Democracy or Autocracy: Which Guarantees Better Security?

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Abstract

The rivalry between Democracies and Autocracies often has international ramifications. Both challenge each other in terms of global governance and policies. The most visible effect of this is the Security of the nations or the world. When discussing security, we look at the national, international, and human security aspects. One can also consider both traditional and non-traditional threats of security. It is often very difficult to understand which form of government provides better security. Is it the democratic nations like the USA which ensure peace and stability in the world or the autocratic nations like China which are better at handling internal security? Both these forms of government try to propagate its version of security to its citizens as well as the global audience to spread their influence in the minds of the global citizens. It's a very complex debate that needs much broader and wider discussion. This article will briefly elucidate on the above aspects and try to understand which form of government offers better Security.

Keywords - Democracies, Autocracies, Security, Interests, Regional Groupings, Alliances, Conflicts, Global agencies

Introduction:

Thinkers of International Relations often indulge in debates. During the cold war period, 'Realist' theory was dominant. After the end of the cold war, many thought that 'Liberalism' was prevalent. There are often debates about pros and cons of 'Capitalism' and 'Socialism'. Similarly for a very long time, the world has been divided between 'Democratic' and 'Autocratic' forms of governments. Even though at present the world has more democracies than autocracies, the effect of autocracies in global affairs can't be neglected. They can influence the international order in various ways, like economically, diplomatically, militarily etc. The most important effect the autocracies have in the international order is of 'Security'. And that's where most democracies tend to challenge autocracies or vice-versa.

In a hypothetical situation, the presence of autocratic governments in the world is itself not uncommon, because in the history of the world, before the various theories of international relations as well as the terms 'Democracy' or 'Autocracy' were conceptualised, the world had many kingdoms, ruled by emperors, queens, kings, etc. And the world still existed with these kingdoms which somewhat behaved or existed like an autocracy. It was only after the 'Treaty of Westphalia in 1648' and the 'French and American Revolution' that the idea of democracy was brought in its modern form. Autocracies and democracies have often clashed in modern history and have challenged

each other's way of governance, ideas, policies, etc. One of the key questions that's often difficult to answer in the modern world is which out of the two forms of government, viz 'Democracy' or 'Autocracy' is better in providing security. And when we mention the term security it's a very dynamic, evolving and a very complex concept. Security is a concept which is not just confined to the security in terms of national security; it extends to human security, environmental security, international security, regional security, etc. Then security is also to be understood in terms of 'conventional' and 'non-conventional' security, or 'traditional' or 'non-traditional' security. There are some autocracies which are a security threat to its neighbours, whereas there are some which are a global security threat. Keeping in mind the above points, this article will try to analyse which form of government provides better security and will establish a general idea of what are the advantages or disadvantages of having a democratic or an autocratic system in the modern day world to secure peace and stability in any nation or the world.

National Security aspect:

National Security or National defence is the security and defence of a sovereign state including its citizens, economy and institutions. Basically a state can achieve the security of its citizens and protect its sovereignty by safeguarding its borders from enemies. The way a state can do this is by formulation of national security policies. These policies may include the capacity to raise a strong army to protect borders, build a good military via including state of the art weapon platforms and electronic systems. The security of a state not just means protection of it's land territory, it also includes it's airspace and territorial waters in the sea if it has one.

Democratic governments all over the world with the exception of nations which are surrounded by oceans all around like Japan, Australia, New Zealand, etc may either be having a democratic nation or an autocratic regime as their immediate neighbour. So it will be easier for those democracies to protect their borders if they share a border with another democracy. Democracies mostly tend to be peaceful nations with no intentions to attack their neighbours. The prime example can be found in 'Global North'. Countries in North America, Europe are mostly peaceful democracies and those nations coexist with each other. There is very little border dispute among them and even if they had any disputes in the past, they have all resolved it amicably and bilaterally. The USA has a peaceful border with Canada in the north, and in the south it has a border with Mexico. Even though the USA has security issues with Mexico over illegal migrants coming from poor Latin American countries like Guatemala, Honduras and El- Salvador, it hasn't escalated tensions between the two nations. Although there are few disagreements in the leadership of Mexico and the USA over the USA policy of 'Remain in Mexico', still we can observe the two countries haven't had any tensions for a very long time. It must be remembered in the history of border disputes between the USA and Mexico, there was a war when the USA annexed Texas from Mexico in 1845 and one of the reasons was migration of Mexicans from Texas towards the USA. If we take a look in Europe, we can observe border or territorial island disputes between the United Kingdom and Spain over the status of Gibraltar, or its dispute with Argentina over the Falklands islands. These disputes have been there for more than three centuries. But the important point to note is that these democracies haven't fought bitterly over these issues. Nor have they changed the status quo unilaterally. This could be one of the advantages of having a

democratic neighbour. There is another recent example of how democracies tend to opt for a peaceful agreement if both the countries are not a military power. Denmark and Canada recently announced the end of their border dispute over 'Hans Island', a tiny barren, half mile square island between Danish territory of Greenland and Canada's Ellesmere Island. Both these nations decided to formally divide this tiny island under an agreement peacefully. In other regions of South Asia, we can see the recent Border dispute of 'Kalapani-Lipulekh' between India and Nepal with no chance of any major confrontation basically for the simple reason that both are democratic, and India is much stronger economically and militarily.

But if we compare the situation when a democracy is having an autocracy as a neighbour, then not everything is peaceful. The simple reason is autocracies mostly tend to be aggressive and don't abide by the international rules. Excellent example is China which has a border dispute with almost 17 countries in the South and Southeast Asian region in land and sea. It has land border disputes with India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar etc. It has territorial disputes in the sea with Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam etc. In fact, China is the only country in the world at present which has such a large number of border disputes. Autocracies are often expansionist in their nature and behaviour when they become powerful both economically and militarily. We have seen this trend in history during the 'Second World War' when Germany attacked Poland. The same can be observed by the behaviour of China in modern times when it has tried to attack India over the Himalayas. China being militarily and economically superior tried to bully India, but India, also being a major economic and military power responded in kind. But the same is not always the case with democracies. Whenever there is any confrontation, the democracies often try to remain calm and peaceful, but they don't react till they are attacked directly. Democracies are often bound by lack of political will, sentiments of its citizens, aspirations for economic growth and friendly relations, duty to obey international rules etc. The recent Ukraine-Russia war has caused much damage to the 'European Peace' of decades. Once upon a time, Ukraine being a part of the former Soviet Union, is now facing attack from its neighbour which shares the same language, culture, traditions, etc. Since Ukraine, after becoming independent in the 1990s, it surrendered it's nuclear arsenal to Russia in the hope of lasting peace with its neighbour. But then, it remained hopeful to join NATO for its own security purposes. Other regions of the world where this type of security concern is prevalent is between North and South Korea, between Japan and Russia/China, Israel and Palestine, Taiwan and China, etc.

There are certain specific characteristics of democracies that are very effective in times of extreme crisis. One of those is the principle of 'Common Security' and 'Balance of Power'. We have seen how during the 'First and Second World War', how allied democracies came together to fight war against the tyrant rulers and regimes and defeated them successfully and comprehensively. Then during the cold war period, the western block were successful in building allies and forge partnership with not just democratic nations for security, but somehow even managed to partner with non democratic nations like China or Pakistan for economic benefits like trade and security and were rewarded economically. In contemporary times, we have live examples of how the western world has united themselves to help Ukraine to fight against Russian

invasion. Or in matters of providing immediate relief to citizens affected by this war, the democracies have opened their borders for providing assistance to refugees. But again, there is also a much hidden flaw in this idea of collective security of the western European democracies. The western democracies are readily available to help their European partners and allies, but they will not readily agree to help other democratic nations so easily or quickly in the rest of the world like in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

There are many instances of that, like during the India-Pakistan war of 1947 or during the Indo-China conflict of 1962. Sometimes this collective security takes a back seat due to various other reasons like 'Self or National interests', political reasons or very rarely due to discrimination based on race. This is one area where democracies have failed other democracies. In fact, autocracies which are powerful often tend to cooperate more with themselves or with weaker countries during challenging times. This was evident during the Korean War of 1952 or the Syrian crisis where Russia has provided full backing to the Assad regime. Also during the nuclear diplomacy talks between North Korea and Iran with western countries, China and Russia have extended them full support in various forums as well as the United Nations Security Council.

Another aspect of National Security is internal security, which is predominantly the most serious challenge to democracies all over the world. Right after the end of the 'Second World War', most nations which gained independence from their colonial rulers, faced major challenges due to 'internal ethnic-conflicts'. It has been observed that most of the democracies suffered due to 'intra-state conflicts' and wars. This can be often due to a large number of ethnic groups who reside within a state but want self-determination or freedom. This has been further strengthened by the UN charter of 'Self-Determination', which guarantees equal rights for all people. There can be other factors like oppression, human rights violation, Political, social or cultural reasons, economic development, deprivation of natural resources etc. The major examples of major ethnic conflicts all over the world are in Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, India, Israel, West Bank, Indonesia, Rwanda, Balkans, etc. These conflicts have often been very violent and often been witnessed in states which have people of multiple faiths, religions, and cultures. In particular, the democratic nations which are poor and are developing have been grappling with these conflicts till the present times. There hasn't been any complete solution to these ethnic conflicts. Whether it's the Kashmir issue in India, the Tamil group issue in Sri Lanka, the Kurds, Jews, Shia's or Christian groups issue in Iraq & Syria, ethnic groups in Western Sahara or Morocco, majority of democracies in the poor or developing global south have faced social tensions or civil wars from ethnic tensions. These have often drained democracies economically, militarily and have cost them national resources. And democracies themselves become targets of western democracies when these ethnic conflicts erupt. As a result, they sometimes face scrutiny or sanctions from the west. As a result, they suffer economically as well as diplomatically. Then there is always the threat of autocracies exploiting these ethnic tensions for their own benefits to undermine their enemies. For example China and Russia have used propaganda and 'information warfare' to undermine democracies. China has raked up the Kashmir issue in multiple global forums, thereby providing its ally Pakistan to undermine India. Similarly, Russia has effectively used the social and racial tensions prevailing in the USA to cause information manipulation during the

'Black Lives Matter' Campaign and have tried to demonstrate that western democracy is discriminatory in nature.

In the contemporary times, another threat to internal security of nations is from Terrorism and Militancy. In the earlier times, when Asian countries like India or Afghanistan were a victim of terrorism, the Western world never took any initiative to address this threat. The term terrorism was understood only to be a problem of the poor 'Global South' and even in the UNSC, there was a complete lack of any initiative from US or Europe to address this. Unfortunately what is more distressing is the fact that the UN has till this day failed to come up with a proper definition of the word Terrorism. UN having more number of democracies, failed to recognise the issues of terrorism faced by developing Asian or African countries. All this changed drastically when the USA became a victim in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Suddenly the whole North America and Europe became active in multiple global forums and began implementing global policies and ratifying treaties to stop the menace of Terrorism. Even the '1267 Sanctions committee' of the UNSC was formed somewhere in the late 90's but countries like India were suffering from Terrorism and Militancy from a much earlier time like in 1993 Bombay Blasts, or the Pakistan sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The West kept ignoring the menace of Terrorism until the USA was attacked by 'Al-Qaeda'. It's also very pertinent to mention here the role of USA in fighting terrorism. Its on and off relationship with 'Terror State' Pakistan is not a secret for the world. On one hand, USA has imposed tough sanctions on Iran for its destabilizing terrorist activities in West Asia and it has imposed energy sanctions which hurt oil consuming nations like India, but then, USA hasn't been as much tougher on the other terror state Pakistan due to its cold war era relationship and it's own self interest in Afghanistan.

Recently the Pentagon has approved an additional 450 million dollar additional upgrade for its F-16 fighter jets which Pakistan is known to use against India. The Americans call it help to Pakistan for its counter terror operation, but never ever has Pakistan used these platforms to destroy terror hideouts. Instead it is used against the local civilian population in Balochistan or against India. India has raised this issue several times with the USA but they decided to ignore India's request. A terror state like Pakistan which housed the infamous Terrorist like Osama-Bin Laden or other dreaded terror groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad or Lashkar-e-Toiba should be treated in a similar way like how USA treats Iran or North Korea. This proves that the democracies are not United in fighting a global issue due to their own national interests, unless the rich Global North like North America and Europe starts facing that very issue. This discrimination within democracies has upset the poor developing countries and they remain suspicious of the intentions of organisations like UN which claims to maintain international peace and security.

But on the contrary, autocracies tend to better control aspects of internal security because it's a closed society with no individual freedom like democracies. In Democracy, we have checks and balances of the 'Executive and Judiciary'. Whereas the autocracies have a controlled 'Executive, Legislature, or Judiciary' which can deal with social tensions with an iron hand. China, North Korea, Russia, Iran, Myanmar etc are great examples of how internal security is effectively managed. They have rigorous procedures

like Surveillance, Police resources, Anti-national laws, security laws etc to crush any form of dissent. The Xinjiang, Tibet regions in China are great examples of how internal security mechanisms are considered a tool to control radicalization or even domestic militancy.

A nation can defend itself from external threats if it can spend resources and wealth on building its armed forces. Here comparison between democracies and autocracies can be very complex because both these types of governments do spend a lot to build their military capabilities. The USA has the world's strongest military resources. But then we have Russia and China with strong military and both are autocracies. But overall, in the top ten 'Global Firepower Index', barring Pakistan, which is on paper a democracy, but functions like a military dictatorship, eight countries are democracies having powerful military. Democracies in the 'Global North' are all developed with smaller population and high GDP and higher Research & Technological advancements. Hence they are able to spend a lot on their defence budgets. But democracies in the global south like Asian or African countries are poor developing countries which have limited GDP and no Research and Technologies. Hence they are not able to spend a lot in their defence. Democracies in Asia or Africa also have challenges to give priority to their healthcare, education, infrastructure development, rural development etc, where huge amounts of money is required. Countries like India or Bangladesh, although having a high GDP growth can spend a lot on defence, but they are bound by limitations like public opinion, labour laws, defence reforms, opposition parties in parliament, development of poor citizens, political will, corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, etc. Whereas in case of autocracies like Russia, Iran, Pakistan or North Korea, they don't hesitate to spend on their military power, sometimes at the cost of development of their fellow citizens. China, having a high GDP growth and larger economy, doesn't need the authority of any opposition or public pressure groups because it doesn't need any approval from legislation or any opposition parties. All decisions are made by a single person, who is the 'Chairman of the Central Military Commission'. This ensures timely and speedy manufacturing and procurement of defence equipment and platforms, thereby ensuring national security.

Global Security aspect:

When we talk about global security, it can mean security of both democracies and autocracies combined. It also takes into account regional security. Since the world is deeply interconnected due to 'Globalisation', any security threat taking place in one part of the world can have effects on a far distant part of the world. It can be either militarily or non-militarily, economically, diplomatically etc. In international relations, the 'Security Dilemma' has been existing for a very long time for which we have seen events in modern history and modern contemporary times. The major threats to global security nowadays are both traditional and non-traditional. In traditional threats, we have wars, conflicts, nuclear, chemical and biological threats cross, border terrorism, Islamic extremism and radicalisation, etc. In non-traditional threats we have global pandemics, climate change, cyber threats, food crisis, energy crisis, migration, environmental threats, water crisis, livelihood & health security of citizens, natural calamities etc. The

constant competition and disagreement between the democracies and autocracies to these issues give rise to global tension.

The world witnessed the horror of nuclear conflict during the 'Hiroshima-Nagasaki' atomic bombings in 1945. Then there were nuclear disasters like the 'Chernobyl' crisis and 'Fukushima' disaster. In 1962, the world came close to the verge of extinction when the USA and USSR locked horns over Cuba, what is famously known as the 'Cuban Missile Crisis'. In spite of the 'Non-proliferation treaty', the nuclear proliferation threat is very much real in the present times. Iran and North Korea, both autocracies are having tensions with the west over their nuclear ambitions and programs. While North Korea has built nuclear weapons, Iran is assumed to have plans to get a dirty bomb. The west is having tensions in restoring the 'Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action' (JCPOA) which is commonly called the 'Iran Nuclear deal'. What's disturbing to note is that autocracies like China, in spite of being a member of the 'Nuclear Suppliers Group' (NSG), and being a UNSC permanent member have actively helped rogue countries like Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons. The help given to Pakistan was done to contain India, China's strategic rival in Asia. In turn, Pakistan, another dictatorship, helped North Korea with their nuclear weapons program. Thus it can be observed that autocracies are a threat in terms of nuclear proliferation and that's why the west is worried over the nuclear ambitions of Iran. The world also remains tense over the Indo-Pak rivalry which can escalate into nuclear war because unlike India, Pakistan doesn't follow Nuclear 'No First Use' policy and has often threatened India with nuclear attacks in the past. In fact, its leadership has admitted in the past that it made nuclear weapons only to use it against India.

Autocracies also threaten regional and global security by their expansionist and rogue behaviour which can trigger a war. China is a prime example of being an 'expansionist power' of the 21st century. It has ambitions of taking over territories of India, Nepal, Bhutan, Taiwan, etc. Pakistan, though technically not an expansionist, has been obsessed with the territory of Kashmir and has fought four wars with India over it. It has illegally occupied the Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Gilgit-Baltistan. Then, it has in the past carried out terrorist attacks in India to disturb peace and security in Kashmir. During the 1980s, it had implicitly given support to the 'Khalistani' terrorists for secession activities in the state of Punjab. Elsewhere in the world, regional security is highly threatened by the activities of autocracies. In the West Asian region, there are constant tensions between Iran and Arab nations. Israel, an excellent and only real democracy at present in West Asia, is surrounded by security threats all around, be it from Hezbollah of Lebanon, Islamic Jihad group in Palestine Authority, Assad regime in Syria, Hamas in West Bank etc. Except Israel, it's hard to find any other democracy in the Middle East which is a true democracy. All its neighbours are involved in bloody ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and social unrest. Israel considers Iran it's top enemy and vice-versa. The West has strongly helped Israel to maintain its peace and security by providing it with state of the weapon platforms and equipment. Israel constantly faces threats from Iran and it's proxies.

In the Korean Peninsula, South Korea and North Korea have been at a state of war since the end of Korean war in 1953. North Korea constantly conducts nuclear, ballistic and cruise missile tests to threaten South Korea which largely wants to achieve peace from

North Korea. This behaviour stems from the suspicion that North Korea has towards the alliance of South Korea with the USA. North Korea considers the USA as a threat to its leadership, and it views US policies as a threat to its communist regime. In recent times, North Korea has conducted multiple ballistic missiles launches which have even threatened Japan, as it flew close to Japanese territory. All these irresponsible missile tests can accidentally trigger a conflict which can turn into a regional or global war.

It's not always that autocracies and democracies have clashed with each other directly. They often clash indirectly also in a third venue to prove their military prowess or to achieve their foreign policy goals. We have seen how civil wars in Yemen, Syria, Libya, in African countries etc have destroyed the lives of people. In Syria for example, the Assad regime has been accused by the west to have caused deaths of civilians by use of Chemical weapons. The US forces have been trying to give support to the rebels in Syria to dislodge the Assad regime. But then, Russia has also provided direct military support to crush any militant uprising against Assad. In Yemen, the civil war has lasted for many years, without any hope of any peace in sight. The Western countries, Saudi Arabia and are fighting Houthi rebels who controlled the capital Sana, after ousting the democratically elected government in Yemen. In Libya, the battle between the Turkish and Qatar supported Presidential council and the Western and Saudi Arab supported eastern forces of Khalifa Haftar have been continuing since 2019. This has given rise to a grave humanitarian crisis. Before that Libya has been facing civil wars after the end of NATO operation which eliminated Muamar Gaddafi. In Africa also, various conflicts have been going on in South Sudan, Tigrayan conflict in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique etc. The UNSC has been rendered useless to prevent these crises because the UNSC has three democracies and two autocracies which use veto power to safeguard their national interests. These geopolitical competitions between democracies and autocracies undermine global security.

The most important need that is felt by the majority of countries at present is the need for reforms in the UNSC. The UNSC was formed in the aftermath of the Second World War. But in today's changed World order, the five veto holding countries aren't doing enough to prevent a crisis. In fact they use veto for their own personal interests. Democracies like the USA and UK used the UNSC and went against the wishes of France, Russia and China to attack Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. They adopted resolutions which the then UN Secretary General also termed as illegal. In the present times, autocracies like Russia have used its Veto Power multiple times to reject any resolution over the Ukraine war and over its forced annexation of the four provinces of Ukraine. Similarly, China has used the UNSC to veto any resolution drafted by India, US, France etc to put a technical hold over listing of terrorists in the 1267 Sanctions committee to support Pakistan based terrorists and their groups. So until and unless the UNSC is reformed with the representation of countries like India, Brazil, Japan and Germany and more representation from African countries, effective peace and security won't be established. But even in the reform of the UNSC, the competition between autocracies and democracies will be felt. Pakistan has already shown its reluctance to support India's candidature. In future also, it may try to influence Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) members like Turkey, Qatar, Kuwait and Malaysia to reject India's candidature over the Kashmir issue.

It's because of many such geopolitical battles, we have seen the emergence of various regional alliances or groupings like QUAD, AUKUS, SCO, NATO, OAS, SAARC, ASEAN, BIMSTEC etc in the world. These groups claim to ensure peace and security in the region. But that's not always true all the times. For example, SCO was founded in 2001 to ensure regional peace, connectivity, economic development, etc. But two of the members of the SCO, India and Beijing are involved in a state of confrontation due to border conflicts. SCO has failed to resolve the differences between these two. There are serious doubts over the functioning of SCO in future because of this. Another mechanism of SCO, the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure, has failed to check the growing role of Pakistan, a SCO member and Afghan-Taliban, an observer, to protect and breed terror groups within their territory. In fact, because of China's covert support to Pakistan, the SCO has failed to take any action on Pakistan with regards to narco terrorism, cross border infiltration, illegal arms transfer etc in the region.

Similarly, ASEAN, another grouping of Southeast Asian nations founded in 1967, has failed to prevent the bloody humanitarian crisis going on in Myanmar after the February 2021 coup by the army, which has caused instability in the region. Thousands of civilians have died and many more have been forced to cross borders and enter into India, Bangladesh and Thailand because of the Myanmar army's crackdown on the people. In fact 'Tatmadaw', the armed force of Myanmar, has even rejected the '5 Point Agenda' proposed by ASEAN to establish peace in the country. This all proves the failure of ASEAN to establish peace in Myanmar and the region.

In Europe, there are also flaws in the regional military grouping NATO and EU to provide peace and security. For example, in the current Russia-Ukraine war context, Ukraine tried to become a member of NATO for the past few years, but its application was not considered. Grouping like NATO requires years for an eligible member to fully become a NATO member. Then there are differences inside NATO itself that showcase it's weakness to its rivals like Russia or China. Germany in the initial days of the war was hesitant to provide Ukraine with military equipment. Turkey, another NATO member, has refused to accept Sweden and Finland's proposal to be accepted into NATO due to Turkey's objection over Sweden and Finland's support to banned Kurdish rebel groups. Turkey refused to impose any sanctions over Russia and in fact condemned NATO for escalation. During the Trump era, USA demanded that NATO increase its defence budget to meet its own security requirements. Turkey purchased S-400 missile defence systems from Russia despite warnings from USA and NATO that it can interfere in the operation of its F-35 fighter jets. Afterwards, the USA cancelled its F-35 joint manufacturing program with Turkey.

During the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts over 'Nagorno-Karabakh' region in 2020, Turkey sent its armed 'Bayraktar drones' to Azerbaijan which tilted the war in its favour, despite warnings from Russia, NATO, and USA. All this points to the rogue behaviour of Turkey, but still NATO is reluctant to take any strict action against Turkey. In the European Union, there are differences between Belgium and Poland and Hungary over migration, LGBTQ issues, human rights, election process, etc. Hungary has directly refused the entry of Ukraine into NATO, blaming NATO itself for the current Ukraine

crisis and refusing to permit the fighter jets from UK, France, Germany etc to fly over its airspace to guard the NATO Border States. All this can be seen as major differences between these regional alliances.

Apart from traditional security concerns in the world, there are non-traditional security threats also looming around the globe. Here also, we can observe the differences between democracies and autocracies. Take for example the global death and destruction caused by COVID-19 pandemic in the world. The whole world believes that the pandemic originated from China. But China sternly refused such allegations. In order to investigate the origin and causes of spread of this pandemic, WHO and the nations all over world requested China to grant access to its biological labs where the study of such bat virus corona virus was being undertaken. But China, being a closed autocracy, has denied access to fair investigation. Any democracy in place of China could have in fact on the contrary requested WHO to send its scientists to gather further information. India saw the outbreak of 'Nipah Virus' in the state of Kerala in the year 2018. Immediately the State and the Central government sought intervention and help from WHO to stop the spread of virus. Whereas in the case of China, the political leadership decided to keep quiet and allowed the travel of infected Chinese citizens to all over the world. This in fact helped to spread the virus all over the world. There are also accusations that China influenced the top decision makers of WHO to keep quiet or stay relaxed till the time this disease took the shape of a global pandemic. Hence it can be safely assumed that autocracies can act irresponsibly in handling the pandemics in future. But at the same time, democracies like the USA and EU also have an obligation towards vaccine patent waiver being requested by developing nations like India and South Africa to fight any pandemic in future. Rich countries should try to donate vaccines to poor nations and themselves don't use all the vaccines multiple times like in dosages to protect their citizens, thereby denying the vaccines to some needy persons in the poorest parts of the world.

The fight for Climate Change and Global warming is another challenge of the present times. The speed with which our planet is getting warmed together with the frequency of the devastating cyclones, floods, heavy rainfall, extreme droughts, etc are a threat to the existence of humans everywhere. Here the various initiatives taken so far by the UN haven't achieved the desired results. The various 'Climate Summits' have so far only ended without any credible outcome or resolutions. The autocracies blame the rich 'Global North' democracies like the USA, EU for failing to stop global warming by their rapid industrialization and emissions, deforestation, and desire to maintain their economic superiority. On the other hand, the democracies blame the autocracies like China for having done little towards reducing their use of coal consumption capacity which is a major cause of global warming. But it's not a secret that both democracies and autocracies have equally made contributions towards global warming. The current sanctions on Russian gas have forced countries like Germany to extend their dependence on coal. According to sources, the top emitters of Greenhouse gases in the world are China, USA, EU, India, Russia etc. Although India is also an emitter of greenhouse gases, which can be assumed because it has grown both economically over the last 40 years, its per capita emission is much lower when compared to China, EU and the USA. India is also taking various initiatives like the 'International Solar Alliance',

'Green Hydrogen' utility, Electric vehicles manufacturing, at massive scale to meet its 'zero-carbon emission' targets. Hence, it's urgently required by both democracies and autocracies to understand the fact that climate change and global warming can affect them equally and can have devastating consequences. The deadly floods in China, Pakistan, typhoons in Japan, extreme temperatures in UK, EU and Australia, droughts in North Korea and China, forest fires in the USA are some of the effects of Climate Change.

The recent Ukraine-Russia conflict has caused energy, food and migration issues and led to instability in the world. The effects of this war are felt in faraway regions like Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. Because of the blockage of Ukrainian ports, tons of wheat are not being exported to poor African countries. As a result, their citizens, children are dying due to hunger. The various conflict zones of the world like Yemen, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, South Sudan, Afghanistan, etc have been gravely affected due to disruption of humanitarian and food supplies. Similarly, gas and energy supplies to Europe are being threatened with the damage to Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in the recent days when blasts were observed in the pipeline in the Baltic sea regions. This has led to decrease in energy supplies and increased demand in the winter days. The prices of oil and gas in the international market have increased in poor Asian, African and Latin American countries due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. India has also been impacted due to this war. Its various critical imports like fertilizer from Russia have been affected due to the Sanctions imposed by the West on Russian imports. Similarly various industrial and defence imports of India have been affected. India was dependent on Marine Gas Engines from Ukraine which is used in most of its naval warships. But due to the destruction caused by Russian attacks in Ukraine defence industries, India has to look for alternative options. This war has also given rise to the issue of migration where many Ukrainian people have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries like Romania, Poland, Bulgaria etc. This has added to the security issues at the borders of those countries. This uncontrolled migration can also give rise to humanitarian issues like kidnapping, human trafficking, forced labour etc. Some countries from poor nations have also questioned the attitude of treatment of Ukrainian migrants vis-a-vis migrants of other nationalities. Migrants from Asia, Middle East, or poor Southeast Asian nations have been discriminated against at the border conflicts when they tried to cross borders. On one hand, the European countries are readily available to provide shelter and humanitarian aid to Ukrainian migrants because they are European citizens. And on the other hand, they have discriminated against Syrians, Kurds, Afghans in the past, when Migration was treated as a security threat by these European democracies. Hence Racism is rampant in European countries in aspects of migration also.

Human Security aspect:

Apart from National or International security, human security is equally vital for a state. Nations acknowledge the value of human security, as it's directly linked to the prosperity of the state in terms of its economic development. Only when a nation is economically secure, can it spend on its armed forces for national security and vice-versa. But the lives of human beings are terrible mostly in autocracies. For example, China, which aims to be a Superpower by 2049, the centennial year of the founding of

the Chinese state, has a dismal record in terms of treating its ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang, Tibet and Mongolian regions. There is no freedom of expression in China, hence there is nobody to complain in China. There is absence of judiciary, which makes the citizens feel insecure. Take the example of various Chinese initiatives, where citizens' rights were violated. The Zero-Covid policy of Xi Jinping has caused trouble to citizens. China couldn't prevent the deaths of many people when the covid-19 pandemic started. Many millions of deaths are still unreported.

In 1989, many Chinese citizens were killed in the 'Tiananmen Square Massacre'. The Recently introduced 'National Security Law' in Hong Kong has made the citizens feel unsafe as many people are being arbitrarily arrested and put behind bars. Many more have lost their lives in democratic protests. People from Hong Kong are forced to flee Mainland China and seek asylum in Taiwan or the UK. Apart from that, there is no scope for employment as the Chinese economy is slowing down. Similarly, China's ally North Korea, another dictatorship has tortured and killed many of it's citizens for challenging the leadership. During covid-19 pandemic, Many North Koreans suffered due to lack of healthcare facilities, vaccines. Before that many deaths were reported due to famine in North Korea. Since it's under international sanctions, North Korea is unable to revive its economy. Same situation is prevailing in Iran and Afghanistan, where both the 'Sharia law' dominated governance have curtailed human rights and citizens are being killed for not following the Sharia laws. Recent blasts at schools in Afghanistan killed many children and citizens. In Iran, the anti- hijab protests have invited strong resistance from the government, causing more protests and deaths. Elsewhere school children are being kidnapped by terrorists in Somalia and Nigeria. In many of the poor African countries, where armed coups have taken place, the security of humans is the least. In Myanmar, thousands of people have been killed since the coup led to the arrest of the democratic leader Aung San Su Kyi.

Democracies, on the other hand, provide freedom, equality and fraternity to its citizens. The life of citizens in democratic nations is little better than autocracies. That's the reason for the human development index to be highest in western democracies compared to autocracies. This leads to more innovation, research and economic development. But there also is a big flaw. Life is secure in democracies until the Political leadership starts behaving like a Dictator. Victor Orban of Hungary, Erdogan of Turkiye, Bolsonaro of Brazil, Andrez Duda of Poland, Duterte of Philipines have all faced resistance from citizens on issues of Covid-19 management, LGBTQ, Media freedom, Abortion laws for women, election discrepancy, drug menace, deforestation etc. In Canada, Europe or the USA, the world's oldest democracy, there is rampant misuse of Gun-culture, where people are being shot dead openly during disputes. Police brutality on African origin people is a reality in the USA. Racism is still present in many parts of the USA, and Europe or Australia where people of Indian origin are still targeted for their skin color. Hate crimes against Asians and Africans is a reality in Europe or the USA. The internet is filled with videos of hate crimes happening everyday in developed democracies of the Western world. Philippines and Brazil are known for being the most unsafe countries for journalists because they are killed for reporting badly about government policies. In the USA the danger of human kidnapping is very real in spite of having an effective policing system. People of Indian origin, students and families are

still targeted in the USA. In the UK, there were clashes between Pakistani and Indian origin people after a cricket match. In Canada, Khalistani terrorists often vandalise Indian places of worship and commit crimes against innocent citizens. What's unfortunate is the mute response of the corresponding government over there which can be understood because a native white American, Canadian or a British citizen is not targeted.

Lessons for India and Conclusion:
Based on the above brief analysis, one can observe that the democracies and autocracies both equally view security from a prism of their own national interests. No one is perfect in its policies of providing global or national security. With regards to cooperation among groups of democracies or autocracies among each other, there also we can expect the role of self or national interests. No democracy will help another democracy to defend itself unless there is some foreign policy or national interest goals. Similarly no autocracy will help or defend another until they have something to gain. In international relations, there are no permanent allies or enemies. There are only permanent national interests. Inspite of these differences, there is still hope for countries to co-operate in few areas such as climate change, terrorism and radicalisation, pandemics etc which are some of the biggest problem over and above the national interest of any country in the planet. Any country can be affected by the above issues. Also, the unexpected security threats to our planet like the collision of an asteroid in the coming future are a real challenge and require equal cooperation from likeminded nations having the technological and scientific prowess to tackle it.

India being the world's largest democracy was the leader of the 'Non-Alignment Movement' (NAM) during the era of cold war. It was because of India not joining any group of two power blocks, viz, the USA or USSR, the western democracies always viewed India with suspicion and never fully supported India in its difficult times. Hence we can infer that the world was and is still divided between two groups of democracy. One is the rich developed western led block consisting of the USA, EU, Australia, Canada etc. The other is the developing countries like India or Brazil. Until the western democracies shed their attitude and demand of toeing their vision of world politics towards the developing poor democracies, there will always be a hindrance in cooperation in matters of security or global contemporary challenges. Hence India should strive to maintain a balance in its foreign policy to achieve its own national interests and security irrespective of the interests of other nations or the world.

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