact of violence has increased by 16%. This leads to a simple conclusion, that the achievement of perpetual peace is an idealistic notion. Therefore, the nation's endeavors must be generated to attain the ambitions of positive peace.

In the real world, unfortunately, individual state interests tend to override the collective goodwill. Furthermore, the sovereignty of states continues to be challenged in various ways through traditional and nontraditional means. Nontraditional security threats including climate change, water shortages, resource scarcity, population shifts, and human security issues have the potential to trigger inter and inter-state conflicts. Cyberspace has brought non-geographical dimensions before states that extend beyond state border controls.

Statecraft seems to give way to what is known as debt craft. From the outrage of populism in the farther lands, there is a spread of sectarianism with fundamental systemic changes such as globalization, global inequality, and technological advancements. The current demographic trends also fuel instability as Pakistan is now experiencing a 'population explosion.' Furthermore, the rise in poverty inevitably results in the increased production of extremist ideologies driven by religion, ethnic and class divisions. Discriminating global politics and global military spending as said earlier, are shifting the military awareness of the public in various regions.

Conclusion

The question is positive peace. It is perhaps wherein an optimal environment of global and national potential there is an opportunity for nations to succeed. The world is in transition mainly in four directions. First, there is a shift in polarity where dominant powers shift from unipolarity to multipolarity in military and technological domains. The resultant changes can be felt in geopolitical trajectories. Second, there is an unshakable reemergence of power centers especially in the East, for example, rising India or the emergence of BRICS. The emphasis now shifts on issue-based partnership from traditional alliances. Third, there is an ideological collision among globalization versus populisms and hyper-naturalism.

Finally, there is an overwhelming influence of technology that is leading to what we know is a sustained dehumanization of every sphere of our life. From hospitals or business centered battlefields automation in artificial intelligence is replacing humans with microchips and robots. It is inevitably within this constantly evolving environment political climate that nations rise and fall and Pakistan must anchor itself deep within the global system in order to progress.



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