

## The Liberal World Order and a New International Situation Determined by the Khilafah on the Method of Prophethood

International order or world order generally refers to the state or nature of relationships between different states in the world. In reality, the relationships which define and determine the international or world order are relationships between major powers. So, international situation or international struggle at a given point in time is practically defined by the relationships between great powers of that era.

The word “global” or “world” order is often misleading. It is more accurate to refer to the current international order as the liberal or Westphalian order, for it is built upon Western ideals about international relations agreed upon in the German city of Westphalia in 1648 by West European states, and later embraced by the whole of Europe and much of rest of the world. The Treaty of Westphalia gave a unique concept of sovereignty and defined certain rules for conducting international relations based on this particular concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty or authority of a state was limited to a territorial boundary, and the state was realized as an institutional entity independent of a particular government or ruler. International relations were thus viewed as being conducted by the state and not a particular government or ruler. Equality of states was declared but, of course, it was not translated into equality of their ability to define and shape international relations. What the equality of states meant was that each state, no matter how small and weak it was, was recognized as a sovereign entity and had certain rights; for example, its freedom to determine its own internal political system independent of foreign interference. The most profound impact of the Treaty of Westphalia was this particular approach towards sovereignty. States agreed not to interfere in another state’s internal matters and recognized the exclusive authority of a government or a ruler over its own territory and were committed not to violate this authority and the rights it enjoyed internally. What this meant was that the states agreed on the principle of not using force to expand the boundaries of a particular state or to reduce the territorial reach of another state. Simply put, borders will not be changed through the use of military force even if a stronger state had the ability and moral case to do so. Sovereignty was limited within a territorial boundary, and the nation-state was born.

From the principle of not changing borders through the use of force emerged the idea of balance of power. The Treaty of Westphalia emerged under a particular internal and external environment within Christian Europe. Internally, Europe was divided due to sectarian wars within Christianity as well as power struggles between the monarchs and feudal lords and between the monarchs and the Church and between monarchs themselves. Externally, the Islamic Khilafah State threatened Christian Europe with its conquests which were a regular aspect of the foreign policy of the Ottoman Khilafah. This specific context motivated the Europeans to develop a concept of sovereignty which protected states from interference from other states. It was argued that this particular approach towards sovereignty will reduce conflicts and usher in an era of peace and stability in Europe. It was agreed that if a state’s borders are violated by another state, all states will collectively repel the aggressor state and restore the balance of power and hence international peace.

The motivation behind the Treaty of Westphalia was to reduce the frequency of the use of military power to resolve international conflicts. As the use of military means to resolve conflicts was discouraged, a rules-based approach towards conducting international relations was adopted, which relied more on political action based on a certain degree of agreement

among major powers as to how to conduct international relations. Thus, another idea emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia was the idea of Summits of European states. The idea was for the European states to meet regularly to develop a consensus on how to solve their problems and protect their national interests through consensus or consultations. This idea of summits later developed into the idea of summits of super powers where they meet to decide global and regional issues in the light of interests of the super powers. The idea of a rules based international order emerged directly from the treaty of Westphalia and formed the basis of what is now known as international law.

The idea of balance of power, which emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia, was in fact an agreement between major powers to divide the world between themselves and to resist the change in the international situation, and hence keep their monopoly over power and influence in shaping the international situation.

Thus, Westphalian ideals of limiting sovereignty to territorial boundaries, discouraging the use of military force to change boundaries or resolve conflicts, the idea of balance of power, the idea of international summits, international law and rules-based conduct of foreign relations and preserving the current configuration of global power and influence came to form the basis of how foreign policy is conducted in the post Westphalian World.

We can see the application of these Westphalian ideals in the conduct of foreign policy by major states. Internal political dynamics and change in political, military and economic strength of different states resulted in shaping very strong or weak states over time. Wars or conflicts continued to take place, which also contributed to the strength or weakness of major powers of a particular era. This relative increase and decrease in the strength of major powers often resulted in what is referred to as disturbing the balance of power. Whenever this occurred, wars were initiated by major powers, which aimed at restoring the balance of power as the Westphalian ideal demanded. This happened in the case of Napoleonic wars in the early nineteenth century when France, under Napoleon, waged a major war against different European states, and during the second half of the eighteenth century when Russia annexed Crimea and some other Ottoman territory. Another example is of the First World War when Britain, France and Russia felt threatened from Germany and its alliance the Ottoman State and launched a war against them. Or the example of the Second World War when Germany felt that it has been denied a legitimate stake in the balance of power in Europe and sought to alter it aggressively in its favor through the resort to military means. America and the Soviet Union, sensing an opportunity to alter the global balance of power, intervened in Europe and Asia under the pretext of restoring the regional and global balance of power.

Today, the current world order, dominated by America, is built on the same Westphalian ideals. American policy makers take pride in the fact that for the past seven decades, no direct great power military conflict broke out at the global or regional level. They attribute this to the successful management of great power relations and balance of power. In fact, the current American foreign policy towards the two great powers which are considered potential adversaries (China and Russia) is to manage their rise or ambitions through a regional balance of power, or if need be, like the case of China, to integrate it in the global balance of power. American policy towards China in the Asia Pacific region insists on persuading China from abstaining from using military means to resolve conflicts in the East and South China Sea. As for Russia, America in alliance with Europe, seeks to punish it through punitive sanctions for its violation of the Westphalian ideal of changing boundaries through the use of force in Ukraine. Through this, America seeks to emphasize Westphalian ideals which underpin the current global order.

Since the end of the Cold War, there hasn't been any serious international struggle or competition at the global level as America dominates the management of global issues. International relations are thus increasingly conducted at the regional level with America, playing a role in shaping the relationships between states at the regional level. Thus, it seeks to manage the rise of China in South East Asia, helps the rise of India in South Asia, deters an aggressive Russia in Europe and keeps Europe sufficiently weak in order not to rival it as an economic power. It has not allowed any international competition in North or South America, and has competed with Europe in controlling the resources of Africa while it has sought to control the Middle East for its oil resources and strategic location. In all these regions, the execution of American foreign policy generally followed Westphalian ideals.

There were, however, some important exceptions. The Westphalian ideal of non-interference in other states' affairs contradicted with the ideological conduct of foreign policy especially during the cold war where both the Western and Eastern camps tried to promote their own models of governance, management of economy, social organization of societies, conduct of foreign policy and their viewpoint about organization of human societies. Moreover, after the end of the cold war, a new interpretation of sovereignty was put forward by Western powers, which was built on the idea of responsibility to protect. This ideal sought to deny sovereign governments their right to act as they liked within their own territories if such action led to a humanitarian crisis. So, Western governments pragmatically sought to ignore the Westphalian ideal of non-interference in other state's affairs when it suited their interests. In addition, Western governments did not stop from interfering in the affairs of weak or subordinate states and even in the affairs of satellite states under one pretext or another. It is probably more accurate to state that the Westphalian ideal generally applied to the relationships between strong independent states rather than all states.

The most profound challenge to the Westphalian ideal came from two regions based on two different ideals. The European economic integration project, which was launched to create a powerful economic interdependence among European states so as to deter them from going to war as happened in the Second World War, led to the idea of European political integration as well. This gave rise to the European Union free trade zone and Euro Zone and what some thinkers referred to as the postmodern project or the postmodern era. The modern era was the era of Westphalian ideal of nation-states and national boundaries. The postmodern era was deemed as the era where national boundaries did not matter and where the Westphalian ideal lost its relevance. The European Union and Euro Zone were considered to be examples of this era which was termed by some as the way forward for much of the world. However, the economic problems faced by Euro Zone and European Union countries in the last decade or so have discredited the idea of postmodernism and nationalism and have made a comeback in Europe. This is what some writers like to refer to as the return of history in the context of Europe where the Westphalian ideal has made a comeback.

The other region where the Westphalian ideal faced a significant challenge and collapse altogether is the Middle East or the Muslim World. There, the Westphalian ideal of nation-state was introduced artificially by European colonialists after the destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate and the end of Muslim rule in the Subcontinent. This ideal was artificially upheld by dictatorial regimes subservient to Western states who used force to make Muslim societies submit to the ideal of nation-state and secular politics. However, the Arab spring and a wider Islamic revival led to the collapse of some of these states in the Middle East while many Muslim majority states face serious challenges to their legitimacy. The reason for the failure of the Westphalian ideal in the Muslim World is thoroughly ideological. Islam cultivates within

its followers a powerful sense of religious identity which supersedes all other identities. The concept of an Islamic Ummah, which is one with the exclusion of all others, is emphasized repeatedly and in detail in Islamic culture. Moreover, the Westphalian ideal of nation-state emerged in Western Europe, together with the ideal of secularism, and both were promoted by Western states to the rest of the world. The Muslim World was also introduced to nation-state and secular politics at the same time and it comprehensively rejected both.

Another challenge to the current Westphalian ideal is the issue of globalization and global commons. Increasingly, states are affected by issues which transcend national boundaries. Climate change, cyber space or pandemics are just a few examples. Some present economic interdependence in the same context, however, participation in free trade agreements and international financial markets are sovereign choices which can be rolled back any time. Still, economic interdependence is considered as a challenge linked to globalization. There is increasingly an argument in the West for collective responses to issues linked to globalization and global commons. A new interpretation of the Westphalian ideal is being presented as a solution to such issues. To mask its imperial ambitions in Afghanistan and justify its occupation, America presented a new interpretation for sovereignty to the world. It argued that any sovereign nation loses its rights under the Westphalian ideal if its territory is used against another nation and it refuses to hold accountable those who used its territory against another nation. Later America expanded this justification to intervene militarily in Muslim countries. Now, some American thinkers are presenting this very interpretation of sovereignty which was used to invade Afghanistan and to deal with issues linked to globalization and global commons calling it sovereign obligation. Under this concept, states will be held responsible for actions taking place within their territory but which affect other states; actions like carbon emissions, cyber-attacks, failing to warn the world against an infectious disease or providing a sanctuary to militant groups. However, such a concept is still under development and is applied occasionally to international issues.

The defense of Westphalian ideal was also the excuse used by America to intervene militarily in some of the Muslim countries in the name of bolstering or protecting the legitimate or sovereign authority from attacks from militant groups.

There is now a consensus among great powers that the Westphalian ideal is embraced by much of the world (except for the Middle East), and hence the creation of any new states is undesirable. In fact, the creation of numerous new countries in the twentieth century was considered part of decolonization under the slogan of self-determination. Both the Soviet Union and America encouraged the policy of decolonization to reduce the role and influence of European states in global and regional affairs. Hence, support for self-determination has now waned after the completion of physical decolonization. Rather, self-determination is now increasingly seen from the prism of Westphalian ideal of interfering in a country's internal affairs.

Islam presents a uniquely different approach towards international relations and international situation which is thoroughly ideological in its orientation. The Islamic state does not subscribe to the Westphalian ideal of territorial sovereignty, the concept of building and maintaining a balance of power or the idea of a rules-based global or regional governance architecture which is binding on all states, for Islam seeks to radically change the international situation so as to make it favorable for the deliverance of Islam's message to humanity to worship Allah (swt). Allah says in the Quran: **﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾** **“You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you**

enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah. [Aal e Imran:110]. Islam cultivated a powerful sense of Islamic identity based on the Islamic creed which superseded tribal, ethnic or other identities. Allah says in the Quran: ﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ﴾ “The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). [Al-Hujuraat-10]. And Allah says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. [Al-Hujuraat-13]. This powerful sense of Islamic identity, of belonging to an Islamic Ummah by just embracing the Islamic creed, made Islam a truly transformational force in global politics when it first appeared at the international stage after the establishment of the Islamic State in Madina by Prophet Muhammad (saw). The message was universal and inclusive. Anyone and everyone is welcomed and is embraced as part of the Muslim Ummah irrespective of his previous beliefs, ethnicity, race, language, gender or color if s/he proclaimed *shahadah*. Islam presented the concept of an expansive state which is not limited by territorial boundaries. The objective of the expansion of the Islamic state was to establish the authority of Islam over new lands. This establishment of the Islamic authority would naturally serve as an invitation to Islam as the new areas annexed to the Islamic state will be governed by Islamic law. The new citizens of the state will thus have a comparative experience of living in an Islamic society governed by Islamic laws and a non-Islamic society governed by non-Islamic law. The superior experience of living in an Islamic society would thus be an invitation to the new religion and no coercion would be applied by the state on its non-Muslim citizens to change their religion. In fact, non-Muslims will enjoy similar rights as that of Muslims with a few differences.

On the return of the Khilafah to the international stage, it will seek to overturn the Westphalian ideal of nation-state. The Muslim World is ready for such a change, for Muslims in the Middle East specifically and the Muslim majority countries generally reject the Westphalian ideal, and in some cases the Westphalian state has already collapsed. Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe as well as some countries in South Asia and South America are weak states who have not benefited considerably from the liberal world order. People of such states and societies will willingly embrace a superior alternative to Western liberalism if the superiority of such an alternative is demonstrated to them.

It should be noted that although global arrangements, like the United Nations, IMF, the World Bank and World Trade Organization, are in place, much of them are discredited globally for they mostly represent the balance of power as was the case immediately after the Second World War or as was in the case of WTO immediately after the end of Cold War. Increasingly, America is resorting to regional architectures or bilateral or smaller multilateral arrangements to manage international relations. This points to a lack of consensus over the liberal order in today's world. On its return, the Khilafah would target the dismantling of formal global and regional architectures which introduce binding or formal obligations upon states whether such architectures are political, economic or security related in nature. Such a campaign would need to be political and sometimes military in nature where the ineffectiveness of such arrangements or their bias towards protecting interests of Western states needs to be demonstrated to the world. The world should instead be invited to voluntary treaties to manage their international relations negotiated for a certain amount of time for a certain aspect of international relations. To successfully achieve this, the Khilafah

State must have a strong military as was historically the case and should achieve considerable economic strength in the shortest possible time. One of the biggest assets that would be available to the Khilafah State is the huge number of Muslims spread across the globe. As is easily demonstrable even today, these Muslims can exert a lot of soft power. Even today, Muslim communities in the Western and other non-Muslim countries are at the forefront of intellectual and political struggle against Western and other governments who are insisting that Muslims adopt Western secular culture or that Muslims abandon their Islamic identity. If properly organized by the Islamic state, this huge Muslim population can project tremendous soft and cultural power helping to prepare foreign societies for the acceptance of Islam's message and eventual expansion as a state and authority.

The Khilafah State would also be best positioned to tackle the challenge of what is termed as globalization because it will be a single expansive sovereign authority reaching three continents if only current Muslim majority countries are taken in to account. This will mean that a central authority, the Khalifah, will have the ability to immediately implement any policy whose reach and influence will be felt over three continents instantaneously. Nothing will guarantee more stability, consistency of policy, free movement of goods, services and people over such a long stretch of lands than these areas being under the command of a single sovereign and expansive authority; the Khilafah State. This will be the case when the Khilafah returns and this was the case when it commanded global authority historically.

The return of the Khilafah State to the international stage would in itself be a remarkable event, for it would demonstrate the sheer determination, resilience and willingness of Muslim societies to resist colonialism and overthrow its clutches. It would be a powerful political announcement on its own. Add to this the reality that liberal democracy and Capitalism are facing an internal crisis of legitimacy within their own countries where tough economic conditions have unleashed a wave of popular movements which are challenging long held Western traditions like Open Market, Free Trade, an acceptance of immigration and the willingness to project military power abroad. And we have a world which is ready for change and a reconfiguration of global power once the Khilafah on the Method of the Prophethood returns by the will of Allah.

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Engineer Moez – Pakistan**