

## **Is Democracy a wave of Global Pacifism?**

Shakhawat Shamim

Legal Academic & Freelance Writer, Daily Prothom Alo

### **Introduction**

In 1863, the United States President Abraham Lincoln in his the remarkable Gettysburg speech defines democracy as a ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people’. Since 20<sup>th</sup> century democracy is the most popular and generally accepted form of government. The expansion of democracy is urged for the sake of ensuring global security as democratic peace theorists believe democratic states hardly fight with each other. This theory is one of the most influential liberal contributions towards the global peace and war debate (Rosato, 2003). A couple of centuries back this idea was developed by the Thomas Paine, Immanuel Kant and Woodrow Wilson (Gat, 2005).

Kant (1795) was one of the pioneers of the democratic peace theory and in his essay *Perpetual Peace: a Philosophical Sketch* provides certain conditions for ensuring perpetual peace. According to his proposal, majority number of people will not vote for the war, thus if all states will republic, the war will come to an end. Gat (2005) says, the underlying principle of democratic peace theory is ‘democratic or liberal states never or very rarely go to war with each other and that they are less likely to become involved in militarized disputes among themselves-is the most robust, ‘law like’ finding generated by the discipline of international relations’. The Democratic Peace theory was further popularized by the work of Michael W. Doyle. In 1983, his two parts of work *Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs* has contributed much to this theory. Doyle’s further work (1986) implicates again ‘democracies almost never fight other democracies’ and then this theory has gained a new attention as well as debate in the contemporary international relations and security.

Since the end of cold war, democracy has become popular around the world. Gat (2005) comments, ‘introduced in the 1970s, the democratic peace theory has since gathered momentum and gained credence, withstanding extensive criticism and continuously being developed, amended, and refined in the process’.

### **Rationality of Democratic Peace Theory**

Democratic peace theory stands on the two assumptions, one is dyadic (democracies never or rarely if ever fight one another) and monadic (democracies are more pacific in general) (Chingono, 2009). Doyle’s (1986) phrase ‘democracies almost never fight each other’ actually has three meanings (Maoz & Russett, 1993). Firstly, ‘democracies are not to fight with each other (an empirical statement); they have other means of resolving conflicts between them and therefore do not need to fight each other (a prudential

statement); and they perceive that democracies should not fight each other (a normative statement)' (Wang, 1996). Russett (1993) empirically proved that there were no wars between democracies between 1946 to 1986, but war or use of military force was eight times higher than when it among the one or both non-democratic pair states (cited in Rosato, 2003). Although Rosato (2003), Farber and Gowa (1997) and Gartzke (1998) postulate that these clearly proved democracies pacifism data not for the democracies, other factors may have caused for this peace building among democracies. Because these data were made by considering 'conflict' only to the meaning of armed disputes and those empirical data 'is not only incomplete but also imprecise' (Chingono, 2009). Dixon (1994) also says, like the other types of government, democracies are as often as involved in war and armed conflict with others. Democracies are more aggressive towards the non-democratic states. As these theorists believed that, democracies are pacifism in general, then how armed attack to the non-democratic is amounted to pacifism! When a democratic state fights with a non-democratic state that also gives an apprehension of counter-attack. Undue or forcible democratization by way of war or interventions may cause threats to both side security and peace, whatever the financial or military position of non-democratic state is. Interventions by the USA in the Afganistan, Iraq and Libya and fall of their non-democracies subsequently raise the Al-Qaeda and ISIS, which has been threatening global security for the last couple of years. Spanier and Hook (1995, cited in Wang, 1995 p.5) argues '...wars became ideological crusades to destroy the enemy state and then send its people to democratic reform school. . . For Americans, then, war was a means employed to abolish power politics; war was conducted to end all wars'. The normative logic of democratic peace theory as to why democracies rarely fight one another is, democracies are mutually trusted and respected (Russett, 1993; Dixon, 1994). Mutual trust and respect leads democracies to resolve their conflicts of interest peacefully. Amicable dispute settlements among democracies can avoid war, but in some situations may come, when one state will not stand to compromise with her interest, even 'democratic states do not perceive each other to be democratic and therefore fight one another' (Rosato, 2003, p.586). On the other hand, non-democracies are not trusted and hence not respected as well, as democratic peace theorists think non-democracies are in a state of war against their own citizens and thus democracies may attack non democracies for either defend themselves from attack or 'launch pre-emptive strikes' (Rawls, 1999). Coercive interference to fellow democracies may count as as illegitimate assaults on the freedom and self-determination of individuals (Tomz & Weeks, 2013). But experience shows democracies not only fight for self-defence and liberal purposes, they often attack their fellow democracies for other interests. Rosato (2003) postulates that, out of 66 wars waged by liberal democracies during 1815 to 1975, as listed by the Singer and Small (1994), are result of imperial competition of two liberal democracies of the Britain and France, none of the reasons of self-defence indeed. American cold war interventions to fellow democracies in the developing states are good enough to say that 'democracies do not always treat each other with trust and respect when they have a conflict of interests (Rosato, 2003). During this period, American interventions in Iran, Indonesia, Nicaragua,

Mossadeq, Gualemalá, British Guyana, Brazil and Chile were replaced every government 'by a succession of American-backed dictatorial regimes' (Rosato, 2003, p.591). Thus, these American interventions to the fellow democracies suggest that 'democracies trust and respect has often been subordinated to security and economic interests' (Rosato, 2003, p.591).

Another dominant institutional logic of democratic peace theory is, democracies are accountable to their people and they have opposition parties to use their weak policies (Doyle, 1997, cited in Rosato, 2003). Kant (1795) wrote in his *Perpetual Peace*, 'if the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise.

But under a constitution where the subject is not a citizen, and which is therefore not republican, it is the simplest thing in the world to go to war'. As democracies are elected form of government by the direct vote of the people, so ruling government usually wants to keep their popularity, otherwise next election time they will lose their power. But despite the opposition from the opposite parties and from public, during the Iraq attack by the USA and British coalition, both the George W. Bush and Tony Blair were re-elected in their subsequent election. Political parties use their techniques to raise pro war sentiments, nationalism and emotions (Rosato, 2003). Even, after a massive bomb attack in Japan by the USA and killed almost one million civilians, there were no sustained protest, and it was made possible by a huge propaganda campaign by the political parties that the Japanese are 'subhuman and untrustworthy to others' (Rosato, 2003, p.595).

In a sustainable democratic developed state, people are less politically concern than developing countries, until and unless they are directly victimized. The developed state like the USA, when they attack other states, people have hardly any reaction even in their electoral decision. Moreover, Singer and Small (1994) provides, about 97 percent militarized disputes waged by the USA and Britain have suffered less than hundred battle casualties, and as they have a huge number of professional armies to make war, the public usually has little interest to protest against war. Rosato (2003) further provides that autocrats are more likely to suffer from losing war than regime type government. 'Autocrats have been punished 27 percent of the time, while democracies have only been removed 27 percent of the time and punished 7 percent of the time' (Rosato, 2003, p.594).

Another supporting logic of the democratic peace theory is, democracies are slow in the decision-making process to use force that will prevent from any surprise attack. Because democracies need prior parliamentary approval for declaring war. But, Rourke (1993, cited in Rosato, 2003) provides, 'the united states have taken military action abroad more than 200 times during its history, but only five of these actions were wars declared by Congress and most were authorized unilaterally by the president' (p.597). So, slow mobilization logic of democratic peace theory is also not maintainable here.

### **Is not a Covert intervention or economic sanction to fellow democracies amount toward?**

Rosato (2003) claims that, the democratic peace is in fact an ‘imperial peace based on American power’. Collapse of communism was a win of the democracy and since then the USA is in the dominant position to spread democracy or American liberal foreign policy. But at the same time, ‘the world’s most militarily active democracies- Britain, France, India, Israel and the United States have gone to war 30 times since 1815’ (Rosato, 2003). At the contemporary time, the USA has played a pioneer role to attack others, either directly or using covert interventions. Van Evera contends that, only when fellow democratic government supported by US policies, then US favoured democracy there, otherwise they initiated to overpower such democracy (cited in Poznansky, 2015).

There are lots of available instances when the US initiated covert action to indulge US foreign policy (Poznansky, 2015). O’Rourke identifies 63 covert action attempts by the US during the cold war (cited in, Poznansky, 2015, p.816). Unfortunately, this practice is still going on, even in contradiction with the very notion of democratic peace theory. Here I can consider a contemporary Syrian civil war crisis to understand how liberal democracies are now involved in war, even without declaring war. In the Syrian civil war crisis, the US covertly supports its rebel group Free Syrian Army and on the other hand, Russia supports ruling government Assad party (BBC, 2017). Both the Powerful US and Russia are involved in Syrian civil war, but none of the states are parties to this war. Neither party waged war against Syria, rather they are supporting two opposite parties. This approach by the democracies not to spread peace, rather to prolong the crisis and insecurity. Kant (1795) wrote, ‘No state shall by force interfere with the constitution or government of another state...and it would itself be an offence and would render the autonomy of all states insecure’.

Another new form of attack by democracies is, imposing economic sanctions. ‘Democracies still sanction each other because of a clash of interests, domestic values and priorities, overriding their shared values and common norms’ (Chingono, 2009, p.63). Most democratic states are involved in highly trade relation with each other, thus using economic sanction by the highly developed democracies as an alternative to militarized conflict (Chingono, 2009). Imposing economic sanctions to fellow democracies is relatively convenient, not commonly criticized by the world community and serve to execute their desired goal (Chiggonno, 2009).

Among the three basic conditions of Kantian perpetual peace, one is economic interdependence or trade relations. Since First World War, the US has employed 115 times economic sanctions against 75 countries (Patapan, 2012). How and under what grounds the democracies uses sanctions against fellow democratic state, let me show an example here. A controversy was made between the World Bank and Bangladesh, regarding a loan to construct Padma Bridge. The World Bank alleged corruption in terms

of allocating Construction Company, and hence they refused to pay the loan. But the truth behind the fact was, Bangladesh refused to allocate US nominated Construction Company for the proposed Padma Bridge. But, the USA has taken their revenge by suspending Generalized System of Preference (GSP) facility. The USA is one of the biggest markets for Bangladeshi ready-made garments products, but the USA suspended GSP on the ground of poor labour rights and working environment. Even after the amendment of Labour law accordingly, GSP facility is still suspended by the USA. Bangladesh is a fellow democratic state, but here this factor was not considered by the USA in determining to suspend GSP facility. But, at the same time, China is not in a position of western standard democracy and they have huge allegations of human rights violation, nonetheless China is not in the USA sanction list (Chingono, 2009). Even there will be no sanction to China at least in the near future, because 'US stands to benefit more economically from a cordial relationship with the rising giant' (Chingono, 2009, p.70). Even India had both trade and economic sanction from both the Canada and USA, for exploring nuclear test (Chingono, 2009).

Thus, democracies are keeping continue the covert action and economic sanction to their fellow democracies. Due to the reputational effect from other democracies and international level, now intervention format has been changed. Covert action and economic sanction to fellow democracies are new formula to attack tactically. By these practices, democracy may be expanded, but the global peace and security is still remaining questionable.

### **Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, democracy is now only accepted form of government by the global political trend. Democratization transition moves rapidly. Major democracies and the UN also promote democracy as a wave of global pacifism. But Layne (1994) declared, democratic theory is a 'dangerous' and also claims its promise of peace is 'illusory'. Democratic peace theory is not as effective as they claim. Neither its normative, nor its institutional logics are justified by considering the democratic practice in the last decades. Still democracies are fighting with each other. Even waging war between democracies and non-democracies, for the reason of promoting democracy, is not fruitful for bringing peace. Doyle (1983a) himself says, 'liberalism is not inherently peace-loving'. World experience rather shows, it threatens security, which ultimately hampers global peace. We have seen, democracies often waging war not for democracy, rather for their personal interest. On the other hand, they keep good commercial relations with authoritarians for own interest.

Moreover, democracies are in a military and nuclear competition that is actually preparation for future war as well. In addition, democracies are often engaged with covert interventions and sanctions. These signs indicate to firmly believe that, if the whole world would become democracies, even then global peace and security will not be ensured.

Democracies need to be more flexible in settling disputes amicably. Mutual respect and trust should be upheld more generically. Instead of waging war against non-democracies, democracies need to strength democratic trend, so that non-democracies will automatically take transition to the democracy. Kantian peace is still a fallacy, and so far the democratic peace theory has failed to ensure global pacifism. But, I do believe that if the major democracies practice will change, then global peace and security is possible through democracy.

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