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The Detrimental Effects of Ineffective Foreign Policies on Democracy

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Abstract

This paper examines the complex interplay of foreign policy and democracy, detailing how one nation's foreign policy can profoundly influence its democratic base. While shrewd foreign policy can reinforce democratic governance, economic growth, and international cooperation, misplaced or incompetent foreign policy will undermine trust in the public, destabilize institutions, and lay the groundwork for authoritarianism. This paper reviews how failed foreign policies underlie the crisis in democracy, engaging with literature from various regions. Mistakes in foreign policy can lead to serious repercussions, including economic decline, social unrest, loss of a nation's reputation and credibility, and alienation of public trust. Building on its analysis of the correlation between foreign policy miscalculations and democratic decay, the paper uses the specific examples of US intervention in Iraq, Russian aggression toward Ukraine, Saudi engagement in Yemen, and Chinese adventurism in the Indo-Pacific to illustrate how elite foreign policy failures

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have ushered in democratic backsliding and a decline of democratic norms and institutions throughout their societies. The paper concludes that responsible and effective foreign policy is based on democratic values, respect for human rights, and international cooperation. These policies allow nations to create democracy at home and promote a more peaceful, prosperous world.

Keywords: Backsliding, Democracy, Economic Decline, Foreign Policy, International Collaboration, Populism, Public Trust

INTRODUCTION

This field of foreign policy concerns the interaction and negotiation between the parts of the world ruled and the approach of democratically ruling them, one of its most formidable global issues of affairs and international relations, although it focuses primarily on contemporary and traditional security issues. Well-calibrated foreign policy, both ideologically and operationally, cannot only fortify democracy but also make it exist at the economic levels, bring out the concept of social solidarity, and bring international partnerships. In contrast, the opposite is true for faulty foreign affairs. In recent years, a cloud has crept over democracies worldwide in a crisis characterized by rising populism, democratic backsliding, and an accelerating erosion of civil liberties. The situation has heightened concerns about foreign policy, with many scholars and policymakers claiming that failed foreign policy ventures are not simply a symptom of this democratic malaise but relatively central to its speed-up.

Using a wide variety of examples from around the world, this paper explores the close relationship between failed foreign policy and the crisis in democracy, highlighting the multifaceted nature of this relationship. It also highlights the importance of global cooperation in responding to this crisis, which is necessary for us to be united in these challenges.

Objectives

This research paper has the following main objectives:

- Discuss how bad foreign policies contribute to the crisis of democracy in multiple facets, with examples from worldwide and from literature.

- To analyze some of the specific U.S.-led interventions in Iraq, as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Saudi intervention in Yemen, and China's aggressive foreign policy approach in the Indo-Pacific to demonstrate how these foreign policy follies have laid the groundwork for democratic erosion and the weakening of democratic norms and institutions.
- To highlight the dire necessity for foreign policy to be responsible and practical, derived from democratic ideals, respect for human rights, and dedication to international cooperation.

METHODS

The study utilizes a qualitative case study methodology, focusing on historical and current analysis of the relationship between failed foreign policy and the crisis in democracy. It is based on diverse sources of information, such as scholarly papers, policy documents, official publications, and media coverage, to provide a multi-factorial analysis of the nature of this relationship.

The paper adopts a two-step research methodology:

1. **Case Studies:** The research is based on case studies that focus on specific foreign policies that have not fared well and have, therefore, partially contributed to this crisis in democracy. Such case studies span the United States' Intervention in Iraq, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Saudi Arabia's role in Yemen, and China's belligerent tactics in the Indo-Pacific.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** The research component will include a comparative analysis of the selected case studies, aiming to identify common patterns, causal mechanisms, and contextual factors that influence the relationship between foreign policy failures and democratic decline. The following analysis is intended to illuminate the interplay of domestic and international factors that drive the crisis in democracy and to underscore the immediate necessity of responsible and effective foreign policy rooted in democratic values.

Literature Review

There is no straightforward relationship between foreign policy and democracy. A successful foreign policy can enhance democracy, but a failed one can corrode it. The crisis

in democracy in recent years and paper. Foreign policy failure and the crisis in democracy around the world.

Several scholars have been studying this entanglement of foreign policy and democracy. S.D. Muni, 2019, India's Foreign Policy: The Democratic Dimension' and S.M. Lipset in 1959, Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', American Political Science Review, Vol. Larry Diamond (2023) laid out the links between economic inequality, falling social mobility, and the weakening of democratic norms. Other scholars have examined specific failures in foreign policy and how they undermine democracy, such as Ganguly (2003), who focused on the Iraq War and its implications for US democracy, and Haqqani (2005), who looked at Pakistan's foreign policy and its relationship with its democratic deficit. In this sense, these studies offer an essential insight into the genre of foreign policy and democracy.

This literature review outlines the academic literature explaining the relationship between foreign policy and democracy. Finally, the reviews and papers mentioned in this review point out several theoretical and empirical aspects. The review has also illustrated the diversity of scholarship from South Asian, Asian, Indian, and international scholars.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding the Global Decline of Democratic Freedom

Democracy, once considered the inevitable endpoint of political evolution, is facing a period of unprecedented turbulence on a global scale. Freedom House, a leading non-governmental organization that monitors the state of global freedom, has documented a steady decline in the number of countries classified as "free" over the past two decades. This democratic recession, as Larry Diamond (2023) aptly terms it, manifests in various forms, from the subtle erosion of democratic norms and institutions to the blatant dismantling of electoral processes and the suppression of dissent. The roots of this crisis are deep and tangled, encompassing a complex interplay of factors, including:

- **The Rise of Populism:** Populist movements, often fueled by economic anxieties, cultural grievances, and a distrust of established elites, have gained traction in many democracies. These movements frequently exploit nationalist sentiments, promote

divisive rhetoric, and undermine democratic institutions, posing a significant challenge to the liberal democratic order.

- **The Spread of Disinformation:** The proliferation of disinformation and misinformation, often amplified by social media and other digital platforms, has created a fertile ground for polarization, distrust, and the erosion of public faith in democratic processes. The manipulation of information and the deliberate spread of falsehoods can undermine informed decision-making, erode public trust, and destabilize democratic institutions.
- **The Erosion of Democratic Institutions:** The weakening of democratic institutions, including the judiciary, the legislature, and the media, is a hallmark of the current crisis. These institutions serve as vital checks and balances on executive power, safeguard individual rights, and ensure the accountability of elected officials. Their erosion undermines the foundations of democratic governance and creates opportunities for authoritarianism to take root.

The Domestic Fallout of Foreign Policy Failures

Failed foreign policies, often characterized by ill-conceived objectives, flawed execution, and a disregard for long-term consequences, can exacerbate the crisis in democracy in several ways:

- **Economic Decline and Social Unrest:** Misguided foreign policy adventures can lead to economic turmoil, triggering trade wars, sanctions, and disruptions in global supply chains. The resulting financial hardship, characterized by job losses, rising inflation, and declining living standards, can fuel social unrest, erode public trust in government, and create fertile ground for populist movements to exploit. Economic development and political legitimacy are intertwined, and economic decline can undermine the social foundations of democracy (Lipset, 1959, pp. 69–105).
- **Damage to Reputation and Credibility:** A nation's reputation and credibility on the global stage are invaluable assets. Failed foreign policies can tarnish this reputation, making it difficult to forge alliances, build partnerships, and exert influence in international affairs. This loss of standing can weaken a nation's ability to promote its interests, defend its values, and contribute to global peace and security.

- **Erosion of Public Trust:** When citizens believe their government's foreign policies are misguided or ineffective, they will be less willing to trust their government. The fallout from a collapse of public trust is wide-ranging, leading to apathy toward the political process, low voter turnouts, and devolution of democratic institutions.

Democracy's Blind Spot

There is a long history of foreign policy blunders that have aggravated democratic decay. The interaction of a country's foreign relations with its democratic internal realities is a complex relationship knot, as diplomatic missteps can come back to haunt the home front, alienating the population from government and even fracturing social cohesion. Thus, diplomatic missteps unravel the fabric of democracy in ways that do not become unspooled at the snap of someone's fingers.

The 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq based on false intelligence and dubious justification should be considered a cautionary tale of a foreign policy gone awry. This coup attempt in Egypt occurred before the 2003 invasion of Iraq on similar deceptions (that they would liberate the world from its weapon systems of mass devastation). It ultimately came at the price of hundreds of thousands of civilian lives and displacing the entire region. The Iraq war and the following march set up populations to sectarian violence and power vacuums that made the emergence of extremist factions like ISIS possible. The global repercussions set in motion by the actions the Americans undertook that day unbound from any fig leaf of international law to advance an agenda of Western imperialism were incalculable.

The war's catastrophic fallout tainted America's standing in the world, contributing to a rise in anti-American sentiment globally and damaging its status as a defender of democracy and human rights. The war also fueled skepticism about the Bush administration's assertions that a present threat from Iraq was growing, and it compounded increasing domestic distrust of the United States government as casualty figures mounted in a struggle that did not leave the country in a stable position. When national decision-makers are overcome by hubris, they challenge and ignore the international rules the rest of the world establishes. What happens is that the struggle to force its appearance is what we have seen, what the Iraq war now warns us against.

Another–"poignant," as Kagan describes it–example is Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This unprovoked act of aggression, an unapologetic repudiation of Ukraine's

sovereignty and territorial integrity, has led to a humanitarian disaster, killing thousands, creating millions of refugees in the worst European exodus since World War II, and leaving destruction in its wake. The war has also ruptured Europe's security architecture, caused a worldwide energy crisis, and left Russia more diplomatically and politically isolated than at any time in decades.

The invasion of Ukraine revealed the vulnerabilities of democratic norms and the readiness of authoritarian leaders to employ naked force to achieve their geopolitical goals. It has also shown the interconnectedness of the global order and how one nation's actions can send ripples around the world, destabilizing parts of the world, disrupting economies, and undermining the rule of law.

Outside of these high-profile instances, countless examples provide evidence of the connection between failed foreign policy and democratic decline. Yemen conflict: "After 7 years, tens of thousands of deaths and 4 million displaced people, a threat will have ended, but Yemen remains ravaged by a war of regional influence and foreign intervention, with a severe humanitarian crisis. The Saudi-led coalition's involvement in the Yemen civil war, bolstered by the United States and other Western nations, has blown out the internal conflict, causing mass casualties among civilians, starvation, and the disintegration of essential services. This long war has ravaged Yemen, bred regional instability, and tarnished the international community's credibility.

Under Xi Jinping, China has pursued an assertive foreign policy marked by territorial disputes with its neighbors, economic coercion, and human rights abuses, raising questions about the prospects for democracy in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, Beijing's increasing economic and military strength and the rise of an increasingly repressive regime at home have allowed it to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy that has eroded the existing regional order and democratic norms. Aggression in the South China Sea, repressing dissent in Hong Kong, and the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang have all set alarm bells about China's intentions and impact on the global democratic landscape.

The democracy crisis is complex and multicausal and, therefore, not easily remedied. Those failed foreign policies that do not take the public views and needs into account or actively misrepresent and lie to them are, of course, abettors of this crisis by gutting people's faith in politics, feeding the fissures within society, and corrupting or destroying democratic processes. It cannot sacrifice the post-war foundation of our foreign policy based on

democratic values, respect for human rights, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts between states.

In an age of rising globalization, states' foreign policy choices can have profound repercussions on their domestic democratic health. We also need foreign policy grounded in democracy, respecting international law, protecting and promoting human rights, and creating a certain state of affairs where democracy can flourish, at home and abroad, to be a necessary precondition for stability and prosperity.

Foreign Policy and the Fate of Democracy

The crisis of democracy is a chimerical, multiheaded monster with no precise origins or remedies. Many factors are at play, including economic inequality, social polarization, technological upheaval, and waning trust in traditional institutions. However, one can gather plenty of evidence that disastrous foreign policies were a significant factor behind this crisis. Errant foreign policy enterprises, military interventions, or aggressive unilateralism, in particular, can sow consequences at home that undermine democratic values and institutions in a way that may undermine the court, legislation, and other institutions in the local vs. state way.

The second one refers to the foreign policies that play a vital role in economic decline and, as a result, in the democracy crisis. The funds needed for potentially poorly thought-out military campaigns, as in the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, are battered national coffers, draining money from essential public services and causing economic upheaval. The human and financial cost of wars can evaporate a nation’s economy, cause social unrest, and create a breeding ground for populist movements that exploit society's dissatisfaction. As Lipset (1959) argued, economic development and political legitimacy are interdependent, and economic stagnation can alienate public confidence in democratic governance.

In addition, unsuccessful foreign policies can undermine a country's reputation and credibility internationally. A state that engages in illegality or violates human rights undermines the international law and human rights regime. It loses or faces disturbances in its diplomacy to extend over international law. It alienates friends; it emboldens foes; its soft power is diminished. This can lead to a decline in a country's international influence, impairing its capacity to advance its interests and values through diplomacy and cooperation. On this note, India's foreign policy in the Cold War period (1960s–1980s),

marked by non-alignment and Third World solidarity, was vital to elevating its international status and consolidating its democratic image (Muni, 2019, pp. 1006–1018).

In addition, the fallout from ill-advised foreign policy can undermine public trust in government and drive a wedge between the people and the democratic process. Democratic citizens may conclude that their government is acting recklessly or doing bad things abroad in pursuit of questionable objectives and, therefore, give up on the idea of democratized foreign policymaking altogether. This eradication of confidence can cause a decline in voter turnout, political apathy, and a vulnerability to populist rhetoric that scapegoats external enemies and rocks democratic norms. Diamond (2023) has pointed out the increasing tendency towards backsliding of democracy, partly driven by public disaffection with the record of democratic governments.

At a time of global interdependence and complicated challenges, our country's need for diplomatic sensibility and effective foreign policy could not be more urgent. Advocates of diplomacy, multilateralism, and the pursuit of common ground over unilateralism and military adventurism must prevail. Decisions about foreign policy will also have domestic consequences, and leaders should work to build popular support for their international actions by being open, accountable, and consultative.

By pursuing foreign policies informed by democratic values, respect for human rights, and a commitment to global cooperation, nations can set the stage for a more stable and prosperous democratic future. This evolved from zero-sum mentalities to shared interests and common humanity." It also demands adherence and respect for international law, institutions, and processes, including multilateral processes for resolving conflicts and addressing global challenges.

In the end, the crisis of the day faced by democracy is uncontentious and multifaceted, although there is much that failed foreign policies can do to accelerate that crisis. Such misguided adventures in foreign policy deplete the ground for populist movements, endanger democratic institutions, and generate the conjunctive conditions for dictatorship fed by economic decline, social unrest, a demotion of a nation's status, and erosion of public trust in the government. Moreover, in an era of unparalleled connectivity, the authors contend, we need sound, practical, values-based foreign policies more than ever to advance national interests and secure democracy's future.

The Global Reckoning

Democracy, widely regarded as the unavoidable end point of political development, is in a deep and multidimensional global crisis. Freedom House is an independent monitor of freedom and democracy worldwide. That organization highlights a troubling trend: The number of countries it rates as "free" has fallen for 17 years in a row. This democratic recession, as Larry Diamond (2023) aptly puts it, indicates an alarming retrenchment of basic freedoms and political rights in much of the world.

This decline is not a straightforward, uniform trend but a complex intersection of many factors that have, in one way or another, jointly challenged the pillars of democratic rule. One motivation is the resurgence of populism, a political philosophy that casts the "ordinary people" as victims of a corrupt, out-of-touch elite. Populist leaders thrive on fears of economic insecurity, social cleavages, and cultural grievances to garner support. They often employ nationalist rhetoric of speech and authoritarian tactics to consolidate their authority and power (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Another rising concern would be the spread of disinformation attributed to social media's popularity and other digital platforms. Disinformation, the deliberate dispersion of false or misleading information, can shape perceptions and public opinions, decrease trust in institutions, and radicalize communities that may engender democratic devolution (Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). This is compounded by the erosion of democratic institutions, including an independent judiciary, a free media, and a vibrant civil society. They are essential checks and balances on executive power, defend fundamental rights, and provide avenues for citizen participation. Their erosion, or capture, by authoritarian forces, is a direct attack on the core tenets of democratic governance (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018).

The crisis of democracy is not limited to any one region or political system. The revenge on democracy can take many forms, from deliberately dismantling democratic institutions in autocratic regimes and countries flouting the rule of law to the more insidious erosion of norms and values in established democracies. Populist leaders in countries such as Hungary and Poland have painstakingly eroded judicial independence, limited media freedom, and persecuted dissenters, effectively eliminating the checks and balances on which the working of democracy is dependent (Krastev, 2019).

Even countries with long democratic legacies, like the United States and India, have alarm bells ringing. Hyper-partisanship, disinformation, and declining public trust in institutions

are existential challenges to these democracies (Muni, 2019, pp. 1006–1018). The crisis in democracy stands as one of the major global challenges of our time, with significant impacts on human rights, peace, and security. It is essential to acknowledge that this is a global crisis, too, one that demands concerted action by governments, civil society organizations, and international institutions to support democracy, freedom of expression, media freedom, and the rule of law for democratic resilience.

Unraveling the Link Between Foreign Policy Failures and Democratic Decline

The inextricable and growing connection between foreign policy and the life of a democracy is a matter of increasing salience in the 21st century. Although a wise and effective foreign policy can strengthen the democratic framework of a state by promoting stability, development, and cooperative relations in the international arena, a failed or misguided foreign policy can seriously undermine those democratic institutions and values. In this essay, I analyze how diverse failed foreign policies have contributed to the present crisis in democracy, referencing regions and a diversity of academic literature.

Economic Decline

One of the most prominent and harmful results of improper foreign policy. A nation's faltering foreign policy does not just create a bunch of headaches; it can also spur many negative economic reverberations, from trade wars to economic sanctions to instability in international markets. These disruptions could cause job losses and rising prices for essential products and services, reducing citizens' overall quality of life.

The economic hardships of failed foreign policy can drive social unrest and lead to political instability. The history of protests also presents many particularly memorable examples in which economic grievances have sparked the flames of the fire of protests, riots, and revolutions. Such belief erodes citizens' trust in the government and the whole system of democracy when people understand that they must face economic hardship because of the wrong free sovereign solution. This breakdown of trust can pave the way for populist movements, authoritarian leaders, and the loosening of democratic institutions.

The connection between falling economic activity and democratic backsliding, a process defined by a gradual weakening of democratic institutions, norms, and practices, is firmly established in the academic literature (Diamond, 2023, pp. 142–156). It is not a mere correlation; this connection has a profoundly causal character, marked by economic

elements at its root holding the potential to build or adversely affect the structures of democratic societies (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006).

Economic development is essential for the survival and prosperity of all democratic regimes; it provides the social and economic bedrock upon which democratic values and institutions can grow and flourish. Lipset (1959) showed how economic development -- alongside increased education, urbanization, and a growing middle class -- could promote the conditions for a democratic society to take hold and develop. This process, in turn, encourages a more politically informed, engaged, active, and activist citizenry, ultimately strengthening civil society and diminishing the size and scope of socially divisive stratifications or cleavages, further building a more stable, resilient, democratic system.

With each passing day of economic development, citizens become better informed; they possess how political motives can be derived (Lipset, 1959, pp. 69–105). This engagement also means increased civic participation, where citizens can shape their governance and hold elected officials accountable. Additionally, economic growth nourished a strong civil society, creating a web of autonomous organizations and associations that act as crucial constraints on state authority and advocates for transparency and accountability (Putnam, 1993). These groups give a voice to the diversity of interests, ensuring that not all power will be centralized among the privileged. In addition, economic modernization can help close social cleavages and reduce inequalities that can lead to conflict and polarization that undermines democracies (Przeworski et al., 2000) by creating upward mobility and reducing economic inequality. This lays the groundwork for a more harmonious society in which a wide range of backgrounds has a vested interest in the system and, thus, a diminished motivation to use divisive tactics or violence to accomplish goals.

Democratic governance is badly impacted by stagnation or reduction in economic development, which plagues its construction and efficacy and jeopardizes its stability. Economic hardship can lead to social unrest and discontent, increasing anger and frustration at the political establishment. This environment provides fertile soil for the emergence of authoritarian leaders who skillfully exploit popular grievances and present easy-to-implement, even populist, solutions that appeal to a disillusioned populace searching for change (Lipset, 1959, pp. 69–105).

Additionally, economic decline can erode state capacity, undermining the government's ability to deliver services, maintain law and order, and respond to urgent social and

economic needs. This decline in state capacity further diminishes public trust and confidence in democratic institutions because citizens view them as ineffective and unable to meet their needs (Haggard & Kaufman, 1995). Not only does this breed disillusionment, but it also breeds apathy from the political process, eroding civil society and leaving room for authoritarian leaders to take power.

The complex relationship between economic conditions and the survival of democracies. Moreover, Diamond (2023) shows the link between economic inequality, falling social mobility, and the declining capacity of democracy to protect norms. When financial insecurity is compounded by feelings of unfairness and lack of opportunity, the result is a deep distrust of democratic institutions and support for populist leaders who promise but often fail to deliver programs designed, through coercive techniques, to bring back lost glory or transform the current status quo to benevolent ones (Diamond, 2023, pp. 142–156).

In a recent analysis, Diamond discusses the relevance and importance of economic growth and equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities (Diamond, 2023, pp. 142–156). Indeed, when a large part of society feels left behind or excluded from the rich, it creates a fertile ground for anti-democratic feelings or movements (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). It is cut off from a lifeboat and just becoming a target of the appeals of demagogues who point fingers at minorities or foreigners, alienating social cohesion and eventually threatening the very democratic pluralism that Liberalism (and its champion, capitalism) ultimately brought to the majority.

Further, an economic downturn can deepen existing social and political fault lines, making consensus around critical issues and policymakers' work to implement effective policy more difficult. This leads to political gridlock, paralysis, and a feeling that democracy cannot solve the nation’s problems. In such a context, the lure of authoritarian remedies, which claim to provide rapid and effective crisis management, may become ever more powerful, further endangering the future of democracy.

The relationship between economic decline and democratic rot is probably not straightforward. However, in my view, the preponderance of the evidence suggests that it is, above all, financial constraints that effectively map the arc of democratic polities. Finally, economic development is inextricably connected to building a more educated and engaged citizenry, a vibrant civil society, and a greater sense of shared prosperity that reinforces

those hallmarks of democracy. Conversely, economic recession, especially in contexts of growing inequality and social marginalization, harms the foundations of democracy, erodes public trust, and creates the conditions for the rise of authoritarianism.

Damage to Reputation and Credibility

Poor foreign policies can also severely damage a country's reputation and international perception. An unsafe or untrustworthy state cannot be relied on to refrain from making a bad decision with potentially devastating consequences when interacting with a third country, making it very difficult to build and keep strong allies and partners. Such behavior can lead to few allies, less influence, and a failure to pursue its global interests.

The consequences of a tarnished reputation can be wide-ranging. It can significantly inhibit a country's functioning in global frameworks, trade deals, and investment discussions. Collaborating with other countries on broad challenges such as climate change, global health, and counterterrorism will make that more difficult.

Worse, losing influence abroad has consequences at home. It can also result in national disgrace or loss of honor, which will make citizens trust the government less and less in foreign affairs. The erosion of trust will increase disappointment with the democratic process.

Loss of Public Trust

The most insidious way failed foreign policies contributed to the crisis in democracy is that they erode public confidence in government. Let's suppose for a second that citizens think their own government doesn't do well when it comes to foreign policy, especially on issues that result in costly wars, humanitarian disasters, or diplomatic disasters. Then, they might stop believing in how democracy is supposed to work.

As such, citizens' confidence in the political system will erode over time, leading to lower electoral turnout, less support for democratic institutions, and an acutely dismissive or skeptical attitude towards politics. This can poison the well for populist leaders and authoritarian movements, taking advantage of public grievances and pledging to reconstitute pride and might.

Political science literature has long established that public trust in government is critical for a healthy democracy. Democratic governments must ensure public support for their actions in the world. When transparency and public engagement in foreign policy are

absent, the government and the people become disconnected, and thus, democratic legitimacy is drained (Muni, 2019, pp. 1006–1018).

The Imperative of Responsible Foreign Policy

Failed foreign policies are undoubtedly linked to the crisis of democracy. Moreover, economic decline, reputation and credibility damage, and public trust erosion are serious consequences of misguided foreign policy decisions. These consequences can become contributing factors in a vicious cycle, eroding democratic institutions, fueling social unrest, and rendering societies more susceptible to authoritarianism.

The world is becoming more interconnected and complex, and the need for responsible and effective foreign policy has never been greater. Democratic governments should pursue sound-principled foreign policies in their people's interests and encourage international cooperation. It is how they can help save democracy at home and further a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Dismal Foreign Policies: The Erosion of Democracy

The intersection is complex; foreign policy is often a function of the health of a democracy, which can, in turn, be funded and preempted by the health of a democracy. A firm foreign policy can strengthen a nation's democratic foundations. It has the potential to create stability, economic opportunity, and mutually beneficial relations with the rest of the world; the consequences can be catastrophic when it does not. It erodes the bedrock of democracy, pestilence public faith, unraveling institutions, and creating a verdant climate for authoritarianism." In recent years, an international analytical interest in failed foreign policies in democratic backsliding has been growing.

One of the most egregious foreign policy mistakes that has eroded democracy is the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003. This was a war fought because Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, a claim that would later be shown to be false and that inflicted horrors of its own. It resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians and destabilized the entire region, providing fertile ground for extremist groups such as ISIS to thrive."

It is this goddamned clusterfuck that caused immense human misery and that has tarnished the reputation of the United States all around the globe. It highly compromised its reputation as a champion of democracy, and its actions were broadly denounced as a

violation of international law. On the home front, the war was punctuated by a dramatic decline in public confidence in the government as the public believed it had been misled and betrayed by what turned out to be the Bush administration's post-facto rationales for the invasion. American democracy was undermined as distrust declined, leading to increased disillusionment with the political process.

The foreign policy failure that has led to democracy's domestic undoing to date is an exemplar in Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. This unprovoked act of aggression is responsible for a catastrophic humanitarian crisis that has already claimed thousands of civilian lives and displaced millions from their homes. The war, too, will determine the trajectory of Russia's democratic future.

Since the invasion, the Kremlin has launched a broad-based crusade against dissent, shuttering independent news media, imprisoning opposition politicians, and squeezing fundamental freedoms. The war has also served as a pretext for the Putin regime further to tighten its authoritarian control over the levers of power, obliterating whatever was left of democratic institutions and stamping out any trace of dissent.

The war in Ukraine also cast a chilling haze on democracy elsewhere on the planet. Leaders emboldened by Russia's relationship with the U.S. are more likely to try aggressive foreign policies if they think they can act with impunity. This would amount to increased degradation of democratic principles and greater global instability.

One must have the perspective to see that democracy does not only die in those countries where there is a conflict but in the whole world due to failed foreign policies that spread, undermining democratic institutions and norms globally. A perfect microcosm is the Syrian Civil War and its attendant refugee crisis, born of this pernicious potential for the countries of Europe and the Middle East to bleed each other dry from the outside, draining resources and filling many European countries with Ugandan-grade xenophobia. This, in turn, has nurtured the growth of populist and nationalist movements that directly challenge the essential principles of liberal democracy.

Failed foreign policies can also poison the international order. When great powers violate international law and norms, it creates uncertainty and distrust. But there is only the sense of doom, and issues that are complex and globalized (like climate change, pandemics, and economic inequality) become less amenable to collective action.

However, there is a direct correlation between the extent of foreign policies that failed and, consequently, the current state of democracy as we know it. From the Iraq War to the still-developing war in Ukraine, history offers a wealth of experiences through which we explore how misguided foreign policy decisions can damage democratic practices and institutions, erode trust in officials, and create circumstances in which authoritarianism can flourish. It needs this understanding of the intertwining of political issues and questions of peace, and we require foreign policies founded on democracy, human rights, and the pursuit of peaceful solutions to international problems.

Results

The interplay between foreign policy and democracy is a complex matrix of causes and effects, success and failure, stability and unrest. While prudent foreign policy can strengthen democratic foundations, wayward foreign policy can have excruciatingly destructive impacts, eroding confidence in the public sphere, destabilizing institutions, and rendering a democracy susceptible to authoritarian creep.

In recent years, the world has witnessed a worrisome trend of democratic backsliding. As this type of dictatorship crisis becomes increasingly widespread, it is evident that fumbled foreign policies are the cause and the conduit through which it is now able to spread throughout the world. This downward spiral is fed by the rise of populism, the viral spread of disinformation, and the weakening of democratic institutions.

The most impactful and immediate ramifications of misaligned foreign policies are economic decline. A nation's foreign policy collapse can lead to economic backlashes, trade wars, financial sanctions, and global market destabilization. These disruptions can result in job losses, rising essential goods and services prices, and falling citizens' living standards.

The question is whether the economic consequences of failed foreign policy activate social discontent and political crisis. Many historical examples of economic grievances spark protests, riots, and revolutions. When leaders are seen to have taken their countries into foreign policies, resulting in economic suffering, citizens trust the government (though not always the leaders), and the democratic system can be increasingly eroded. This loss of trust can pave the way for populist movements, authoritarian rulers, and the unraveling of democracy.

External political strategies stand to ruin an installment plan's reputation and legitimacy on a worldwide level. Building and keeping trusted partnerships becomes impossible when the

world views a nation as unreliable, untrustworthy, or prone to making horrible decisions abroad. This can result in reducing diplomatic alienation and the ability to promote its interests with the world.

A bad reputation can have a wide-reaching impact. It can prevent a nation from being invited to join international organizations such as the United Nations, from making trade deals for its benefit, and from attracting foreign capital. It can also complicate efforts to collaborate with other countries on urgent matters like climate change, global health, and counterterrorism.

The most insidious way that failed foreign policies plummet the crisis in democracy is by eroding public trust in government. However, when citizens begin to feel the consequences of their government's bad choices in matters of foreign policy, especially those choices that lead to costly wars, humanitarian crises, or even diplomatic failures that wound national prestige, the democratic process can lose its luster.

This eroded trust can translate into lower voter turnout, falling levels of support for democratic institutions, and a sense of resignation or disenchantment with politics. It can also provide fertile ground for populist leaders and authoritarian movements, exploiting public discontent and projecting themselves as the saviors who will restore national pride (Anderson, 1991).

It is directly related to failed foreign policies and the crisis in democracy. The fallouts of bad foreign policy moves are serious, such as economic decline, loss of reputation and credibility, and erosion of public trust. These effects can create a vicious cycle, weakening democratic institutions, increasing social unrest, and making societies more and more vulnerable to authoritarianism.

Within this increasing complexity and interdependence, the need for responsible and effective foreign policy will become ever more pressing. Democratic governments require a steady foreign policy that serves the interests of their population and promotes international coordination and cooperation. In this way, they also strengthen democracy at home and construct a peaceful and prosperous world.

CONCLUSION

Foreign policy and the state of democracy's health are delicate ballets, and bad moves on the world stage can reverberate in the corridors of power here. Such failed foreign policies, be they the result of misplaced targets, bungled execution, or a disregard for long-term consequences, trade on the democratic societies' high price, eroding citizens' belief in the system, undermining economic viability, ultimately besmirching the nation's image in the international community.

The crisis of democracy is a multi-layered problem and a multi-faceted solution. However, there can be little argument about how failed foreign policies have greatly exacerbated this crisis. Nevertheless, recognizing this connection and creating a government that helps move a country's position but does not sacrifice its citizen's well-being, does not cripple international cooperation, and does not undermine the core pillars of democracy at home is one step toward the right direction. The fate of democracy may depend on it.

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