
THE NEXT CLASH OF IDEAS?

HOW PERCEPTIONS OF JUSTICE MAY SHAPE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE 2020S

Mikhail Troitskiy

AT the start of the 2020s, domestic political debates within democratic societies are heating up and at times radicalizing. The middle ground in such debates has been waning for more than a decade, while both left and right wings of the political spectrum have become increasingly vindictive, manipulative, and uncompromising. Traditional conservatism is now flirting with populism, while liberalism is at the risk of being monopolized by emancipatory rhetoric and almost unbounded demands for entitlements by disadvantaged groups on both the left and right sides of the political spectrum.

Unlike the times of the Cold War when confrontation between the superpowers, in part fueled by ideological differences, divided societies across the Third World, today's domestic polarization is not induced

by global trends. In most cases, the sources of current polarization are purely domestic. They include economic grievance and the tension between equality for all from the perspective of political rights, on one hand, and the growing inequality among the same people from the perspective of accumulated wealth, incomes, and actual ability to have their voices heard, on the other. But can the reverse dynamic also occur whereby domestic divisions lead to intensified competition of ideas at the level of international community?

Indeed, precarious politics create what Dartmouth's William C. Wohlforth calls the "temptation of subversion" among rival powers that may seek to fan the flames of domestic partisanship to undermine their opponents by weakening their social cohesion. This is one way in which domestic polarization

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Lady Justice personified: will debates about her role define the 2020?

may play out in international politics, but are there any other—perhaps more direct—avenues?

I argue that the rhetoric of justice, which seems to be driving much of the domestic political scene in economically advanced and developing countries alike, will increasingly spill over and impact international politics. If this dynamic continues at the current pace into the 2020s, it will be my candidate for the most influential single trend in international politics of the new decade because of the strength of the domestic contradictions in major countries that their

governments and people will not be able to ignore.

It will, however, take a more subtle form than the “class struggle” that was instigated internationally by Soviet Russia and later the USSR as an idea for obtaining justice after October 1917—in the 1920s, economically advanced societies adapted relatively quickly to fend off the risks of a successful communist coup and a global proletarian revolution. The rest of the world left such possibility behind at least 35 years ago after the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev acknowledged the shared goal of survival for the West and the East.

The coming clash of justice principles will now be more complicated than a showdown between advancing democracy and lingering authoritarianism. While democracy has made major strides since the fall of the Berlin Wall, transition—as it was expected to look like—stalled in many countries, fresh attempts at cascade democratization (such as the Arab Spring) did not bring immediate results, and some nations registered a rollback on democracy altogether. Indeed, the next global clash of ideas with material consequences—as it is likely to develop in the 2020s—will not happen exactly along the lines of representative versus unrepresentative government or open versus closed political systems.

Domestic discord and the unraveling of the social fabric may lead to bouts of inter-faith or inter-civilizational strife in the international arena. That, however, is likely to happen only in cases of fragile societies in developing countries, with fallout only reaching regional scale. The most prominent example in the twenty-first century has been the massive—but eventually contained—regional security crisis in the Middle East and the rise of ISIS that happened as a result of civil conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

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The most powerful ideas-driven international dynamic is likely to be the building of coalitions around competing principles of justice. These principles will be instrumentalized by major powers and their alliances with the goal of enlisting support for their competing agendas. To win the competition, each side will try to tilt the balance of global public opinion towards its “own” interpretation of justice and then leverage this interpretation to increase support or neutralize resistance to this side’s interests and policies.

The competition of ideas of justice in the 2020s is likely to be soft; it will not achieve the fever pitch of the Cold-War ideological rivalry. However, the outcome of some contests of justice narratives may shape the security landscape in a number of regions as well as globally.

JUSTICE ENTERS THE GAME

Major domestic events and trends have a long history of affecting international politics in earlier decades. Indeed, proving causal links is usually impossible. However, the interplay is clear in many cases.

The main event of the 1990s that set the stage for both domestic and

international politics in the rest of the decade was the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its alliances across the globe. The ensuing peace dividend reinforced by fast technological progress spurred an array of economic and social trends known as globalization. These trends could have hardly made the same impact on the world if the USSR and most of its allies stayed aloof—preoccupied with maintaining stability of their regimes and working against globalization that would have no doubt been seen by them as a threat to their closed societies.

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The first decade of the new millennium writ large was shaped by multi-vector domestic political transitions in the Middle East: marginalization of groups that morphed into transnational terrorist movements, attempts to remove old regimes during the Arab Spring, and build a new political framework in Iraq. On the international level that led, after 9/11, to a wave of U.S., allied, and—later on—Russian interventions and protracted civil wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Despite the tragedy and drama, this did not bring about tectonic shifts in the Middle East or the adjacent South Asia, with all major divides—Arab-Israeli, Sunni-Shia, India-Pakistan—remaining in place.

In the 2010s, key domestic events—the election of Donald Trump to the American presidency on his platform of economic nationalism and Xi Jinping’s decision to stay in power in China beyond the usual two terms while accelerating the country’s emergence as a major international player—led to resurgent

great power politics and increased interest towards balancing against the United States. That balancing has involved not only the usual suspects, namely China and Russia, but also allies. Among them, not

only Turkey is overtly asserting views and interests that often run counter to those of Washington, but even France and Germany seem to be balking at the United States and are not in a hurry to leave behind the transatlantic contradictions and divisions of the Trump era. Yet a broad coalition determined to challenge the United States is not shaping up. While significant, the overlap among the opponent agendas is still insufficient to undergird a decisive move against the superpower. All of that sets the stage for a new round of domestic developments that will have a direct impact on how the rivalry will play out over the 2020s.

As the new great-power game is unfolding, its major participants rarely use the language of confrontation. Instead they tend to declare commitment

to negotiated solutions to any security, economic, and other issues arising among them. At the same time, great powers are looking for ideological arguments and rhetorical tools to enhance domestic mobilization, facilitate coordination within the government apparatus, and rally support for their actions among other members of the international community. As a key part of such efforts, international players—big and small—have long been working to embed their positions, postures, and strategies in a discourse of justice. As will be seen from the examples below, they look at justice from the angle of their respective entitlements that they usually frame in ethical terms. These actors then assert that justice will be served if what they consider their entitlements are met by other actors.

In the words of the negotiation scholar I. William Zartman, negotiating parties look for “formulas” that lay the foundation for their postures and then try to find a mutually satisfactory “formula.” Justice has been a particularly strong anchor for these “formulas,” perspectives, positions, and strategies because justice is broadly seen as a powerful ethical notion that arouses people’s emotions, generates sympathies, and incites them

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to collective action. The Soviet Union and the United States wasted no opportunity to frame their positions on the world stage in the terms of justice—not just for themselves, but for broad groups of countries that they were looking to recruit as allies. However, the rhetoric

of justice—and ideology writ large—are generally considered to have been secondary to geopolitics during the Cold War. In any case, interest towards justice as an anchor outlived the era of global geopolitical confrontation. The language of ethically-grounded entitlement and justice is being widely used in a much more complex,

multipolar, and non-linear world of the twenty-first century. For example, a 2018 paper by Russian international affairs experts led by Andrey Sushentsov that sought to exert influence on actual policymaking explicitly proposed placing the notion of justice at the heart of Russia’s foreign policy rhetoric. Indeed, as two leading Russia hands at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace indicated in a recent article, the “message of a historic injustice that fate dealt Russia, the country that more than any other was responsible for defeating fascism, [...] became the cornerstone of the new national narrative and of Putin’s foreign policy.”

The quest to increase the appeal of a nation's foreign policy and, more specifically, negotiating posture through embedding them in a specific justice discourse leads to interaction between, if not a clash of, conceptions of justice. This happens as the dividing lines between competing positions in the key debates in international politics have become manifest and the game of recruiting supporters for each perspective has begun. Outcomes of many of those debates will therefore set long-term trends in international politics. The outcomes will depend on the relative acceptance by neutral states of the rival conceptions of justice. By "acceptance" in this context I mean the extent to which a view of what is just is shared by the policymaking elites as well as broader groups of people in those states.

Perceptions of justice may also affect and change the established patterns of action in standard situations, such as a trade dispute or a cyberattack. Aggravating global challenges—climate change and pandemics—instigate debates about justice as it becomes commonly invoked in relation to the distribution of collective costs and benefits. Justice-conscious players then apply their cherished conceptions of justice to other domains, including bilateral interactions with their counterparts.

The leveraging of justice by international players—big and small, acting unilaterally or in concert—is likely to be one of the key trends of the 2020s.

JUSTICE IN CONFLICTS AND NON-PROLIFERATION

One of the key factors that we need to predict when building forecasts for the 2020s is the extent of restraint that is likely to be exercised by major powers. Do we expect the speed of conflict escalation to rise, or are the players becoming more inclined to consider and implement response options later—for exam-

ple, not until reaching a reliable judgment about the real scale of the attack and attackers' intentions? Escalation scenarios will become very widespread in multi-domain conflicts—involving military, cyber, financial, diplomatic, and other tools simultaneously—that are so complex that no pre-meditated strategy of conduct in such conflict will work beyond the first or second move. Escalation uncertainties will require broadly accepted guiding principles that could prevent conflicts from spiraling out of control. Perceptions of justice appear a promising source of such principles.

Proclivity to respond immediately and forcefully depends primarily on the scale of the attack (is there simply time

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to think before we are destroyed?), the calculation of risk arising from each response option, and—most importantly—on the assessment of credibility loss short of a demonstration of direct and clear link between attack and retaliation which seems to be a rational factor. However, the way we calculate risks is underpinned by our choice: whether our undisputed entitlement to respond immediately and proportionately may be outweighed by larger benefits from an alternative course of action that would not involve reciprocity, symmetrical or not.

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For example, if potential ripple effects from an immediate counterattack—for example, in the cyber domain—may not just punish the attacker, but also harm or put at risk the cyber infrastructure of a large number of other states that were not responsible for the initial attack, serving justice may require refraining from immediate escalation. Even if no government is likely to forswear the right to reciprocity in an official doctrinal document, a broad discussion of the shared goal of survival—along the lines of Mikhail Gorbachev’s “new political thinking” of the late 1980s—may consolidate the belief that the global community has a bigger entitlement to avoiding catastrophic risks from great power conflict

escalation than any of those great powers are entitled to tit-for-tat interactions with no clear boundaries.

Another key debate in global politics—the outcome of which will depend on the dominant interpretation of justice—is focused on the future of

nuclear weapons and other indiscriminate means of mass destruction. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force in January 2021, effectively pitting scores of influential states demanding a quick

phase-out of nuclear weapons against the nations that possess—and at times brandish—these weapons. The long trend which involves rising pressure on major nuclear weapon states towards disarmament will continue in the 2020s.

Nuclear non-proliferation has hinged on the assumption that non-nuclear weapon states—and the international community as a whole—will be better served by the strict limits on the number of states possessing nuclear weapons. The logic has been that everyone’s—not just nuclear-weapon states’—security is better ensured when only five states are allowed to have nuclear bombs. In other words, the imperative of global security trumps the justice principle of equality. The abolition

movement removes the contradiction between the two principles and harnesses them both to the cause of nuclear prohibition. Even Iran—a country suspected by many of not ruling out the option of building the bomb—played with the possibility of acceding to TPNW at the time when its 2015 nuclear deal with P5+1 was in force.

Indeed, it is attractive to ground one's positions on key global issues and trends in the widely accepted notions of justice. Such bid is difficult to counter for the states that rely on the rhetoric of justice and shared benefit in their foreign policy doctrines. For example, while the United States and Russia—the owners of the bulk of global nuclear weapons stockpile—are likely to keep dismissing the quest for “nuclear zero” at a limited cost to their international standing, China may turn out to be more sensitive to demands for scaling back China's advanced nuclear-capable weaponry. Such demands may come from China's neighbors in Asia as well as developing countries across the globe. Given the relatively high stakes, the debate around the future of nuclear weapons may eventually boil down to a contest between conceptions of entitlement and justice.

CROSSING BORDERS

Another key trend that will be shaping global politics in the 2020s is the reaction by major international players to the handling of internal political dissent and other

domestic crises by other states. The pattern of response by the international community to internal political crises triggered by the struggle for power or territory will depend on the prevailing conception of justice. Domestic groups rebelling against governments—as political opposition or secessionist movements—appeal to justice principles to

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rally support for their cause not only domestically, but also internationally. Appeals by opposition groups for protection from their governments are likely to become more vocal in many countries—from Asia Pacific and post-Soviet Eurasia to Latin America and the Middle East.

The clash between the right to interfere in other states' internal affairs and unconstrained sovereignty is mirrored by the competition between the basic justice conception of equality and collective progress as a form of communitarian justice. While equality of recognized sovereign governments

means that each state is entitled to immunity from interference by other states, the global community may be equally entitled to progress understood as improvement in people's living conditions. The size and—consequently—power of coalitions of states and other actors willing to breach other states' sovereignty out of support for their suffering populations will depend on the extent of global acceptance of the notion that collective progress does better justice to any nation—understood as a group of people—than full freedom of hands for that nation's government. In other words, ask yourself which situation is fairer from your perspective as a citizen: your government exercises unconditional sovereignty like governments of other states or you and your fellow citizens have resort to transnational norms that create inequality because they may constrain your government while empowering others. It is not an easy question, but it is likely that the 2020s will finally offer us at least a preliminary answer.

So far, the principle of nominal sovereign equality of governments has been gradually giving way to the doctrines emphasizing solidarity with suffering people irrespective of the position of their governments. Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is the core solidarity doctrine that has achieved broad recognition. In the 2000s, the UN General Assembly and

then the Security Council endorsed R2P, thereby recognizing the right of the international community to intervene in domestic crises even against the will of the governments unable to cope with serious domestic challenges or abusing their powers. However, the need for obtaining permission from the UN Security Council is accepted as a limit on interventionism.

The fate of that limit will depend on important material factors, such as the presence of actors willing to intervene in domestic crises overseas as well as these actors' calculations of the costs and benefits of intervention. But even more it will depend on the outcome—at least preliminary—of the debate on the fairness of unconstrained sovereignty. That outcome appeared almost sealed during the presidency of Donald Trump who saw an irreconcilable contradiction between multilateral solidarist agendas and the pursuit of the national interest of the United States. However, his successor U.S. President Joseph Biden has stated he plans on “revitalizing America's network of alliances and partnerships that have made the world safer for all people” in order to “shape the rules that will govern the advance of technology” and “stand up for democratic values [...] pushing back against those who would monopolize and normalize repression.” A few weeks before Biden's speech, the quintessence of the opposing view of international justice as

unconditional equality was delivered by Xi Jinping: “No two leaves in the world are identical, and no histories, cultures or social systems are the same. Each country is unique with its own history, culture and social system, and none is superior to the other [...] The right choice is for countries to pursue peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect and on expanding common ground while shelving differences, and to promote exchanges and mutual learning.” In his turn, Russian President Vladimir Putin cautioned, several years ago, against “American exceptionalism” as a motive enabling foreign policy action, including armed intervention by the United States in the domestic conflict in Syria. He concluded: “There are big countries and small countries, rich and poor, those with long democratic traditions and those still finding their way to democracy. Their policies differ, too. We are all different, but when we ask for the Lord’s blessings, we must not forget that God created us equal.”

This discussion will continue into the 2020s, and the pressure on the states and organizations positioning as active international players will gradually mount, as conflicting parties on the ground issue their appeals to the competing respective justice principles. Such dynamic will increasingly galvanize major players and force their hand for a variety of reasons, including their own declared commitment to particular

justice principles as well as pragmatism. However, even reactions undertaken by cynical politicians seemingly on the basis of hard-headed conceptions of national interest may on a closer look turn out to be equally driven—if indirectly—by perceptions of justice, such as Trump’s recognition Juan Guaido as the legitimate leader of Venezuela in January 2019. According to a popular interpretation, the move was aimed to beef up support for Trump in the swing state of Florida by appealing to the Cuban Americans who solidarized with the Venezuelans suffering under an oppressive regime.

While Guaido failed to seize power in Venezuela, Trump carried Florida in the November 2020 presidential election. The contribution of the Guaido decision to Trump’s electoral success in Florida can hardly be measured, but in this case it is immaterial. What is important is that an American president was responding to a popular demand galvanized by transnational appeals to justice.

In any case, in the 2020s, major players may no longer enjoy the freedom to define their stance on a particular case of separatism or internal strife in other states on the basis of their naked national interest. These players will increasingly come under the influence of their own domestic groups sympathizing with one of the

conflicting parties in other states, and that will prevent the definition of seemingly faraway conflicts in terms of pragmatic national interest. Such dynamic will spark discussion focused on ethics and justice, with the winner concept driving policy—at least, until a painful reassessment in case of a conspicuous failure.

The ideas of collective entitlement to progress are gaining additional influence because of the impact of global challenges, such as climate change or pandemics. Actors seeking to establish themselves as leaders on climate change are rapidly enacting norms that have clear extraterritorial application, such as the European Union's clean energy requirements for corporations seeking access to its market. Should the rise of green parties and agendas continue in Europe, North America, and economically advanced Asia, the notion that long-term goals of collective survival should be given priority over benefits of cheap energy and immediate corporate profits may deal a significant blow to sovereignty understood as discretion rather than responsibility.

Such effects may be reinforced by the politics of support that is likely to be

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eventually extended in the fight against COVID-19 to the states that are unable or unwilling to produce their own vaccines. Provision of vaccines will be linked to increased transparency of the national health systems of recipient

developing countries and may result in social protest against revealed inefficiencies.

Given the current trends, it is difficult to see how the principle of sovereign equality could in the 2020s hold the ground against the ethically attractive collective entitlement to progress.

JUSTICE IN REGIONAL SECURITY?

Another long-time international political contradiction which is framed in justice terms and which the 2020s may see at least partially resolved is the one between spheres of influence claimed by great powers in the neighboring regions, on one hand, and the right asserted by smaller states in those regions as well as off-shore powers to build alliances of their choosing. This contradiction largely underlies the relationship between the United States and Russia and—to a smaller, but still significant extent—the United States and China. Each side in the debate has for decades tried to rally support behind their respective view

of great-power neighborhoods. China has gone to great lengths to assert its right not to allow Taiwan to formally proclaim independence, probe U.S. alliances in East and Southeast Asia, and to deny the U.S. Navy freedom of maneuver in the South China Sea.

In a similar way, contradictions over multilateral governance and domestic politics in post-Soviet Eurasia have been at the core of conflicts in U.S.-Russia relations over the past two decades. Moscow has utterly disliked the prospect of post-Soviet Eurasian republics getting closer to NATO and/or the European Union, which, according to the popular view, could only happen at the expense of Russia's security interests. Even NATO member Turkey, having grown into an aspiring regional leader and looking to assert its autonomy of strategic and tactical decisions, is now challenging the United States in Syria, the EU in the Mediterranean, and Russia in the South Caucasus. In their turn, the United States, the European Union, and their various partners in the neighborhoods of larger powers have been claiming that every nation is entitled to a completely unconstrained choice of alliances and—more generally—foreign policy orientations.

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Encoding these policy contradictions in terms of justice may strike some observers as an unusual and possibly gratuitous approach. And yet, the lack of progress in finding a way out of the long-standing “neighborhood” conflicts points to a deep incompat-

ibility of perspectives rooted in some fundamental aspects of each side's position. While the small and medium-size neighbors relying on support from the super-power claim the equality of rights for all states, the regional powers point out the inevitability of hierarchy and emphasize

the principle of equity of contributions to regional security. Those bigger powers claim a special role in maintaining regional security—because they are capable of making a bigger contribution to resolving regional conflicts and also because—cynically speaking—if they are upset, they can create bigger security problems for the region than smaller states.

While the concerns of smaller states with potential *diktat* by the regional powers are fully legitimate, the bigger regional powers themselves—such as China, Russia, or Turkey—also have a point when expressing their own concerns with the negative impact that alliances and partnerships involving the

United States, the EU, or other major offshore powers and smaller states may have on the regional powers' security. Choosing between equality and equity as justice principles is a particularly difficult challenge. The debate on the applicability of each of those principles has been ongoing in its current form since the end of the Cold War, and the jury of global public opinion is still out.

As the risks of conflict escalation are constantly rising because of the ongoing technological innovation in foreign policy toolkits, it is difficult to see, at the start of the 2020s, how the international community may be able to afford another decade of wrangling over contested regions. These contradictions are likely to repeat themselves even if the geopolitical landscape undergoes transformation as a result of relative strengthening or weakening of some states or the emergence of new ambitious players. It is therefore likely that in the current decade we shall see attempts to address the political consequences of the contradiction between equality and equity among players in contested regions—from East and Southeast Asia to the Middle East to post-Soviet Eurasia. Such attempts may well shape the trends in the evolution of the global

security architecture and define the relative amount of international conflict and cooperation in the new decade.

One way of bridging the gap between the two principles in the areas where

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the security interests of offshore and regional powers collide may be to concede sufficient equality to smaller states worried about the behavior of their bigger regional neighbors; but at the same time for those smaller states and their offshore superpower al-

lies to give a more equitable treatment to the regional leaders. These actual or aspiring regional leaders will need to find a form of providing acceptable security reassurances to their smaller and vulnerable neighbors—including credible rhetoric of peace, shared security challenges, increased military transparency, and fostering closer economic interdependence (instead of threatening disengagement) within respective regions. In their turn, smaller states and their offshore supporters could foster inclusive regional security solutions that would envisage the settlement of long-term conflicts and contradictions that have been creating grounds for mutual security concerns between aspiring regional leaders and their smaller neighbors. Equitable treatment of the regional leaders by their neighbors

could include, for example, refraining from fearmongering about the leaders in the domestic politics of smaller states once reasonable security reassurances have been offered.

At this time, the discussion of win-win options for regional security solutions across the vast space from Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus to the Middle East and the South China Sea appears to have reached an impasse, as the sides have firmly grounded their positions in the cherished conceptions of entitlement and justice and have been unwilling to find a middle ground combining elements of each of the competing conceptions. Over the past decade, the aspiring powers—mainly China, Russia, Turkey—have been hardening their stances, while the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia have been struggling to find a response. Their reactions have been criticized by some as weak and inconsistent, and by others as provocative. In the meantime, the conflicts around Ukraine, Syria, Taiwan, and the South China Sea have shown no signs of subsiding and at times threatened to spin out of control.

As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a strong chance that the 2020s will become the time when the stakeholders find a solution to the equality vs. equity dilemma in the context of regional

security. The relative success in finding a compromise between unconditional reciprocity and the avoidance of unfair collateral damage shows that grandstanding on what competing players may consider as immutable principles of justice may be a strategy with suboptimal outcomes.

JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Academic debates about the meaning and applications of justice to international affairs have been unfolding for decades. On the level of practical politics, these debates are likely to come to a head in the 2020s when they will play an increasingly prominent role and define key outcomes in conflict resolution and addressing global challenges. The impact of conceptions of justice on international politics is rising because of increased interest among both the aspiring and status quo players in grounding their foreign policy positions in the universal ethical principles of equality, equity, effectiveness, efficiency, and others that underlie the most influential conceptions of justice. In a situation when major global divides have finally transpired after three decades of the post-Cold War transition, justice conceptions are seen as powerful reference points that can provide players with additional leverage in adjudicating the costs of combating global challenges, providing reassurances to partners, or showing resolve to rivals.

Technological progress will not slow down, making plenty of promising new instruments of statecraft available to the leaders of technologically advanced states. However, in the past, defense usually caught up with offense relatively quickly, so that technological innovation, fast military buildups, or surprise foreign policy maneuvers did not have a lasting destabilizing effect. This dynamic is unlikely to change in the 2020s when every major competitor in the international arena is doing its best not to fall behind on any breakthrough technology that may be instrumentalized for the purposes of foreign and security policy.

Propaganda understood as intentional misleading of large and/or important audiences for political purposes has also largely run its course: it has become largely detectable, and governments and private media have achieved tangible results in designing and implementing measures that reduce

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the exposure of unwitting social groups to purposeful lies and manipulation. As a result, achieving an edge over peers in the traditional domains of competition becomes difficult, if at all possible. Innovation in foreign and security policy toolkits will thus shift to the domain of persuasion in inter-state negotiations and transnational outreach to broad social strata.

Unlike propaganda, such outreach will pivot around genuine ethical principles defining stakeholder entitlements in debates and open conflicts. It will constitute a more transparent mode of engagement with limited if any hidden agendas and yet with plenty of uncertainty about the impact of competing justice conceptions on the views and opinions of leaders and general public in stakeholder states. At the end of the day, while many of those conceptions seem mutually exclusive at first glance, they may prove to be reconcilable and even complementary in particular regional and global contexts. ●

JEREMIĆ ADDRESSES KAZAKHSTAN'S

G-Global Plenary Session

On November 19th, 2020, CIRSD President **Vuk Jeremić** addressed the plenary session of the annual conference of the G-Global platform for cooperation, co-organized by Forte Bank and the Club de Madrid.

"I'm honored to serve as a General Advisor to the International Project of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev 'G-Global.' This initiative is designed to help the world achieve what an important UN report published during my term as President of the General Assembly defined as a "more participatory system of global economic governance." It was in this spirit that I organized a high-level thematic debate at the UN in April 2013 focusing on how significant economic actors, including IFIs as well as informal groupings such as the G20, may interact with the rest of the world in the future. One of the conclusions of the event was that the General Assembly, like the G-Global initiative, can provide inclusive platforms for all developed and developing countries to exchange views and share information on common economic concerns. Today, we face a crisis that is even greater than the one we faced then, and that's a reason the G-Global platform remains important. Vaccine availability is going to be a challenging geopolitical game because all countries have the same goal: to provide and distribute the vaccine before others. This could easily cause devastating consequences around the globe."

– Vuk Jeremić

The welcoming address to the G-Global annual conference was made by **Krymbek Kuserbayev**, State Secretary of Kazakhstan. Other plenary session speakers included **Bandar M. H. Hajjar**, President of the Islamic Development Bank; Croatia's former president **Ivo Josipović**; Belgium's former prime minister **Yves Leterme**; and Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Rae Kwon Chung**.

