

WORLD POLITICS 2014: Events that shaped the Year

Introduction:

This coverage of these events seeks to highlight the key events that changed conventional political systems and chat new systemic ways. These events cut across all continents from Cuba to Hong Kong, War and Peace time events, young and old led events. This year has been a dynamic and interesting one especially in its politics.

The Analysis

December 2013- January 2014

• Russia and Ukraine

The event that began with a street action demanding a partnership with the European Union from Ukraine Government, metamorphosed into a national awakening and rejection of the Post-Soviet State. Later on Mr. Putin and Mr. Yanukovych agreed on a Payment to Ukraine worth \$15 Billion and a price of \$268 per thousand cubic metres instead of \$400 for gas price- a good deal from Mr. Putin. On the 22nd of January- The Ukraine Day of Unity, protests broke out leading to the loss of five lives and hundreds of injured demonstrators. Other reasons that necessitated the violence include the repressive laws on the Media, the criminalization of the protests which began in December, the ineffective opposition leaders and the EU isolation from trade deal.

• The War in Syria

The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS)and Jabhat Al-Nusra (JIHADIST MOVEMENTS) took over blanketing other groups such as The Free Syrian Army, Syrian National Coalition on the fight against Assad. Other groups not affiliates of Al-Qaeda include the Islamic Front which is an umbrella body of smaller groups such as Ahrar al-Sham (Salafist outfit) and the Army of Islam (too conservative and undemocratic). The conflict by the time led to 6.5 Million Internally Displaced Persons, 2.3 Million fled to other countries, this numbers required \$6.5 Billion for humanitarian assistance by the United Nations. On 22nd January, there were talks in Geneva led by UNSG Ban-Ki-Moon that discussed: the elimination of chemical weapons that led to the death of 100,000 people; the killing of 11,000 detainees; the release of 1,000 jihadists as Amnesty. The Montreux Peace Conference- a UN Diplomacy move was also useful in bringing the players to talk, the players in this case refer to Iran and Russia who support Mr. Assad and Saudi Arabia and Qatar who support the Islamic

Front.

February 2014

• The Scottish Referendum

"A different Country with different Priorities" was the burner under which the working class supported the independence. There were intense campaigns from the two sides during this time, in preparation for the referendum to come later in the year.

• The State of the Union Speech

This was addressed by President Barack Obama stating that "Wherever and Whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunities for more American families, that is what I am going to do". This statement would necessitate unpopular decisions thereafter from the President when the Republicans dominate the Senate after the Mid Term Elections.

• China and Taiwan First Meeting in 65 Years

This High-Ranking Ministerial Level talks on the 11th of February were the first since 1949 after the split. The discussions were on maintaining stability and warmer ties in the region.

March 2014

• Crimea Secedes From Ukraine

The referendum held on the 16th of March showed that 97% of the voters decided to secede from Ukraine, the parliament sought annexation by Russia. This move was opposed by USA where President Obama said that "the referendum violates the Ukrainian Constitution and occurred under duress of Russian military intervention". There was also opposition by the United States General Assembly which condemned the annexation of Crimea, citing it as illegal and the referendum was invalid. Ukraine signed the trade deal with EU and received \$18 Billion loan from IMF and \$1 Billion aid package from the USA.

• North Korea Provokes South Korea

On the 26th March, Pyongyang test fires two Ballistic Missiles which have the capabilities of shrinking Japan, South Korea and China in the sea between North Korea and Japan. This angered Seoul leading to exchanges of artillery shells across the disputed western maritime border on the 31st of the same month.

April 2014

• #BRINGBACKOURGIRLS

Boko Haram – a Militant group in the northern part of Nigeria kidnapped 280 girls from a school with the intention of making the girls sex slaves. This sparked international outrage from leaders, celebrities and citizens in the streets. Nigeria received aid from USA to help track down Boko Haram, however no efforts from Government in collaboration with the International Community proved successful to the Bring Back our Girls Campaign.

• Palestinian and Israeli Peace Treaty

There was stalling in the implementation of the Treaty signed by both parties, this stalling was caused by Israeli's delay in releasing 26 prisoners and the settlement expansion in the West Bank meant for end of April. This situation made USA State Department led by John Kerry so as to cool down. Later on within the month, the peace talks were hindered by the reconciliation of the Palestinian Leadership and Hamas. The reason is that the USA and Israel regard Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and hence is not recognized.

May 2014

• Election Month

This Month witnessed: the European Parliament Elections; World's largest Election in India led by Narendra Modi after a decade in opposition; South Africa's ruling ANC Won the general Election. There was also change of regime in Thailand though through a coup by the Military led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha; Billionaire Petro Poroshenko wins the special presidential election on 25th May in Ukraine; Egyptian Presidential Elections won by Abdul-Fattah Sisi on 27th May- He was former Defense Minister who led the ouster of Morsi.

• Iran Nuclear Talks

There was a continuation of the Iran Nuclear with the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and Germany (P5+1). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) acknowledge the willingness to allow much more intrusive monitoring than ever experienced- including the signing of the additional protocol of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The major disagreement in over the sequencing of sanction relief as well as a difference in opinion of whether to have a 10-20 Year accord as espoused by the West or maximum 5 Year accord as demanded by Iran.

June 2014

• The World Cup

The 2014 World Cup in Maracana Stadium in Brazil was a success although marred with many issues. FIFA- A Swiss Non-Profit Organization; Main Sponsors include Adidas, Coca-Cola, Emirates, Hyundai, Sony and Visa. The contentious issues include the Qatar 2022 bidding which was alleged to be corrupt; Reforms on the governance; failure to capture the three largest countries i.e. China, India and USA direct engagement; the host selection process.

• The United Nations Environmental Assembly(UNEA)

This event is the first of its kind, held in UNEP Offices Nairobi. It brought together State and Non-State Actors in a bid to bring about interdisciplinary and holistic approaches to sustainable development and environmental conservation.

• ISIS Control in Mosul

ISIS is an Organization borne out of Regional Warfare and Islamic Fundamentalism, battling

against Bashar in Syria, it has recruited foreign fighters and veterans. It is so zealous and blood thirsty that other rebel groups in Syria do not approve it. The capture of Mosul heightened the seriousness the conflict deserves resulting to the sending of 300 Military Advisers by the USA. Mosul is the second largest city in Iraq and a crucial oil hub in Northern Iraq. ISIS: released Sunni insurgents from the prisons; loot banks and got away with \$425 Million; occupied the Airport; took over some government, military and police stations and buildings. At this time ISIS is well equipped and prepared continues to seize more territory in Tikrit where 500,000 people fled.

July 2014

• Mysterious Plane Crash in Ukraine

A commercial plane, Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777, from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, crashes in Ukraine near the Russian Border leading to the loss of 298 passengers. Ukrainian and American said the plane was shot down on the 17th of July by Russian made surface to air missiles citing satellite images. Analysts said that the rebels may have mistaken the plane for a military transport plane, the rebels went ahead to deny access to the bodies of the victims and the crash site and transported the bodies to refrigerated train cars in Torez- a rebel controlled area.

August 2014

• Egyptian Diplomacy

Egypt manages to establish a 72 hour cease fire on 5th August, after fighting for seven weeks Israel and Hamas agree to an open ended cease fire. The interim agreement has Hamas in control over Gaza whereas Egypt and Israel exercise control over access to Gaza. The intensity of the fighting led to the death of 2,143 Palestinian civilians, 64 Israeli Soldiers, 6 Israeli civilians, 11,000 wounded and 100,000 homeless from Palestine.

September 2014

• Ebola threat to National Security

The World Health Organization reported 4,293 cases out of which 2,296 passed on as of 9th September. The disease spread to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal and a few cases in Nigeria. The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals (fruit bats are natural hosts) then spread by contact with body fluids. There have been efforts by the international community for instance the Geneva Conference which among many other things discussed whole blood transfusion and purified blood plasma as solutions. Various other institutions have made remarkable attempts to dealing with Ebola virus. These include: the National Institute of Health (NIH) and GlaxosmithKline (GSK) in their phase one trials which tested whether the drug is safe for healthy persons, the vaccine developed is able to infect cells and deliver fragments of genetic material from two variations of Ebola; Public Health Agency of Canada

licensed by Newlink Genetics of Ames From Iowa developed Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV-EBOV)- a live replicating virus that infects cells and carries Ebola viral proteins into the host stimulating an immune response; Tekmira Pharmaceuticals from Canada developed TKM-EBOLA which silences the cellular messages that allow viral proteins to be made though produces flu-like symptoms in human- is yet to be tried on Ebola patients.

October 2014

• Democracy in Hong-Kong: Reality or Mirage

The "Umbrella Revolution" which began on the 22nd as a students' class boycott and thereafter attracting more than 100,000 people. Before this was the "Occupy Central with Love and Peace" a protest led by lecturers, both of which were dissatisfied with the economy, the system which is rigged by tycoons, the rising influence by mainlanders and most critically the demand an end to the Chinese government Communist Party selection of the Chief Executive and instead allow voters' choice through democratic election. The protests lasted for 10 weeks ending on the 14th of December when the police cleared the tents, the Chinese government didn't make any concessions and the protestors made it vivid that they can challenge the government.

November 2014

• Climate Change Affairs

On the 11th of November the US and China Presidents signed a Climate Change Agreement, the Chinese agreed to use clean energy such as windmills and solar power as 20% of the country's total energy by 2030, the Americans on the other side pledged to reduce carbon emissions to 26-28% by 2025. The agreement also included agreements on the navigation of US and Chinese planes and ships off China's coast as well as reduction of tariffs on technology items.

December 2014

• Renewed Friendships

This month on the 17th, saw renewed diplomatic relations between Cuba and USA following the release of a USAID Contractor Alan Gross after being imprisoned for 3 years citing humanitarian reasons. This relations have remained strained since 1961 till this year.

2015 Outlook

The global political environment remains unpredictable, however there are events such as the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict that doesn't have prospects for peace in this year since the political will is absent among the leaders. The Middle-East conflict in Syria, Iraq has a chance of reduction in its intensity only when the key players i.e. Saudi Arabia, Russia, Qatar, USA reach a political agreement, without this this conflict will pour into 2016. In Africa, there is probability of a better and working states although the Somalia instability seems to be a pain that will also be dealt with when an agreement with key financiers of Al-Shabaab besides the military efforts. The case of Boko-Haram deserves a continental approach and should not just be left to the west Africans to deal with. In Asia the growth of China as a threat to the Asian tigers is contained by the signing of the agreement between the USA and China, its implementation will bring about stability. For Europe, as the European parliament enters its second year with new leadership its issues and concerns are likely to be moderate not causing any major political shifts.

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