



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND REGIONALISM

Dr. Vijay Pal

Head, Department of Political Science
Vikramajit Singh Sanatan Dharm College
Kanpur U.P. India

International Politics has emerged as important discipline in the present time. Usually it is considered related to interactive political behavior of the states in the world. In recent time, although one another dimension of the International Politics has emerged which is classified as economic dimension of International Politics. This dimension has influenced course of actions of global politics.

In the contemporary time its relevance has increased multifold. Its impact can be recognized on many aspects of the interstate behavior. It can fairly be concluded that in present time International Politics can be studied with two major dimension, political and economic. To understand these two dimensions a background study not only of International Politics is required but also an idea about true nature of International Relations need to be comprehended.

A comparative approach in this respect is needed so that an explicit demarcation can be established between these two almost similar disciplines. This is needed in order to discover the intrinsic nature of political and economic dimension of International Politics.

Regionalism in this respect becomes an important area of study. In contemporary time economic regionalism is widely practiced by the nation states. This is a novel phenomenon which has influenced the course of events of the global politics. The concept of regionalism is a core component of economic dimension of the global politics.

In this background the study of economic regionalism, its relationship with International Politics and International Affairs, its impact upon the relationship pattern of the interstate behavior and interregional behavior assume importance. This Chapter focused on these dimensions.



The present chapter is an attempt to understand these elements. It will attempt to know the political and economic dimension of the International Politics. An enquiry will also be made to understand the true nature of International Politics and International Relations. Their similarities and dissimilarities, the line of difference and the approach to deal these two highly integrated disciplines will be studied.

Regionalism in the present world order is understood usually in terms of economics. The regional economic integration has emerged as an important developmental stage in the world. Therefore present chapter will also focus on economic regionalism. An attempt will be made to understand the economic regionalism in its different dimensions. An attempt will also be made to understand the role and impact of the economic regionalism on the global politics.

The paper is therefore focused on understanding the two major dimensions of the International Politics. It is also focused on to understand the the real conceptual framework of International Politics and Affairs. It will also study the different aspects of the economic regional integration.

International Politics is one of the most important emerging discipline in modern time. There is no gainsaying the fact that this discipline offers many challenges to its scholars as many of the conceptual and philosophical frameworks of the discipline still to be developed, explained and established in acceptable theoretical framework. For this reason the study of this discipline turns out to be highly challenging.

International Politics at initial level can be understood as the study of the interstate behavior where different players or states interact with each other with a clear thought of protection of their national interests and to enhance their power so that they could maximize their benefits in all the possible dimensions of their existence.

International Politics is usually understood in terms of the conflict, particularly the conflict in the sphere of efforts for power attainments by the



states, which is purely political phenomenon. Though one group of the scholar is of the opinion that peace is also important component of the interactive behavior of the nation states. These do not subscribe to the power theory of other school of thought.

International Politics is therefore a complex maze to understand. It can be interpreted that it is full of conflicts due to effort by the nation states to secure their national interests and to enhance their national power, equally true is that it is full of positivites where nation states cooperate and establish the peace and obtain different benefits. They collaborate on many issues in order to gain the peaceful dividends. Hence the study of International Politics requires unbiased and balanced approach. It can not be understood by applying a particular theoretical postulate. It can be understood by analyzing and intrerpreting every component of the interactive behaviour among the nation statets with neutral position.

The nature of the International Politics is quite complex. But its dimensions can easily be identified. Its two dimension, recognized at outset, are the political and economic. These two dimensions of this discipline are although quite integrated with each other still they can be placed in exclusive study zone.

In fact this integration of both dimension and inability to understand the true nature of the International Politics cause much confusion when study of discipline is carried on. It becomes a comples task to identify the best approach to understand this disciplne. The major confusion arises when it is contrasted with almost similar disciplines with which it holds several similarities and differences.

This distinction requires a detalied and separate discussion which is to be dealt later on but for the present study focus, both are supposed to be studied and understood in political field with same theoretical postulates.

As far as the the political dimension of the discipline is concerned, it is based upon the basic premise that world is an interactive platform where



different nation states are active, besides many non state players, intergovernmental and international bodies also exist and influence the course of development of the political behavior of the nation states. The political dimension also brings into focus the positive and negative impacts of such interstate behavior. This dimension hence needs different theoretical approaches to understand its true nature.

Legal – Institutional approach to study the political dimension of the study believes that nation states are major players in the International Politics. Their behavior has direct bearing upon the global politics. They need to exhibit, for this reason, a moral approach and behavior in the International Politics. This approach is an idealist approach to understand the political nature of the global politics. This approach has assigned an important role to the international organizations. It provides that these organizations have useful role in the establishment of the peace in world politics. Idealist approach to the International Politics has been against to the politics of the weapons. This is an important feature of this approach as it negates the weapons in dealing the interactive behaviours among the nation states. This approach searches those elements of the interactive state behavior which has potential in positive direction, hence for it, disarmament and similar efforts among the member states and peaceful role played by the international organizations are important. This approach looks at the International Politics a functional theatre where peace is available and can be searched by the nation states. They look at the establishment of the democratic processing and democratic values in the interstate behavior. Hence this idealistic approach looks at the positive side of the global behavior.

International integration theoretical postulate also attempts to find out the political nature and dimension of the International Politics. Many subconcepts are involved in this approach. These may include pluralism, federalism, regionalism, functionalism and neofunctionalism etc. These theoretical models are close to the legal-institutional approach. This approach



has gained much currency in recent time to understand the course of the global politics. As for illustration the functionalism is often used to understand the International Politics. It believes that there is economic factor involved in the states which has caused the war like situations. It treats poverty, unemployment and other downgraded feature of the humanity as the main causative factors for the conflict production in the world. Functionalism will therefore look at the world politics in economic terms and thinks that problems in the world can be alleviated if the proper economic efforts are employed. According to the most influential philosopher of this approach David Mitrany, the functionalism is a theoretical model by which the peace can be established in the world. In his opinion the world is a place where common needs of the nation states can be converged and these common needs convergence can propel peace in the global order. In this way the functionalism concentrates upon the peace but using the welfare –economic approach.

The political nature of the International Politics is therefore peace oriented, if there are any conflicts then these are due to certain factors, if these are eliminated then this complex order can move to the peaceful stage. These are the basic assumptions of the theoretical postulates mentioned so far. It is true that peace is an ideal and final objective and which needs to be realized in any case. The global order exhibits certain instances where the nation states come together and establish the peaceful relations. The growth of the regional economic bodies attest these. There are many instances where the conflictful nation states have come closer due to their convergence of interests. The growth of the European Union, the reduction of the tensions among the ASEAN member states after the establishment of regional trading organization can be illustrated its example. Another illustration is observed in India-Pakistan relations where both countries inspite of many tensions are in the process of initiating the movement towards the peace. Hence these theoretical postulates have their relevance to understand the political dynamics of the global political behavior but at the same time truth is that many of the countries are still staying



in the conflictful stage. There are many differences between the Venezuela and USA-Ecuador and USA, India and China which have enough potential to turn into more volatile stage, a new cold war like conditions have emerged between USA and Russia with respect to Ukraine . Hence these postulates have their own weaknesses. These are more in idealistic framework. Hence their utility sometime gets diluted when conflicts in the global order are sharpened and there appear no option for their resolution. The crises in Palestine, persistent problem between North Korea and South Korea etc. are difficult to be analysed using this particular theoretical postulate.

Another postulate which has gained importance in the recent time is known as the behavioural and post behavioural approach to the International Politics. This approach in post world war development has attempted to place another viewpoint to understand the interstate behavior than the legal-institutional idealistic approach. For these the theoretical approach of these preceding models is insufficient and unclear to understand the true political aspect of the International Politics. They do not accept the value laden approach to the International Politics , but they emphasise the value neutral approach to the International Politics. For behaviouralists the International Politics need to be studied with scientific approach and models. It can not divorce itself from the realities of the global politics. This approach has almost discarded the idealism in the International Politics as a core theoretical model to identify and understand the political nature of the global politics. Decision making theory, game theory and bargaining theory are major theoretical postulates which have sprung from the behaviouralism.

In order to understand the global politics many other theoretical models too have been offered which are more scientific and realistic in nature. Among these the realist theory supersedes all the other theories and has been accepted by most of the policy planners at the national and international level to understand the real behavior of the nation states. It is argued that application of



this theoretical postulate may help nations to understand the true nature of the global politics.

It treats International Politics as full of contradictions and conflicts where nation states are oriented to serve their national interests with the use and enhancement of their power. The realists believe that human nature needs to be studied in order to find out the true nature of the international politics. They believe like Hobbes, Machiavelli that human nature is basically full of evils, when this is applied to the global politics then conflicts are definitely to emerge, hence realists start with the study of the human nature and reach to the conclusion that International Politics can not be a peaceful dynamic affair due to search by the nation states for more power as they define their interests only in terms of the power. The realists are closer to identify the true nature of the international politics. Their successors in this field as neo realist or structural realist of which Kenneth Waltz is main exponent, believes that world is full of anarchy and whole is larger than its parts which are states in their actions. The neorealists think that power in itself is a means not the end. Many scholars believe that realists and neorealists alike are more successful in offering the correct explanation of the political nature of the International Politics.

The other dimension of the International Politics is expanded to the economic aspect. This aspect of the International Politics has received much importance in the recent time. Contemporary global politics is much focused to this aspect as for illustration the great powers as USA has adopted in its foreign policy. Their one important objective is to initiate and maintain the free trade in the global politics. This was documented in the Fourteen point proposal of US President Woodrow Wilson after the first world war. Even in the present time USA is focused to utilize the huge markets of India and China.

International politics is governed by these national interests. These interests fall in the category of the economic national interests. No country in the contemporary time can deny the acceptance of these interests. In the recent time in South Asia, India initially did not allocate any importance in its foreign



policy to Myanmar particularly after the suppression of democracy and establishment of the military rule there but with the passage of time particularly due to economic factors India started to allocate a place to Myanmar in its foreign policy. The economic realism and considerations of the economic national interests influenced India to change its objectives with respect to Myanmar. India is in search of the new energy resources which can help to sustain its economic infrastructure. China too is very much active in Myanmar because of these compelling factors. It is also constrained with the limitations of energy resources like India. “Indian leaders also view Myanmar with vast reserves of natural gas, as a leading potential long-term source of energy supply free from the geopolitical risks of West Asia oil and natural gas. However, here also the attempts by India have not been very successful. Myanmar has become a theatre of intense energy diplomacy and competition with clear advantage to China because of the support China renders to the junta in its capacity as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.”¹

International Politics is therefore much controlled by these economic factors. There are many efforts by the nation states in a particular region to integrate in an economic group. Economic compulsions derive the countries to come closer. Many regional organizations have been established in the world in post second world war age. In Europe establishment of European Union has been motivated by the economic considerations. The similar situation is obtained in South East Asia where regional cooperation started with security concerns and later completely shifted to the economic considerations. In the similar fashion even in the conflict prone region like South Asia the eight nation states have come closer only because of the economic factors. They have realized that political conflicts need to be kept aside and the economic cooperation is need of the hour. The establishment of these regional organizations have emerged as an important component of the contemporary International Politics as for illustration European Union after having strengthened in economic unification of the member states, initiated political



unification and succeeded in the adoption of several such arrangements which have global significance. EU has adopted an EU defence and foreign policy. European Union has evolved its foreign policy in effective way and influences the course of the action in global politics.

Now debates are taking place to sharpen the foreign policy behavior in order to gain more economic benefits at the global level. In one of the recently concluded meeting on the enlargement and strengthening of the foreign and defense policy of the European Union this can be observed. In one EU meet “five of the six biggest countries in the EU, excluding Britain, have called for a radical overhaul of European foreign and defence policies to create a powerful new pan-European foreign ministry, majority voting on common foreign policies to bypass a British veto, a possible European army, and a single market for EU defence industries. The German-led push, supported by 11 of (now 28) EU countries.”²

The most important fact in this sphere is that European Union is very much serious about finding an effective role in the global politics which is usually a rare phenomenon as EU started as an economic regional trading arrangement but has exhibited itself as an unified political entity of consequence. This meeting has emphasised this fact. The recommendations presented in the meeting stated have attempted to make “the EU into a real actor on the global in the long term {to}introduce more majority decisions in the common foreign and security policy sphere, or at least prevent one single member state from being able to obstruct initiatives. [E U also] aim for a European defence policy with joint efforts regarding the defence industry (eg the creation of a single market for armament projects); for some members of the group this could eventually involve a European army.”³ The economic aspect of the International Politics is therefore an important factor in understanding the behavior of global politics. The growth of the regional organizations have definitely affected the global politics, not only the EU but also the ASEAN has been in process of finding some resolution of the problem



in South China sea. Its efforts can not be ignored by any of the stakeholders in the region. There are wide concerns in many countries with regard to this problem. Those which have the economic interests in the region want an early resolution of the problem. There are many issues involved in this matter which are economic in nature as South China sea and the adjacent countries as Vietnam has vast resources of the oil and the gases. Hence no country of the region or the regional organisation want to miss these resources. Every player besides wants that supply lines for the delivery of commodities through the sea line should remain open. Nations are more interested in securing these resources of the region, hence these factors help to produce conflict and cooperation among the countries as India and China have different opinion about this sea zone and India and Vietnam have come closer to exploit the resources. ASEAN is keen to maintain peace in the region due to its own concerns, in the similar fashion Japan is keen to maintain the supply lines open to ship its products. Thus economic factors have propelled the countries to come closer or have produced certain conflicts in the region.

In this respect one another dimension of the International Politics need to be taken note of. This is related to the behaviour of the states with the International economic, financial and trade bodies which have sufficient bearing upon the global politics. Every country interacts with the Bretton Woods structure which includes the IBRD or World Bank, IMF and IDA etc. There is much impact of these interactions on the countries and global politics. In many cases it is observed that aid is given to the countries with strings attached. The developed countries put the pressures on the developing countries to initiate the structural reforms, a condition which pressurizes these nations to move towards the free market economy.

The developing countries on the other hand are clubbed together on many economic issues. Among these the demand for NIEO [New International Economic Order] is very important demand of these countries. Since 1973 when in Aligess NAM summit, NIEO was conceptualized and in 1974 UNO adopted



resolution for the same. They view the present global order as exploitative and against to their economic interests. They demand that an equitable economic world order should be established. These efforts definitely affect the International Politics. The demands of the developing states help to create the groups in the world which may manifest their collective actions in the international economic institutions and other bodies. The ideas about NIEO can be understood as a pragmatic economic behavior of the developing nations as for illustration the “the Declaration underscores the political independence of the colonial peoples and countries as an event of great significance. As independent countries, they have expanded the membership of the international community. Conscious of their colonial experience, they continue to direct their efforts toward independent development along anti-colonial policies. The Declaration expresses the collective consciousness of the developing countries that, after decades of political independence, their national freedom has remained incomplete and their efforts at independent development are thwarted by formidable obstacles set up by the forces of neo-colonialism, i.e., by the leading capitalist countries. The demand for a new order is the culminating point in the growing Third World awareness that political independence does not necessarily bring economic emancipation and it takes *economic independence* to complete political freedom”⁴ These thoughts of the developing nations have much impact on the global economic thinking. The demand for NIEO has influenced the relationship between developing and developed countries.

In the similar way the WTO offers another case for analytical study. WTO is an example where developing nations have taken a collective view on the issue of the subsidy to the agricultural sector. Developed nations demand that different types of subsidies offered by developing nations to their agriculture must be abolished. In the similar fashion European Union takes its stand on the same issue keeping the interests of its own agricultural class in sight. Smaller countries too attempt to serve their interests. “Despite the small size of their



economies, small developing countries have important interests at stake in the WTO solidarity. Cooperation among developing countries--through groupings such as the Caribbean Common Market--enhances their collective capacity. Various informal groups of such countries meet frequently, and give the opportunity to exchange and coordinate views on current issues. When one country then speaks for the whole group in a WTO meeting, the statement receives serious attention.”⁵ The stands taken in these bodies by different group affect these institutions which have their impact on the dynamics of the International Politics. Many countries particularly from the North i.e. developed countries apply different types of the pressure tactics upon the developing countries to follow their suit. This pressure has under dimension and can be observed on the issues like global warming and the climate issues where developed countries have different stands from the developing countries. One important fact in this respect is that due to economic compulsions and the realization of the development of the collective voice on such important issues as the demand for the NIEO, formulations of the rules in the WTO, deliberations in the COPE climate conference and other climate conferences developing countries have participated in unified manner. It is observed that even those nation states which are not having the positive political relations among themselves come closer and form a collective opinion on these issues. This development is an important feature of the economic dimension of the International Politics. It is easy to understand that on economic matters countries may have convergence on many issues or they may have different opinion. If they have divergence on the particular issue, it is likely that it may impact their political relationship too, which in due course may affect the dynamics of global politics.



These realities have their influential impact on the course of the International Politics. It is true that in the contemporary age the countries have started to provide more space and importance to the economic factors. They have also attempted to develop economic foreign policy to deal these emerging issues and have acted to protect their economic interests. Such activities cause deep impact upon the relationship pattern of the countries, the behavior and the expression of the international bodies and the institution and behavior of the regional trading bodies. In conclusion it can be stated that these can affect the course of International Politics in myriad of ways.

There is a great debate to decide since when the discipline of the International Politics emerged. It is observed that in ancient city states of the Greece the basic trends of intercity states were in existence. In the same manner in the ancient India, states were established which had relationship with each other on the basis of the cooperation but in many cases the conflict was paramount in their interaction with each other. The great Indian scholar and diplomat kautliya has detailed in his book Arthashastra the basic guiding principle for the states to follow in its interactopn with other state. The book also helps to understand the foreign policy action and the system of spy maintenance which have become an important componenet of the contemporary International Politics. In Roman empire too the International Politics advanced but its study, research and teaching started to take a definite shape in the 19th century when geopolitics scholarship emerged for studying the interstate behavior. Illustration it was Morgenthau who provided at initial level a theoretical framework to this discipline by writing the 'Politics Among Nations: Struggle For Power And Peace', with the help of this book in many countries diplomats were taught to obtain the primary theoretical background about this discipline.

It was after the first world war that interests in the study of the International Politics increased and in many countries including India separate courses were started for its teaching. This development has gained much



impetus in the recent time and there is enlarged interests in this discipline due to the ever increasing importance of this subject.

The evolutionary history of study of the International Politics is different from the real establishment of this discipline in the modern time. In fact International Politics as a discipline in the modern time can be assumed to have started since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, when first time the concept of nation came into vogue. In due course of time this concept matured into the nation state when the element of the nationalism was added in the term nation. After the first world war nation states reflected their strength in effective manner, after the second world war the role of the nation states have become much impactful. These wars have established that nature of the International Politics is quite dynamic which is ever changing due to creation of new forms and patterns at the global level, hence needs high quality of scholarship and different postulates to study it.

The study of these developments exhibit the certain elements of the International Politics. A critical analysis shows that International Politics is politics of power as stated by Morgenthau because of the fact the nation states are always interacting with a thought of increasing their power strength at the global level. The main concern of the international Politics therefore lies in enhancing the power element. This is the main goal of every nation state, naturally they come into conflict with each other due to the focus of every state on obtaining the power at any cost.

Hence it can be explained that power attainment is the main action of the nation states. This power attainment can be in political or economic or in any other area although power in the political terms is mainly sought for. Political power is main power for which nation states configure all their actions because protection of their national interest becomes possible by its attainment.

When attainment of power is main goal then conflict emergence is a natural outcome. This assumption emphasises that it may lead to the war like



conditions because conflict are to be resolved in most of the cases by this mechanism. The resolution of the conflict is possible by the negotiations or by the power imposition. The negotiations are the peaceful methods to resolve the issue but in International Politics many times when national interests are severely involved the resolution is managed by the war and similar resolution mechanisms. The involvement of the war and other power techniques are naturally responsible for the maintenance of a tense environment at the global level. It suggests that International Politics is mainly politics of power enhancement for the maintenance of the national interests by the nation states and it has full potential to cause the conflict at the interstate behavior and at the global level.

International Politics has been viewed as the interstate behavior to obtain the power to serve its interests. This view point has influenced the scholars particularly after the second world war phase. The two world wars have definitely proved this assumption correct about the International Politics as during the last century the conflict among the different nations reached to such an extent that they developed groups to face each other. This was the group or bloc approach to understand the global politics which had certain relations with the balance of power theory of the preceding century. It needs to be emphasized that nature of the International Politics was attempted to be interpreted by different angles. The realists and balance of power theory looked International Politics as conflict prone reality. They also looked into the question why the states clubbed together as in case of alliances as observed in the balance of power world system. This clubbing was analysed in terms of the maintenance of power balance by the states which could maintain peace for some time.

This led to analyse the International Politics with a new approach in the post second world war phase and is termed as the peace approach. This approach attempts to find out the peaceful elements among the states' interaction with each other. Attempts by the nation states to integrate at



regional level in economic terms is a major illustration of it. This viewpoint in this age has attempted to transform the thought about the true nature of the International Politics which includes now not only the conflict but also the peace. Thus International Politics may have two major components conflict and peace, states may attempt for these in group or as the singular actor.

In the post world war age, there have taken place some other important changes including emergence of the Non State Actors in the global politics. These are invisible actors in the world influencing the global politics. These are terrorist organizations which affect the actions of the nation states in the disruptive manners. The International Politics have been much impacted by these new developments. In the similar way the new trends are observed in the economic sphere too which have received more importance in the contemporary world. Every nation states have allocated much importance to this element in their foreign policy.

These new changes are potent enough to change the nature of the International Politics. Hence the modern International Politics differs from the classical International Politics.

In this respect International Politics moves closer to International Relations if element of the peace is allocated some importance in the International Politics. This is not to state that this is recent understanding but truth is that a “semantic and philosophical distinction is brought out between international relations and international politics despite the fact that the two are generally taken as interchangeable terms. The areas covered by all great text-books writers from Carr and Kirk to Wright and Wight are almost the same. This viewpoint although may not hold to a larger analytical extent. A critical analysis reveals that there are certain important differences in between both. It is for this reason that while some have preferred the title International Relations while others have preferred International Politics.”⁶

It suggests that both disciplines have differences with each other and have many similarities too. It is true that it becomes quite difficult to find out



the major differences between both because the major actors in both are same i.e. states, hence they have similarities on many counts. For this reason in many cases both terms have been used interchangeably without any problem. In spite of this a rational a close scrutiny reveals that discipline of International Politics has certain differences from the International Relations.

International Relations has wider scope than the International Politics. International Relations covers all types of relationship patterns among the nation states. These can be of the conflict, peace or economic, extra economic-political in nature as the negotiations on the global problems as the climate change and the global warming etc. reveal.

These relationships may cover the interaction of the states with the international bodies or the regional bodies or the intergovernmental bodies. The field of the International Relations is quite vast. One major difference with the International Politics lies its emphasis upon the peaceful aspects and cooperative areas of interstate behavior. Whereas the International Politics has started to allocate some role to the peaceful negotiations but its core lies in the power politics, national interests and in the conflict.

International Relations include all types of the relations. Therefore diplomacy becomes an important operational component of the International Relations whereas in many cases the application of the coercive mechanisms and emphasis upon the violent resolution of the problematic issues as going for war by the nation states become an important feature of the International Politics. Thus International Relations include many of the functions and lays a little more emphasis upon the peaceful approaches and allocate understanding the behavior of the international structures on the global politics with the perspective of peace, International Politics may lack these.

In this respect one of the most impactful addition to this disciplines have been the emergence of the concept of regionalism. Regionalism in this discipline can be defined as the collective effort of the nation states for political or economic or military goals. Regionalism is usually delimited to a



particular region but this is not the mandatory condition as in present time many regional efforts for integration have extended out of their geographical locations.

The development of the regionalism concept in the practical form in the global politics has taken place particularly after the second world war. During the phase of the cold war US led countries established in 1949 a regional organization of military nature and was known as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. This organization was responded by the Communist countries which together established the Warsaw pact in 1955. These both organizations were strictly militaristic in nature, were usually related to a particular region as Warsaw Pact included the countries which were mainly located in the East Europe whereas NATO group included the countries mainly from the Western Europe with the exception of the U S A.

The establishment of such regional phenomenon in the military sphere was repeated in the form of SEATO, CENTO, ANZUS etc. These were militaristic in nature and were responsible for serving the particular interests of the integrated nations during the cold war age. Regionalism of this nature was exhibition of the combined strength of the both poles. This has also exhibited that military regionalism had important geopolitical impact. The bipolar nature of the cold war was based upon the power conflict with ideological differences "Good regionalism is good geopolitics; and bad regionalism is bad geopolitics. This integration of the supposed polar opposites in the scholastic debate among foreign policy academics is well illustrated in both directions by the events of 1979. We live in a world of sovereign nation-states of which two are preeminent in military power: the United States and the Soviet Union. Each is condemned by this simple fact to be constantly preoccupied with the potential and the intentions of the other. Ideological differences, though important, are subsidiary to this basic fact of extraordinary and opposed might."⁷

This reality exhibits the real basis of the military regionalism. NATO like regional structures are its true embodiment. The importance of the NATO



is still relevant to the USA which has been utilised by USA to serve its interests. USA has used it in Afghanistan and more recently in Ukraine crisis with Russia where EU with NATO played an important role. Hence militaristic regionalism still exists. Though Russia [former USSR] once a communist leader with Warsaw Pact, under its control lack such regional military organisation in the present time.

One type of regionalism which has been in prevalence in more effective manner in the contemporary world is the economic regionalism. Economic regionalism can be defined as the integration of the nation states of a particular region for economic purposes. These nation states come closer to create a free trade regime where tariff and non tariff barriers have either been abolished or are being abolished or at least have been diluted. The economic regionalism usually demands the geographical proximity among the countries which have consented for the economic integration but this is not a mandatory condition as many groups as recently established IBSA, BRICS are not so much geographically contiguous whereas on the other hand EU, ASEAN, SAARC are comprised of the countries which have geographical proximity to each other.

Economic regionalism establishes a procedure among the participating nations to propel the economic growth in the region by increasing the intraregional and interregional trade growth. At present in world almost all the nations have aligned themselves with particular regional economic organisation which are usually the main manifestation of the economic integration. The present world order in economic context is oriented towards the globalisation. Globalisation is basic application of the neoliberal economic philosophy as enunciated by the developed nations of the North. This has its seeds in Washington consensus of 1989 which elaborated ten basic principles for economic existence. The present economic global order have instituted the WTO on 1st January 1995 after the Uruguay rounds of discussion for defining the trade rules of the global trade. This organisation has accepted economic regionalism as a natural phenomenon and its direct institutional structures as



regional organisation or the Regional Trading Arrangements as natural institutions which have no conflict with the WTO. In fact WTO believes in their utility but is observed that in many cases regional trading organisations become predominant over the WTO, showing their strength, as is observed in the case of EU. In this respect, a debate has emerged whether these regional organisations are promoting the WTO or disowning these. “Economic regionalism appears to be growing rapidly. Why this has occurred and what bearing it will have on the global economy are issues that have generated considerable interest and disagreement. Some observers fear that regional economic institutions such as the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mercosur, and the organization of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) will erode the multilateral system that has guided economic relations since the end of World War II, promoting protectionism and conflict. Others argue that regional institutions will foster economic openness and bolster the multilateral system.”⁸

To reach on any conclusion is therefore a very difficult proposition but one fact is explicit, economic regionalism and regional organizations have much utility in the contemporary globalised world.

The phenomenon of the economic regionalism is not a new phenomenon although it has gained much strength in the present phase. Historically In 19th century ideas about the economic had been primitively germinated . In Europe some structures similar to these integration efforts had come into existence.

“The industrial revolution and technological advances attendant to it that facilitated interstate commerce clearly had pronounced effects on European integration;but so did the creation of various customs unions and bilateral trade agreements.Besides the well-known German Zollverein, the Austrian states established a customs union in 1850, as did Switzerland in 1848, Denmark in 1853, and Italy in the 1860s. The latter coincided with Italian statehood, not an atypical impetus to the initiation of a PTA in the nineteenth century. In



addition, various groups of nationstates forged customs unions, including Sweden and Norway and Moldavia and Wallachia.”⁹

The growth of economic regionalism although continued in robust manner and the process is still in continuation. “Regionalism seems to have occurred in two waves during the post–World War II era. The first took place from the late 1950s through the 1970s and was marked by the establishment of the EEC, EFTA, the CMEA, and a plethora of regional trade blocs formed by developing countries. These arrangements were initiated against the backdrop of the Cold War, the rash of decolonization following World War II, and a multilateral commercial framework, all of which colored their economic and political effects.”¹⁰

The next phase of the economic regionalism is more important because it is the result of new trends in the global politics, particularly due to overpowering influence of the neoliberal economic order the world has experienced the more pragmatic integration. “The most recent wave of regionalism has arisen in a different context than earlier episodes. It emerged in the wake of the Cold War’s conclusion and the attendant changes in interstate power and security relations. Furthermore, the leading actor in the international system (the United States) is actively promoting and participating in the process. PTAs also have been used with increasing regularity to help prompt and consolidate economic and political reforms in prospective members, a rarity during prior eras.”¹¹

The growth of the regionalism is more influential in the economic direction in the present time. It is not because of the reason that conflicts have reduced in the global politics. The main factor behind such shift from military regionalism to economic regionalism has been the recognition of the value potential of the regional economic integration by the nation states. The growth of the economic regionalism can be considered as an important component of the International Relations due to its potential to produce the peace as a by product.