Week 8

Collective Security and Sovereignty in the 20th Century

1. Emergence of Collective Security as a Peace Mechanism

- ☐ **Definition**: Collective security emerged in the 1930s to replace the "balance of power" approach. Rather than individual states forming alliances, it aimed to create a united front against any aggressor. It was first implemented through the League of Nations after WWI and later strengthened by the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to prevent large-scale conflicts. **One for All, All for One',** Security as a Primary Goal

2. League of Nations' Structure and Limitations

- **Framework**: The League of Nations' Covenant included:
    - o **Article 10**: Members promised to protect each other's sovereignty.
    - o **Article 16**: Imposed economic and financial sanctions on aggressors.
- **Weaknesses**:
    - o **Lack of Military Force**: The League did not have a standing military force and required unanimous decisions for action, making enforcement difficult. o **U.S. Absence & Disagreements**: The League's strength was further weakened by the U.S. decision not to join and policy conflicts between France and Britain.
- **Major Failures**:
    - o **Japan in Manchuria (1931-1932)**: Japan ignored League condemnation for its invasion and withdrew.
    - o **Italy in Ethiopia (1935)**: Sanctions on Italy were ineffective, allowing it to annex Ethiopia and exposing the League's weaknesses.

3. Establishment and Evolution of the United Nations (UN)

- **UN Charter (1945)**: The UN was created to address the League's limitations by establishing the Security Council (SC), where five permanent members (USA, USSR, China, UK, France) have veto power to manage global security.
- **Key Articles**:
    - o **Article 41**: Allows the SC to impose economic sanctions.
    - o **Article 42**: Allows the SC to authorize military force when necessary.
- **Cold War Complications**: Tensions between the USA and USSR led to frequent SC inaction due to the veto system.
- **Example of SC Action**:
    - o **Korean War (1950-1953)**: The UN authorized military action to support South Korea when the USSR was temporarily absent from the SC vote.
    - o **Collective Defense**: Due to UN limitations, nations increasingly relied on regional defense organizations like NATO and the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War.

4. Cold War and Limitations of UN Collective Security
- **Ideological Divide**: The Cold War's competing ideologies led to Security Council gridlock, making regional alliances and arms races more common.
- **First Gulf War (1990-1991)**: Though the UN managed to authorize force against Iraq, later conflicts revealed limitations, and the UN largely shifted its role from conflict prevention to peacekeeping.

5. Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and Global Challenges

- **State Sovereignty**: A core principle in international relations, sovereignty gives states control over their internal affairs. However, globalization, environmental issues, and migration increasingly challenge traditional views of sovereignty.
- **Self-Determination**: Post-WWI, this principle encouraged independence movements worldwide, especially after WWII. It has, however, created risks in states with diverse ethnic groups, often leading to instability (e.g., in former colonies and Soviet states).

6. Micronationalism and Fragmentation

- **Definition**: Micronationalism refers to small ethnic or cultural groups seeking independence. This trend has led to internal conflict and fragmentation in countries like Yugoslavia, Sudan, and Ethiopia.
- **Proposed Solutions**: Granting autonomy and protecting minority rights are suggested approaches, though they are not always successful in maintaining stability.

7. Major Threats to Peace

- **Territorial and Resource Conflicts**: Resource disputes often escalate to war. For example:
  - **Iraq-Kuwait Conflict (1990)**: Disputes over oil led to Iraq's invasion.
  - **Water Scarcity**: Limited water resources in areas like the Nile Basin and the Middle East remain potential triggers for conflict.
- **Civil Wars and Sovereignty**: Civil conflicts pose significant risks to peace, particularly with rebellions (e.g., Afghanistan, Nicaragua) or secessionist movements (e.g., South Sudan, Eritrea). Foreign interventions often risk expanding these local conflicts into broader international issues.
- **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)**: The spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons is a major concern. Efforts to control these weapons have increased, especially after the Gulf War, although some nations resist restrictions, citing sovereignty.

8. Terrorism, Subversion, and Repression

- **Terrorism**: A growing threat worldwide, especially with state-sponsored incidents complicating global relations (e.g., the U.S. bombing of Libya in 1986 in response to terrorist attacks).

- **Repressive Regimes**: Autocratic governments, often linked to human rights abuses (e.g., apartheid in South Africa, Yugoslavia), can lead to mass atrocities. These regimes are also more likely to provoke international intervention due to their oppressive actions.

9. Implications of Micronationalism for International Law

- **UN's Dual Stance**: The UN supports self-determination but also emphasizes the importance of respecting territorial integrity, which can create legal ambiguity.
- **Proposed Criteria for Secession**:
    - **Historical Autonomy**: The region should have a historical precedent of autonomy.
    - **Discrimination**: The group should face consistent political or economic discrimination.
    - **Willingness to Negotiate**: If peaceful solutions (like autonomy) are rejected, secession may be considered.