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MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS IN 2023 AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER



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Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS)



MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS IN 2023 AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Introduction

Just as there is a political system for the order of human society within a territory, there is also an international system. The difference is that the international system is led by states and the national system by individuals. So far, the world has experienced three types of international systems. The first, from 1814 to 1914 was a multipolar international system led by Russia, Austria, Germany, France, and England. The second was a bipolar international system that was led by the Soviet Union and the United States of America after World War II. Third, there has been a unipolar international system in place since 1991 which is led by the United States of America.

There is a difference of opinion among the researchers about the current international system. Some label it multipolar and consider the major powers like China and Russia as important partners in the world order. Others believe that it is still a US-led unipolar system. However, it is certain that from 2020 onwards, the world is moving towards a new international system.

The year 2023 has come to an end and brought with it major events that challenged and impacted the unipolar US-led system.

This year, Russia continued its attack on Ukraine, and the tension between China and the US kept expanding. Hamas's attack on Israel drastically changed the geopolitics of the Middle East; Azerbaijan won the Karabakh war against Armenia; major human rights violations occurred internationally, and the United Nations and other international organizations' failure to protect them was exposed more than ever, and economic crises happened. In this article, we discuss these and other major international events in 2023.

RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

Russia's attack on Ukraine continued in 2023 and had various effects on the international order. This war opened the way for the competition between the great powers and any efforts to control the weapons that were going on within the framework of international law, not only stopped, but the arms race developed further. China, Russia, the United States of America, England, and France have increased their weapons on the one hand, and on the other hand, they have paid more attention to the modernization of nuclear weapons and the development of technological weapons. Based on the report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, China has built 300 new missiles, and North Korea 20 nuclear missiles this year. Based on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has accelerated the enrichment of uranium. ¹ This arms race,



of which the war in Ukraine is also a cause, will create a great threat to international security, which could become the beginning of the destabilization of the international system and the destruction of the absolute rule of the United States of America.

In 2023 another effect of the war in Ukraine was that it strengthened the role of NATO. NATO member countries realized that NATO is a good option for self-defense, and therefore Sweden and Finland also requested membership in NATO. Finland completed the membership process and became a NATO member on April 4.² In addition to this, Bosnia, Georgia, and Ukraine have also shown interest in NATO membership.³ NATO in 2023. Strongly supported Ukraine, but failed to defeat Russia. Also, the expansion of NATO can create another security block in the East, which will be the most important reason for changing the international system.

US & CHINA STRATEGIC COMPETITION

When it comes to national security and economic competition, China and the United States of America are said to be strong rivals in this field. American leaders consider China to be a major challenge for their future order.⁴

Both are the world's first and second economic powers, which together make up 40 percent of the world's economy. Both countries have mutual economic relations. They buy goods from each other, finance each other's commercial companies, and cooperate in making applications and films, but even so, when it comes to world leadership, the rapid economic power of China is ahead of the United States. Not tolerable.

At the beginning of the year, it was thought that the relationship between the United States of America and China would return to normal and the competition would be somewhat sidelined. Because in 2022. In November this year, a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden was held at the G-20 meeting. This meeting was considered a good start for building bilateral relations, and based on this meeting, it was decided that United States of America Foreign Minister Anthony Blankenship would visit in 2023. To travel to China in February. To talk about restoring relations between the two countries and setting aside geopolitical rivalries, in 2023. On February 2nd of this year, the United States Ministry of Defense announced that a Chinese surveillance balloon had entered the territory of the United States of America and was collecting information from different areas. On February 3, China said that the balloon was used for civilian purposes, research, and to determine weather conditions, and its purpose was never to collect information about American military sites. On the 4th of February, the United States of America shot down this balloon, which faced a strong response from China.

Because of this incident, the United States of America postponed the visit of Anthony Blinken to China and imposed sanctions on six Chinese space companies.⁵ A few days after this incident, the United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd Aston wanted to talk to



the Chinese officials about this issue, but the Chinese officials refused to pick up the phone and talk, which made the political relations between the two countries worse. It got worse and the competition between them got stronger.

In 2023 the competition between China and the United States of America in the Middle East also reached a high level. China wants to create a high level of economic influence in the Middle East. And for this purpose in 2023. During the visit of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to China in the first week of October last year, Xi Jinping signed a strategic partnership agreement with him. During the China-Arab Trade Expo, trade agreements worth 23.4 billion dollars were signed between the King of Kuwait and Chinese President Xi Jinping.⁶

In the same year, China mediated between Iran and Saudi Arabia and signed an agreement between the two sides, and diplomatic relations between them grew. Also, China wants to make Saudi Arabia a member of BRICS and there have been discussions between these two countries to sell oil in Chinese yen. These are the tasks that China will do in 2023 has done in the year and in contrast, the United States of America also took some measures to prevent China. The most important of which is the mediation between the two countries to establish a normalization agreement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and through this agreement, the United States of America places some conditions on Saudi Arabia. The first is that they will choose economic and security distance from China, they will not place Chinese military bases in Saudi Arabia, they will limit the use of Huawei technology and they will sell oil to China for dollars, which is itself in the Middle East.⁷ It shows the competition between these two countries.

China's neutrality regarding the Taiwan issue and the Ukraine war are other cases that will be discussed in 2023. During the year, the relationship between the United States of America and China has worsened and competition has increased.

WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS

Another important event of the year was the attack on the Israelis by Hamas in order to defend their territory on the 7th of October, due to which the war broke out between the Zionist regime and the Palestinian state. In this war, Israel, with the support of the United States of America, engaged in the genocide of Palestinians and their forced migration against all international rules. Israel also violated the Geneva International Conventions on War, because it bombed hospitals, destroyed civilian buildings, bombed ambulances killed nearly 22,000 civilians, and injured 57,000, all of which show that Israel has also committed war crimes in Palestine.

In this war, Israel also used chemical weapons, which on the one hand exposed Palestine to environmental pollution and on the other hand caused many diseases. Education and training systems have been damaged, the Minister of Education said that in this war,



education and training structures worth 13 million dollars and materials worth 6 million dollars have been damaged.⁸ In this war, the Palestinian infrastructure was destroyed, there was a famine of food and medical supplies, and Palestine faced economic problems at a high level.

This war also had political, security, and economic effects on the international system and the Middle East.

Its security effects were that the security situation in the region worsened. Hezbollah from Lebanon and Houthis from Yemen and Jordan launched their own Qassam attacks. Also, several Israeli missiles hit Egypt, for which it apologized, Israel attacked Lebanon and Syria, and on the other hand, American bases in Iraq and Syria were also attacked.⁹

The political impact was that Turkey, Bahrain, and Jordan cut off their relations with Israel. The talks on the normalization agreement between Saudi Arabia and Israel have stalled and this agreement may not be signed for a long time. The Bahraini parliament asked the government to cancel the normalization agreement with Israel.¹⁰

Also, Tunisia has drafted a law that if any government signs a normalization agreement with Israel, it will be considered as national treason and a crime.¹¹

Its effects on the international order are that the status of the United States of America was damaged at the international level, China and Russia used this war as propaganda and they spread propaganda against the United States of America. Efforts to prevent China's influence in the Middle East have faced some obstacles.

Iran's position in the region increased and Iran took advantage of this war against Saudi Arabia.

The foreign policy of the United States of America regarding the region has changed because the United States of America wanted to gather the support of the rest of the world in order to maintain the leadership of the international order and only prevent China in the Indo-Pacific. In Eastern Europe, during the war in Ukraine, Russia was oppressed, but this war between Hamas and Israel forced them to give a special place to the Middle East in their foreign policy once again.

CAPTURE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH BY AZERBAIJAN

The Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia took more than thirty years but in 2023. This conflict ended in September and Azerbaijan won the war and gained full control over Nagorno-Karabakh.

In this war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Russia supported Armenia, but this time Russia was busy in Ukraine, so it did not support Armenia in this war, this, along with other reasons, became an important reason why Azerbaijan fought this war. He won.

This war also had an important role in the geopolitical changes of the region, because, after the end of the war and the victory of Azerbaijan, the activities of the Western



countries and NATO were created in the region. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the countries of the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan), despite knowing that Russia was a great power in their neighborhood suddenly could not get rid of its influence. Therefore, on this basis, they gradually started to move away from Russia's orbit and move closer to the West.

As the Russia-Ukraine war is going on now, Azerbaijan's gas exports from this region, especially to Europe, are very important to Western countries. On the other hand, the involvement of Western countries in the region limits the interests of Russia and it uses this region as a pressure tool in this area and can also use this region against Iran, which is the alliance of Western countries and NATO. Does not have a good relationship with the organization; take advantage. And does not want to be engaged in two fronts; Therefore, the Western countries have been given a good opportunity to expand their influence in this region.¹² At the same time, this victory of Azerbaijan will increase the influence of Turkey in the region.

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

2023 The year was the bloodiest year in terms of human rights. On average, 170 civilians, including children and women, have been killed and injured in Ukraine every month this year.¹³

This year, 22,000 Palestinians were martyred by the Zionist occupation regime and nearly 57,000 were injured, most of them children and women. In this war, Israel also used White Phosphorous bombs, the use of which is prohibited at the international level.¹⁴

Nearly 110 journalists have been killed in this war, and their safety has been recognized internationally. Forced migrations have occurred in Gaza by the occupying regime, which is an act against international human rights.

Also, in the United States of America and Europe, those protestors who were protesting in support of Palestine were suppressed and banned from the protest. Demonstration is considered a basic right of human rights at the international level, but the same claimants of human rights violated it at the highest level.

In addition, cases of human rights violations have been registered in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, on the borders of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in Rwanda and Nepal, in Iran and Syria, and other parts of the world.

Afghanistan is one of the countries that in 2023. He is accused of violating human rights. Preventing the education of girls above the 6th grade and education in universities and not allowing girls to work are special issues that are considered a violation of human rights.



FORCED EXPULSION OF AFGHAN REFUGEES FROM PAKISTAN

Based on the information of the government of Pakistan, 4 million Afghan refugees are living in this country, of which 2.3 million refugees have documents approved by the government, and the remaining 1.7 million refugees do not have documents and live illegally. 2023 On October 3rd of this year,¹⁵ the government of Pakistan announced that all illegal Afghan refugees would be returned to their country by the end of October. In 2023 Based on a report of the International Committee of Refugees in July 2021.¹⁶ Since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, more than 600,000 Afghans have immigrated to Pakistan, all of whom are undocumented. According to the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid, 400,000 Afghan refugees have returned to their country through Torkham and Spinboldak in almost a month and a half, that is, until the 20th of November.

There are many reasons behind the forced deportation of Afghan refugees, one of which is the increasing violence in Pakistan. The Pakistani government says that with the increase in illegal Afghan refugees, incidents of violence have increased in Pakistan. And that is why illegal Afghan refugees should be deported from Pakistan so that the security situation in Pakistan is restored to normal. According to Pakistani officials, only in 2023. There were 24 suicide attacks in the year, 14 of which involved Afghan nationals. South Asia Terrorism Foundation says: In 2023. There have been 418 attacks in Pakistan in 2022. It was 365 in the year that the Pakistani authorities considered the illegal Afghan refugees in Pakistan as one of the reasons for the increase in attacks, and that is why they forcefully expelled the Afghan refugees from their land.

The second reason is to put pressure on the Islamic Emirate to carry out operations against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan inside Afghanistan, or to make them talk to the Pakistani government through relations with them. We mentioned earlier that the Pakistani government accuses the Islamic Emirate of harboring members of the Tehreek-Taliban in Afghanistan. Therefore, the Pakistani government wants to put the Islamic Emirate under pressure by deporting the refugees so that they cooperate with the Pakistani government regarding the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

In 2023 although this incident is considered a violation of international human rights, on the one hand, it has negatively affected the relations between Pakistan and the Islamic Emirate, and the bilateral relations between the two countries have deteriorated.

THE FAILURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Charter is considered the most important source of international law. Various institutions and conventions have been established by this organization to regulate human rights and inter-state relations. However, the fact that the practical aspect of international law has only a moral aspect and the mandatory aspect is



weak was already clear and known, but in 2023. In the year, the failure and weakness of the United Nations was revealed at a high level and its status suffered a severe shock.

In this year, the United Nations was unable to find a solution to the war between Ukraine and Russia, and even implement its decisions and resolutions regarding the war between Palestine and Israel. China and Russia's resolutions were vetoed by the United States and China and Russia vetoed the resolutions of the United States of America. But when it came to the General Assembly, it was found that more than 156 countries of the world are against Israel's attacks and want a ceasefire, but the United Nations was not able to apply this decision of the General Assembly to Israel.

The United Nations has not yet been able to find a solution to Afghanistan's problems and create a framework for interaction. The organization failed to prevent forced migration this year and forced member states not to do so.

CONCLUSION

2023 The year was the most important year of political, security, and economic problems and changes at the international level. In this year, the war between Ukraine and Russia intensified, the oppression of the oppressed people of Palestine reached its last limit, and Azerbaijan received Nagorno-Karabakh. The foreign policy of the United States of America regarding the Middle East has changed, and the inferiority, slavery, and helplessness of the Arab countries have been revealed. The position of the United States of America has been badly damaged at the international level due to the violation of human rights and its support for Israel. Economic developments took place in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, but the issue of girls' education remained ambiguous. The region of the Islamic Emirate strengthened its relations, but its relations with Pakistan deteriorated a little on some issues, especially on forced migrants. The equations of the Middle East have changed a bit and all these events have made it easy to take steps towards the change of the international order and it is not far that the domination of the United States of America will end.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The Islamic Emirate should pay serious attention to international changes and interact with the world considering these changes.
2. The Islamic Emirate has strengthened international and regional relations in view of the geopolitical changes in the world and the changes in the international order.
3. On the one hand, the issue of girls' education is a fundamental issue for the country, and on the other hand, it is important to adapt to international interaction and new changes, so the Islamic Emirate should try to open the doors of schools for girls.



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