

A NEW APPROACH TO GLOBAL SECURITY: PIVOTAL MIDDLE POWERS AND GLOBAL POLITICS

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Summary

Unlike the Cold War period, in the post-Cold War era, there has been an inclination toward having an independent and active foreign policy from the regional power centres. By introducing a new power category in international politics, the pivotal middle power, this study argues that pivotal middle powers can play critical roles in establishing a new global world order, if they can act together in global politics focusing on case-to-case approach, in other words, niche diplomacy. Recently, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) and India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) have been the two examples of the niche approach from pivotal middle powers. The new activism of pivotal middle powers in post-Cold War global politics can be located in globalization and global world order context and in future, if successful, such initiatives could pave the way a new understanding of global politics especially with regard to economic and security issues.

Keywords

World order, global security, pivotal middle powers, North-South relations, developing countries.

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the studies of international relations have been preoccupied with the issue of how, or in what form, the new international global order will appear. This debate, coupled with global terrorism, the disintegration of states and increasing nationalism, has changed its direction towards a new construction of international theory. However, the 9/11 attacks on US soil has brought about the concerns of the

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excluded third world and their security issues to the forefront more substantially than ever. Religious fundamentalism and the increasing domination of the American unilateralist approach toward international relations have been debated in the light of new developments in the international arena, but with less focus on the imperatives of third world.

This study aims to bring a different perspective on the issue of building a new global world order and international security with a special reference to the role of middle-sized states in international politics. Since Thucydides, the traditional focus of international politics, as Waltz aptly said, has been on the great powers.² This has meant that the role of middle-sized states has either been ignored or downplayed. With this in mind, this study will try to address the question of middle-sized state influence in international politics in the post-Cold War era, with specific reference to two initiatives namely the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) and the New Agenda Coalition (NAC).

It can be argued that international security is the ultimate aim of any international world order. Therefore, any proposal to establish a new form of global order has to primarily deal with global security. In today's globalizing world, when dealing with international security, one also needs to take societal considerations, such as economic development and AIDS, into account. This has become specifically true after the experience that world has suffered after the 9/11 attacks, which exposed that sending soldiers to insecure areas and spending a great deal of money on military and security are insufficient to guarantee a safer world. In a world where international terrorism has become the main threat to global society, without societal dimensions, which legitimise and support global terrorism being taken into account, it is unlikely that the efforts to win "the war on terror" will bring lasting solutions.

Aware of the sensitiveness of this issue in global politics, this study argues that if the international community intends to win the war on terror they must cooperate with states (pivotal middle powers) that are influential in their respective regions; and through them the international community must start to develop an approach to global security from below. So far, the top-down approaches to global security have failed and produced more insecurity in the global arena.

² Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York, Random House, 1979, p.72.

This study considers the pivotal middle power to be a key state that is able and willing to project power and influence developments beyond its borders-regionally and internationally- and one to determine the fate of its region to a certain extent. This study will also identify a pivotal middle power by its active involvement in security issues such as peacekeeping and peacemaking operations and its leading role with regard to regional economic development and integration.

During the Cold War, literature on (pivotal) middle powers viewed them as status quo states. They had been examined in a context in which “their own power and influence depend vitally upon international stability”.³ As pivotal middle powers more focused on international stability and promoting international norms, which are generally defined in favour of superpowers, many started to think and see the role of pivotal middle powers in this context. According to this understanding, the most the pivotal middle powers gain from the promotion and expansion of existing international norms, and the most they lose if order breaks down.

It is clear that pivotal middle powers in today’s global order act according to their own interests. The questions are: how is it possible for them to act together on global politics? And what are the limits of cooperation among them? To answer these questions one needs to recognize that all pivotal middle powers have different internal and international environments. By the virtue of their location, each of the pivotal middle power has to face different regional and internal problems. This affects their geopolitical importance, degree of integration into the global economy and thus the possible role that they can play at international level.⁴ Most of the pivotal middle powers, due to having spent most of their time searching for solutions in their local and internal problems, either lack sufficient time to think of and formulate a foreign policy directed at global issues; or if it is formulated, they cannot find appropriate channels to voice and implement those approaches.

³ Fen Osler Hampson, “A New Role for Middle Powers in Regional Conflict Resolution?” in Brian L. Job (ed), *The Insecurity Dilemma, National Security of Third World States*, London, Lynne Rienner, 1992, p.194.

⁴ Andrew Hurrell, “Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for would-be Great Powers?”, *International Affairs*, Vol 82, No 1, 2006, p.4-5.

1. Pivotal Middle Powers and Global Politics

Pivotal Middle Power is a relatively new concept consisting of some old and new theories. Before analysing and defining the possible areas where the pivotal middle powers could play a critical role, the concept of the “pivotal middle power” should be clarified. It is a combination of the pivotal state and middle power. To be pivotal, a state must, at a minimum, be physically impressive, have a large population, be strategically located, and possess economic power. In addition, a pivotal state will have the “capacity to affect regional and international stability”.⁵ Its collapse would result in “transboundary mayhem”, but its prosperity and stability “would bolster its region’s economic vitality”.⁶

To be a middle power, in addition to size, population, and geo-strategic location, a state must have middle-rank economic and military capabilities and emphasize multilateral diplomacy and involvement in international organizations.⁷ Furthermore, a middle power could become active in second-order issues such as peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. Being a “good international citizen” and complying with the general interests are also regarded as key behavioural patterns of middle powers. In world affairs, middle powers act as catalysts, facilitators and managers.⁸

Pivotal state theorists do not emphasise the military capability of such states. The middle power approach, by contrast, pays special attention to military capability because middle powers can play a leading role in security issues both at regional and global levels. Pivotal states are, by contrast, important for their regions’ economic vitality and development.⁹

The theoretical basis of this study lies in the combination of the concepts “middle power” and “pivotal state”, to produce the “pivotal middle power” concept. The lack of military power in the case of pivotal states and the regional economic importance of middle powers are one of

⁵ Chase, Robert, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, “Pivotal States and US Strategy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 75, no.1, (January-February 1996), p.37.

⁶ *Ibid* p.37.

⁷ Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Relations*, New York, St.Martins Press, 1984.

⁸ See Andrew F Cooper & Higgott, Richard A. and Nossal, Richard K., *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1993; and Andrew F. Cooper (ed), *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War*, London, Macmillan, 1997

⁹ Chase, Robert, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy (Eds), *The Pivotal States, A New Framework for US Policy in the Developing World*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1999, p..9.

the reasons why the two are merged. The other reason is that the pivotal states concept is mainly formulated to propose a new framework for US policy in the developing world. This concept is, therefore, an analysis from “above”. The middle power concept is, by contrast, based on a state centric approach designed to evaluate the role of the middle powers in the international system and to put forward an analysis from “below”.

The distinguishing feature of pivotal middle powers is their ability to play a role at regional and international levels. Classical middle powers such as Canada and Australia, due to their geographical locations have had a limited role to play at the regional level. In the case of Canada, the regional domination of the US as a superpower prevents it from playing a leading role regarding economic and security issues in North America. For Australia, being a separate continent, usually forces it to play its role at international level as opposed to the regional level. Therefore, the classical middle power approach is not sufficient to explain current middle-sized states activities in global politics. Moreover, pivotal middle powers challenged traditional modes of conducting foreign policy using new kinds of “soft power” and applying new kinds of diplomacy. As Hurrell¹⁰ rightly argues, this is an important and distinguishing point of PMPs from what some call liberal modernist middle powers such as Canada and Australia, whose foreign policies have been built around the promotion of the existing system and utilise the opportunities offered.

Pivotal middle powers are, furthermore, regional powers. They occupy the “heartland” of their regions. The role of the pivotal middle powers cannot, however, be limited to their regions. It is somehow a mixture of both. Another feature of pivotal middle powers is their ability to link between the regional and international issues.¹¹ They are aware of the fact that a regional issue could easily have repercussions at the international level and *vice versa*. In order to understand fully, the role of pivotal middle powers in current global politics should be located within the North-South relations in general and South-South relations in particular.

Until recently, the levels of priority given to the South-South or inter-developing countries’ relations have fluctuated. While it was a foreign

¹⁰ Hurrell, *op.cit.*, p.4.

¹¹ For a case study on the link between regional security and world order in African context see Mehmet Ozkan, “Regional Security and Global World Order: The Case of South Africa in Africa”, *Research Journal of International Studies*, Issue 5, (May 2006), pp.79-100.

policy priority of developing countries in the mid-1990s, South-South relations dropped down the agenda to become more of an ideological talking point than a policy action plan at the turn of the century.¹² More recently, south-south relations seem to have acquired a fresh breath of life and began rejuvenating through forums such as the IBSA, G-20+, and NAC. First, this was only made possible with the involvement and leadership role of pivotal middle powers from different regions. Secondly, such grouping is a product of almost two decades of learning and experiences of developing countries within several forums, such as GATT and WTO.¹³

The interconnectedness among different regions, as many researchers have recognized, is a response to globalisation.¹⁴ Globalisation as a threat and opportunity needs to be problematized from the international security perspective as well as the international global order. The connections between international security and global world order have been analysed by Buzan and Wæver¹⁵, emphasising the role of regions (in their words *regional security complexes*) in global politics. Their main argument is that “since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes”.¹⁶

In recent years, South-South relations have been most successful in multilateral fora on a diversity of issues ranging from trade to security. The undisputed leadership of South Africa and Brazil in this venture have pioneered this collaboration. As a result of this, the Countries of Southern Cone of South America and their counterparts in Africa have found common ground and effectively collaborated to influence various outcomes. So far, such collaborations have been in a limited a number of countries in the developing world. It is perhaps because of the fact that experiences indicate smaller, and more focused coalitions would be a better

¹² Lyal White, “South Atlantic Relations: From Bilateral Trade Relations to Multilateral Coalition Building”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol 17, No 3, (October 2004), p.526.

¹³ Amrita Narlikar and Diana Tussie, “The G20 at the Cancun Ministerial: Developing Countries and Their Evolving Coalitions in the WTO”, *The World Economy*, Vol 27, No 7, (July 2004), p.948.

¹⁴ For example: Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Co., Lynne Rienner, 1998, pp.113-115 and Peter J Katzenstein, “Regionalism in Comparative Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol 31, No 2, 1996, pp.126-127.

¹⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.3-5.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.4.

arrangement to be more influential.¹⁷ With fewer members and greater accountability, the task of setting objectives would be easier and relatively more constructive. Whatever the reason may be, south-south collaborations have been limited to African and Latin American countries, with the only exception of India located in Asia.

With the globalization process, the protectionist inclinations of the Europe and the US can lead pivotal middle powers to act together for their interest in economic realm. While this certainly created ad hoc groupings already, such as the G20 in the WTO Cancun meeting, theoretically speaking the two things might pave the way for further cooperation among the pivotal middle powers. First are the worries defined as not knowing what the only superpower might do. As it is argued, concentrated power invites distrust because it is so easily misused,¹⁸ therefore worries can come from the systemic character of current unipolar global politics. Secondly, there is a current world ‘disorder’ in a sense that the rules are not set and open for major changes. A new international order has yet to be established. The incentive for the collection of the benefits of ‘disorder’ can be another reason for the pivotal middle powers to act together. This last point, while it creates uncertainty, might even give them more confidence and a belief that they can actually play a large role in defining the new roles of global order. For pivotal middle powers, there seems to be two options to follow: balancing (soft or hard), or bandwagoning. The latter may seem a less demanding and a more rewarding strategy than the former one, requiring less effort and extracting lower cost while promising concrete result.¹⁹ Balancing might bear fruit in long run, while bandwagoning can be productive in the short run.

Among these choices, it is unlikely that pivotal middle powers will choose bandwagoning. Although this does not mean to completely rule out such a strategy, however, as Hurrell²⁰ aptly argues the foreign policy inclination of the pivotal middle powers are directly related to the systemic concentration of power and does form a very important element to contain the power of the United States. If that is the case, the bandwagoning

¹⁷ Peter Draper and Razeen Sally, “Developing-Country Coalitions in Multilateral Trade Negotiations”, LSE International Trade Policy Unit, May 2005, p.17,
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/internationalTradePolicyUnit/Events/May2005/draper-sallyjnu1.doc>

¹⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War”, *International Security*, Vol 25, No 1 (Summer 2000), p.29.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.38.

²⁰ Hurrell, *op.cit.*, p.16.

strategy is not preferable to balancing. According to Paul, for the second-tier powers hard balancing, such as establishing military alliances, is no longer appealing since the superpower, at least for now, is not a threat to their very existence.²¹ However, he argues that soft balancing²² behaviour occurs, among others, when “the dominant state is a major source of public goods in both the economic and security areas that cannot be simply replaced”.²³ One of the main appearances of soft balancing is economic strengthening among the members and entangling diplomacy.²⁴ For the pivotal middle powers, developing economic relations among themselves through bilateral trade and special agreements are highly desirable and probably will be the best way to start, if they wish to choose balancing rather than bandwagoning. Using international institutions and *ad hoc* diplomatic manoeuvres in trade negotiations, cross-regional agreements are also another option that pivotal middle powers might be attracted to.

2. IBSA Dialogue Forum

On the 6th of June, 2003, the foreign ministers of Brazil, South Africa and India met in Brasilia to set up the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) after informal talks between their respective heads of state during the G-8 meeting in Evian. The basis for these talks was the shared characteristics of these three semi-peripheral powers. All are strong democracies, from three different regions of the developing world, and have a dynamic engagement with global multilateral initiatives.²⁵ Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Lula da Silva of Brazil and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India formally launched IBSA during the UN General Assembly in September 2003. The leaders of the three states have consciously advanced themselves as campaigners for an emerging developing world. The IBSA initiative is motivated in the following way in the declaration: “In the past few years, the importance and necessity of a process of dialogue amongst developing nations and countries of the South

²¹ T.V. Paul, “Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy”, *International Security*, Vol 30, No 1 (Summer 2005), p.71.

²² Soft balancing is defined as using non-military tools, such as international institutions, economic statecraft and diplomatic arrangements in order to delay, complicate, and increase the cost of using that extraordinary power by a unipolar leader without challenging it directly. See Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States”, *International Security*, Vol 30, No 1 (Summer 2005), p.17-18.

²³ Paul, *op.cit.*, p.59.

²⁴ Rape, *op.cit.*, p.36-37.

²⁵ Darlene Miller, “South Africa and the IBSA Initiative: Constraints and Challenges”, *Africa Insight*, Vol 35, No 1, (April 2005), p.53.

has emerged”.²⁶ Different from previous third world initiatives that aimed alternative and independent multilateral orders; this does not seek to create new geopolitical divisions. Instead the IBSA initiative consists of a group that, in the words of Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, “spread[s] goodwill and the message of peace” and is “not against anyone”.²⁷

South African trade officials have sought to give substance to South-South cooperation through the promotion of special trading arrangements, with Brazil to the west, India and China to the east and the rest of the Africa to the north. Following this, was the creation of the IBSA Trilateral Commission in the aftermath of their participation in the G-8 summit of 2003. It aimed to formalize relations and provide a forum for coordinating strategy between these leading industrial countries of the south. It is also a strategic partnership between three geostrategically located and economically emerging powers to make globalization a positive force for the development of South and “to make the international system multipolar”.²⁸

Generally speaking the South-South cooperation has lost its ideological aspects as it was claimed before. Instead, a pragmatic emphasis on the concrete focal points of the issues where pivotal middle powers or key countries from South may collaborate came to the fore. In the current world, the foreign policy of pivotal middle powers entails no single and consistent approach. The ambivalent shifting between bilateral engagements with the USA, on the one hand, and robust G-20 negotiations on the other, demonstrates a pragmatic, multi-pronged approach with the principle aim of enhancing the national economies’ investment opportunities. However, they always look for ways to benefit from globalisation, especially economically, by enhancing their influence on decision-making bodies globally. Although they are preoccupied with economic concerns rather any political and security ones, the IBSA does not have a fully economic agenda. While it focuses on economic issues primarily, understanding of cooperation in the IBSA documents range from peace and security, globalisation, the reform of the UN to terrorism. Therefore, the possible impact of the IBSA now and in the future should not be underestimated.

²⁶ Clause 2, Brasilia Declaration, 6 June 2003, http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/brasil_declaration.htm

²⁷ R Devraj, “India, Brazil, South Africa Ready to Lead Global South”, IPS-Inter Press Service, 2004.

²⁸ Abdul Nafey, “IBSA Forum: The Rise of ‘New’ Non-Alignment”, *India Quarterly*, Vol 61, No 1, (January-March 2005), p.1.

Put succinctly, the IBSA initiative should be seen as an endeavour to ratchet up three pivotal states' global bargaining power. This initiative is guided by the desire for cooperation between states that enjoy similar positions in global politics. The forum builds on already existing and fairly strong ties between the IBSA members. Economically, the IBSA might be seen as a concentrated effort by key states in the developing world to push the G-20+ agenda. While they recognize the expansion of economic growth, employment and social development, they

“...expressed their concern that large parts of the world have not benefited from globalisation. They agreed that globalisation must become a positive force for change for all peoples, and must benefit the largest number of countries”.²⁹

Bearing this in mind, the key objective of the IBSA has become to make the international economic system responsive to the needs of the developing world and to advance the global governance that is required, and crucial, if globalisation is to be advanced with equity. Put simply, making neo-liberalism work for all is a central message.³⁰ Secondly, before they initiated the IBSA, there have been negotiations for a fixed preference agreement between Mercosur³¹ and SACU³² as a means toward establishing a future free-trade agreement for some time, as well as a preferential trading deal between India and Mercosur on reducing tariffs on selected products in bilateral trade that was concluded in January 2004. In this regard, establishment of the IBSA has moved one step further from the already existing economic relations between the three states.

Politically, the reform of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is of special priority of the IBSA. The Brasilia Declaration stressed “the necessity of expanding the Security Council in

²⁹ Clause 13, Brasilia Declaration, 6 June 2003

³⁰ Ian Taylor, “South Africa, the G-20, the G-20+ and the IBSA Dialogue Forum: Implications for Future Global Governance”, paper presented at United Nations University conference on ‘The Ideas-Institutional Nexus Project: The Case of the G-20’, Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 19-21, 2004, p.17, available at <http://cigionline.ca/publications/docs/argentina.taylor.pdf>.

³¹ Mercosur is a trading zone between Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, founded in 1991 by the Treaty of Asuncion, which was later amended and updated by the 1994 Treaty of Ouro Preto. Its purpose is to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, peoples, and currency.

³² SACU is a custom union among the countries of Southern Africa. It came into existence in 1969 with the signature of the Customs Union Agreement between Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. It entered into force on March 1, 1970, thereby replacing the Customs Union Agreement of 1910.

both permanent and non-permanent member categories, with the participation of developing countries in both categories”.³³ In the New Delhi Action Plan, the IBSA members stated that the UN Security Council, as configured today, is not representative of present-day realities. They expressed support for the reform of the United Nations to make it more democratic and responsive to the priorities of its member states, particularly those of the developing countries that constitute the vast majority of its membership. They reaffirmed that the decisions of the Security Council should be seen as serving the interests of the global community and agreed to jointly explore innovative solutions to the issues relating to the reform of the Security Council in order to accelerate the decision making process.³⁴

The IBSA Dialogue Forum has shown interest in global peace and security by primarily focusing on human development, the fight against poverty, and measures to promote a better quality of life that, according to them, “should underpin and provide for greater guarantees for international peace and stability”.³⁵ However, they have also stressed the importance of multilateral disarmament agreements that should remain the primary institutions and mechanisms, in the international community’s endeavour to achieve common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Interestingly, although located far away from the Middle East, the IBSA members have reiterated their support for efforts to find a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The three countries urged an immediate resumption of dialogue on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the Arab League Peace Initiative and the Quartet roadmap so as to achieve a peaceful and lasting solutions thereby ending the current cycle of violence. They specially affirmed their full support to the vision of the settlement postulated in the UN Security Council Resolution 1397 of two sovereign states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secured and recognised borders.³⁶

Overall, the IBSA initiative is on its way to become the “voice” of the developing world. Started with economic imperatives, the political and

³³ Clause 4.

³⁴ India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum Trilateral Commission Meeting, New Delhi Agenda for Cooperation and Plan of Action, 5 March 2004, clause 5-6, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2004/ibsa0305.htm>.

³⁵ *Ibid*, clause 7.

³⁶ Rio de Janeiro Ministerial Communiqué India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, 30 March 2006, Clause 28, <http://www.brazil.org.uk/newsandmedia/pr20060330.html>.

security related issues are coming to the table as they go along. Economically, *if* it holds together, it could create a market of 1.2 billion people and amount to a US\$1.2 trillion domestic market and foreign trade of US\$300 billion.³⁷ Politically, if they could galvanize the developing world, they could exert their influence on global politics and thus will certainly open another angle to analyse global politics where pivotal middle powers *might* play a crucial role.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum could be seen as a “unique” development in international politics, because it is a transcontinental agreement among three far-flung members of the developing world. The IBSA seems to have less common political ground than any average regional organization; however, the three countries have linked what they do have in common, namely socio-economic conditions and political positions within their respective regions, to promote their internal strengths. In order to tailor a mutually beneficial framework, the IBSA can be effective if the organization focuses on commonly held issues and works to realize goals within spelled-out categories. The IBSA has been, and will likely continue to be, an increasingly successful political format representing the interests of these three emerging regional behemoths with worldwide responsibilities in the years to come.³⁸

3. The New Agenda Coalition (NAC)

The historical tradition of medium-sized states serving as catalysts for global change is alive and dynamic in post-Cold War environment.³⁹ It was in this spirit that on the 9th of June, 1998, in Dublin that the New Agenda Coalition was initiated by a joint ministerial declaration of the foreign ministers of eight middle-sized and like-minded non-nuclear states. The coalition consisted of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden. These states “have considered the continued threat to humanity represented by the perspective of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States”.⁴⁰

³⁷ Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.20.

³⁸ Kaia Lai, “India-Brazil-South Africa: The Southern Trade Powerhouse Makes its Debut”, *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, 15 March 2006, www.coha.org.

³⁹ See Darach MacFhionnbhairr, Patricia Lewis, Marina Laker and Luiz F. Machado, “Constructing a New Agenda”, in Joseph Cirincione (ed), *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, London, Routledge, 2000, p.11.

⁴⁰ Clause 1, “Nuclear-Weapons-Free World: The Need for a New Agenda”, Joint Declaration, 9 June 1998, Declaration can be found at *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue No. 27, June 1998, <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd27/27state.htm>

They declared that their first aim is to secure a “commitment” from the nuclear states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accord with their goal “to abolish nuclear weapons”.⁴¹

The NAC was created in the aftermath of the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in the spring of 1998. Its eight original members decided that the nuclear weapons states had not taken the necessary steps to fulfil the obligations set out in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), specifically Article VI. This article obligates signed states to act in the earliest time possible toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

While the New Agenda Initiative was governmental in its genesis, its proposals for the most part are based on the current developments and the analysis that has emerged over the past number of years. They have emerged through developments such as the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and a broader debate among governments and in civil society. There are clear parallels between the approach of the New Agenda Coalition and those nongovernmental organizations that have been at pains to reinvigorate the nuclear disarmament agenda.⁴² Of particular importance in this connection are the organizations that have coalesced around the Middle Powers Initiative, which brings together an organization with diverse approaches but an overreaching commitment to the resuscitation of the nuclear disarmament agenda. Started in 1998, the Middle Power Initiative also aims at the worldwide reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons.⁴³

The new agenda shakes off the old agenda, by jettisoning some of the rigidity of the old agenda⁴⁴ - for example, the proposal to establish a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmaments coming from one side,

⁴¹ See the Statement by Irish Foreign Minister David Andrews, Dublin, 9 June 1998, on the Occasion of the Launching of the New Agenda Coalition.
<http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd27/27state.htm>

⁴² Darach MacFhionnbhairr, Patricia Lewis, Marina Laker and Luiz F. Machado, “Constructing New a Agenda”, in Joseph Cirincione (ed), *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, London, Routledge, 2000, p.270.

⁴³ See for details www.middlepowers.org.

⁴⁴ Darach MacFhionnbhairr, Patricia Lewis, Marina Laker and Luiz F. Machado, “Constructing New a Agenda”, in Joseph Cirincione (ed), *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, London, Routledge, 2000, p.271.

while the other side maintains that only the P-5 should negotiate these issues.

The new agenda approach forms a middle ground. There is fluidity because of its plurilateral, multilateral, and unilateral approaches as well as the inclusion of the old approaches. Although there is much technical work involved, this new approach shows considerable strategic thoughts. It is fleshing out many of the key objectives to what everyone rhetorically agrees to: nuclear disarmament.⁴⁵

The New Agenda Coalition submitted a resolution to the UN General Assembly in 1998 calling upon the Nuclear Weapons States “to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and without delay to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons”. It was adopted by a vote of 114 nations in favour, 18 opposed, and 38 abstentions.⁴⁶

The resolution that was submitted by the NAC members only asked for negotiations to begin-without any time bound framework as to when they have to be concluded. Not only did they reject the resolution, three Western NWS campaigned around the world for countries to oppose it and forced Slovenia, a NATO aspirant, to drop out of the New Agenda Coalition.⁴⁷ The US sent an emissary to NATO headquarters in Brussels to instruct NATO countries to vote against it.⁴⁸

The implementation of the NPT is reviewed every five years at a major conference held at UN headquarters in New York. During the sixth review conference that took place in 2000, the progress on disarmament negotiations was very slow. Both bilaterally between the United States and the Russian Federation, and multilaterally in the Conference on Disarmament, the levels of discussions were not going the way that it was initially expected. At the same time, the rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the US Senate, showed a strong indication that

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Douglas Roche, *Bread not Bombs: A Political Agenda for Social Justice*, Alberta, University of Alberta Press, 1999, p.30.

⁴⁷ Because of strong pressure from Washington, Slovenia subsequently pulled out of NAC. See Rebecca Johnson, “The NPT Review: Disaster Averted”, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol 56, no 4, (July/August 2000), pp.52-57.

⁴⁸ Roche, *op.cit.*, p.30.

negotiations were about to breakdown. The importance of complying with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is that it slows the nuclear arms race because testing is considered necessary in developing these weapons.⁴⁹ It was at this point, by the virtue of New Agenda Coalition members that a central view was brought in and eventually compromises were reached on meaningful forward action that was acceptable to the nuclear weapon states.⁵⁰ The outcome of the NPT Review Conference in the spring of 2000 was a positive development and inspired hope. The appeal made by the New Agenda Coalition was largely reflected in the final outcome of the conference. The result showed the importance of consistent work focussed on clear and realistic goals. The achieved important element was the reaffirmation of both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states to the goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. At the Conference, the five nuclear weapons states were naturally those who made the most important commitments. A major step forward was the "unequivocal undertaking" to achieve a total elimination of nuclear weapons. Although there was no indicated date/s by which that goal might be achieved, the political commitment of the all states is regarded as a first steps towards success in eliminating nuclear weapons ultimately.

Although the New Agenda Coalition came together only in 1998 and the coalition officially consisted of seven (initially it was eight with Slovenia) non-nuclear nations- Ireland, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden- it reportedly enjoyed the support of about 120 of the 155 non-nuclear states that attended the NPT 30-Year review conference in May 2000.⁵¹ Even at the initial stage, the NAC enjoyed the support of the European Parliament.⁵² According to some,⁵³ the New Agenda Coalition "offers some hope" in order to eliminate nuclear weapons, because it has been gathering political momentum.

⁴⁹ "The Big One", *Canada & the World Background*, Vol. 66 Issue 4 (January 2001), p.12.

⁵⁰ Derek Boothby, "Disarmament: Success and Failures", in Jean E. Krasno (ed.), *The United Nations, Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, London, Lynne Rienner, 2004, p.202.

⁵¹ Tad Daley, "The New Agenda Coalition for Nuclear Abolition", *Humanist*, , Vol. 61 Issue 2, (March-April 2001), p.11; see also Anthony DiFilippo, "Japanese Security Policy and the New Agenda Coalition – Tokyo's Nuclear Disarmament Dilemma", paper presented at 2002 International Studies Association Convention, New Orleans, March 23-27, 2002.

⁵² See "European Parliament Resolution on the New Agenda Coalition on Nuclear Disarmament", 19 November 1998, www.wagingpeace.org accessed 24 May 2004.

⁵³ For example see, Douglas Roche, "Our Greatest Threat, The Coming Nuclear Crisis", *Commonweal*, March 11, 2005, p.26

It should be noted that the most impressive fact about the New Agenda Coalition has been its ability to capture the attention of the nuclear weapons states by challenging them to respond. Given that the NAC has existed for only a few years makes this even more impressive. Because the NAC states believe that the nuclear weapons states have not been living up to their responsibilities mandated by the NPT, it has decided to pressure them to commit to a nuclear disarmament process. This pressure achieved some amount of success at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, since the nuclear weapons states eventually came to accept the NAC's imperative of the need to move with commitment toward nuclear disarmament.

Initiated with ambitious goals, the New Agenda Coalition has secured a commitment during the NPT Review Conference in 2000 from nuclear states. They proposed 13 steps and played a determining role in 2000. But in 2005 due to disintegration of the New Agenda Coalition, they would not put forward their agendas.⁵⁴ One of the reasons why the NAC countries failed to achieve a considerable progress is that international environment after the September 11, 2001 events had substantially changed. Fighting against terrorism indicates an unknown future. The belief that someone will employ weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is one of the main consequences of the 9/11 events.⁵⁵ Thus, nuclear weapon states are unwilling to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in this international environment.

In the international arena in last few years, we are beginning to see new creative partnership and new tools for diplomacy that brings like-minded states together. The groups of like-minded states that have been forming over a number of issues can be very constructive and progressive.⁵⁶ The United Nations is a forum where these like-minded states can play an important role in this partnership. However, one must keep in mind that internationally there are many other forums where they can be used.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See Rebecca Johnson, "Politics and Protection: Why the 2005 NPT Review Conference Failed", *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue 80, Autumn 2005.

⁵⁵ Berhanykun Andemicael and John Mathiason; foreword by Hans Blix, *Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction: Prospects for Effective International Verification*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.xii.

⁵⁶ Darach MacFhionnbhairr, Patricia Lewis, Marina Laker and Luiz F. Machado, "Constructing New a Agenda", in Joseph Cirincione (ed), *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, London, Routledge, 2000, p.272.

⁵⁷ Recently WTO has been one of those forums where partnerships of like-minded states came to fore, see Andrew Hurrell and Amrita Narlikar, "A New Politics of Confrontation? Brazil and India in Multilateral Trade Negotiations", *Global Society*, Vol 20, No 4, (October 2006), p.420.

The New Agenda Coalition should just be seen as one of such initiatives that aim to reach a non-proliferation goal. This is one of the best examples of “niche” diplomacy that uses the UN as a forum in acting together. The impact and influence of the NAC on nuclear disarmament in the future will depend on the success of the advocacy of the concrete proposals in shaping concerned governments’ approaches to nuclear weapons. This is yet to be certain.

Conclusion

In the current global economic and political system, pivotal middle powers seem to possess a range of economic and political power resources, thus they have some capacity to contribute to the production of international order, regionally and globally. They share the belief that they are entitled to play a more influential role in world affairs.⁵⁸ In light of this, the IBSA Dialogue Forum and the NAC groupings should be seen as the expression of such a belief and aspiration.

As it is well-known, aspirations alone are not enough in any endeavour in international affairs and it requires a purpose and project. The new undertakings of pivotal middle powers would be more successful if shaped in a coherent purpose and project in their foreign policies. Bearing these difficulties in mind, it seems that the only way they can cooperate is through what some calls “niche diplomacy”. It simply indicates kind of co-operations that are based on one issue and from time to time brings pivotal middle powers together issue by issue.

In the wake of 11 September, a chastened North appears more willing to consider development concerns of the South.⁵⁹ In this environment, the so-called pivotal middle powers would play the key role in defining the South’s concerns for poverty eradication, debt relief and the other problems of the South. Most importantly, the pivotal middle powers can herald a new balance of power in international politics if their “soft balancing” is being turned to the hard one in future. They have the capacity and possibility to do so, only if they act together.

⁵⁸ Hurrell, *op.cit.*, p.2.

⁵⁹ Chris Alden and Garth le Pere, *South Africa’s Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy-From Reconciliation to Revival?*, Adelphi Paper 362, London, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003, p.75.

As argued by many there is a growing problem of representation in current decision-making process, thus a legitimacy problem exists at the very heart of international institutions and order. It can also be argued that the way governance and multilateralism are understood is not democratic in essence. In fact, the current structure of international political economy can be defined as ‘institutionalist’ in essence, but far from having a ‘multilateralist’ perspective.⁶⁰ It operates within and through “multilateral institutions” that are established over the years, but the enforcement to behave multilaterally is always applied more to the junior partners in these institutions than to the senior ones. Against this background, a revisionist approach of pivotal middle powers can only be taken seriously by the main player. Historically, challenges to the legitimacy of international order have rarely resulted from the weak; they have to come from those states with the capacity and willingness within the existing system. The IBSA Dialogue Forum can be a pioneering organization in promoting more representative global system, if the group members act together in WTO, G20 and other useful institutions.

Turkey as a pivotal middle power needs to follow these new alignments in global politics closely. In the last few years, Turkey has been developing its relations with those co-called pivotal middle power states such as Brazil, South Africa and India. As it has been shown above, particularly in the case of IBSA, the pivotal middle powers tend to use their regional groupings as a step, or advancement in their relations with the others.

Today, we live in a world where security-economy-politics has become a triangle. Without one of them, it would not be appropriate to analyse or fully understand the others. The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) came into existence with the aim of ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction globally but overall it has to deal with every aspect of international security to which it might focus in the years to come. The India, Brazil and South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA), however, based its existence on economic imperatives from the beginning to represent the South and advance the agenda of developing world in the global economic system. After three years of existence, judging from the communiqués released, the IBSA has broadened its agenda towards one

⁶⁰ Richard Higgott, “Multilateralism and the Limits of Global Governance”, paper presented at United Nations University conference on ‘Learning from the Crisis: Where do we go for Global Governance?’, Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 19-21, 2004, p.35.

that is more than *merely* economic. International peace and security, globalisation, reform in global institutions (such as the UN), terrorism, social development and the fight against diseases such as AIDS might occupy the agenda of the IBSA more frequently. If such groupings can hold together, without distractions from the third parties, as Taylor⁶¹ aptly argues, it might have interesting and important implications for global politics; especially on those related to global order and security. However, if the activities of such groupings show nothing else, they show that the prospect for innovation and variety in coalition building has a much greater possibility than the literature on the subject has led us to believe. This is likely to be so because of what some call “the intellectual and entrepreneurial leadership” of pivotal middle powers.⁶²

⁶¹ Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.20.

⁶² See Richard A. Higgott and Andrew F. Cooper, “Middle Power Leadership and coalition building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations”, *International Organization*, Vol 44, No 4 (Autumn 1990), p.600.